

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



# LITTLE CHILDREN OF GOD

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# RAISING A GENERATION OF SAINTS



When you see a little baby, the first thought that probably comes to mind is, "Pure Innocence!" I've had moments when I've looked at the sleeping face of my children and been struck by how angelic they appear. By the next morning we are sometimes left wondering, especially with the lockdown, how will I

ever survive parenting?

This gift, this purpose of marriage, of procreation and education of children can sometimes seem like the toughest job especially when the end is to ensure that they live lives worthy of heaven! That's pretty much what we've vowed to do when we stood at the altar and were declared husband and wife. Unfortunately, when we look around, most parents have forgotten this responsibility. It has become so much about "raising my child to just be a good person" or to have a "bright future". However, when God blessed us with this gift (as every child is) He was entrusting us to raise children for His glory, His purposes.

What does it mean to raise children for God? First it means that we, as parents, take responsibility of raising our children – we take responsibility to care for their physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs. This requires investing time, to understand our child, where he/ she is and to journey with them. It means we need to know what's happening in their lives and guide them in the way they understand, judge and carry out their responsibilities. It isn't enough to give them a good academic education. More importantly, we need to help them build a strong foundation in faith so that they do not get carried away by the influences of the world around them.

Pope St. Paul VI said "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does

listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." This is so true of our children as well. You might have heard the saying "Values are not taught, they're caught." They need to see the values we talk about being lived out. When raising my own children, I've been challenged to practice the Gospel values trusting that God who is my Father and theirs will see us through. It is with joy that I can say, it has not failed!

We often leave faith and character formation to the school, catechism classes and other places where we send them to learn skills; but home is the first place they can encounter God and from there, understand themselves. It's their first taste of the supernatural life!

We can do it in the simplest of ways –

1. Praying the family rosary daily
2. Going through the Mass readings together and sometimes quizzing the kids on the texts. Kids love a good challenge!
3. When they're struggling with friends, studies and other situations to pray along with them and for them.
4. Introduce them to the lives of the saints, who were just ordinary people but with God's grace did extraordinary things.
5. Talk about how we need to make the right choices and being responsible.
6. Setting apart time with each of our children to listen to them and sometimes just have fun.
7. Share a weekly meal together.

We need to be mindful of this: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord!" (Eph 6:4) and "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov 22:6)

In an age where screens and gadgets seem to rule the roost, it's essential to engage kids in real ways, with real family and friends... Jesus was incarnate to be with us, to dwell in our midst, to have us experience Him. May the experience of being with Jesus draw our children to follow after Him with their whole heart!

**COUNTRY SERVANT - JIMMY XAVIER**



# PERSISTING IN FAITH POST-COVID

We have experienced something unprecedented in our lifetime with the COVID-19 pandemic. A small invisible microbe has wreaked havoc on our health and on our social and economic lives. Worse, we are not only locked down in our homes, but our churches are locked down, and we have been deprived of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

For us in Missionary Families of Christ, our pattern of life has been severely disturbed. We are not able to come together for our meetings, formation programs and major events. Our evangelization has somewhat stalled. But at the same time, God has shown us ways by which we are to cope. Mainly we have used online platforms. A disadvantage is that we also have brethren who have no full access to such.

And so we look forward to when the pandemic subsides and we are able to resume our daily lives. In fact, having missed the basic necessities, we must be much more appreciative of what God has given us, and be much more enthusiastic to move forward with our life and mission.

And we know that this work is crucial. It is all about helping dispel the darkness in the world with the light of Christ. It is about reaching the lost sheep and bringing them back to the sheepfold. It is about winning souls for the Kingdom. Since the evil in the world caused God to chastise us by way of this pandemic, the way out and the way forward is repentance and turning back to faith in Jesus. This is what our work is about.

We may not expect that with the lessons of this chastisement, the world will suddenly totally turn back to God. But those who do know Him and His ways should be led to realize the disaster that awaits mankind if it persists in offending God. So it is crucial that they meet Christ, and ultimately live Christ. For that to happen, we are among those commissioned by God to share Christ. It will continue to be a long and arduous battle, but we need to persist and endure. We strive to reach as many as we can.

We have been locked down by this pandemic. There was a time too when the disciples themselves were locked down ... by Jesus himself. Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus told them to await the promise of the Father so that they would be clothed with power from on high. So they went to the upper room, where they locked themselves in.

The authorities today have locked us down in order to prevent us from being infected. The Authority locked the disciples down so that they would be infected, so that they would be filled with the Holy Spirit. They then infected many others and ultimately the whole world.

COVID-19 spread quickly to the whole world and brought death. The gospel must spread quickly to the whole world to bring life. This is the very life of Christ. This is about the salvation of souls. So this is our work in MFC. With lessons learned from this pandemic, let us not waste any more time.

**SERVANT GENERAL - FRANK PADILLA**



**“Because this is God’s strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.” Urbi Et Orbi Blessing, 27th March 2020**

**POPE FRANCIS**

# NOT TOO YOUNG

Children are the joy of the family and of society (Pope Benedict, General audience, St. Peter's Square, Feb. 12, 2015). They can bring happiness to a household in unimaginable ways. Their smile is contagious and their laughter can bring light to even the darkest situations. In their innocence, they are able to experience nature and God in a unique and intimate way. Hence Christ has rightly said **"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."** (Matthew 18:3-5)

However in this day and age, where kids are exposed to the vices of the world through many means, how can parents raise their children according to the teachings of the Church?

Recognizing the importance of leading kids to Christ from a very early stage and the struggle many parents go through to make this a reality, Missionary Families of Christ India supports its members, children aged 12 years and below through MFC Kids India. This segment aims at teaching and guiding them towards knowing God as they grow to become God-fearing and responsible men and women.

**Our activities for MFC Kids include:**

**Kids India Assembly:** This is a once-a-month activity, usually lasts for one-and-a-half to two hours including fellowship, where kids learn more about their Catholic faith. This serves as regular spiritual nourishment for the MFC Kids India members.

**Kids Village:** A once-a-year state-wise gathering for MFC Kids members to discuss the theme of the community through different sessions, workshops and other fun activities.

**Outreach programs for Non-MFC Kids India members:**

**Campus retreats:** A one-time program conducted in schools for kids from classes 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> standard (junior kids retreat) and 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> standard (senior kids retreat). Where kids are taught about different topics of the Catholic faith through action songs, games and interactive sessions.

**Church Connect (Parish-Based Program):** This program allows the ministry to connect to the parishes

and become partners in bringing the children closer to God. An annual retreat or monthly assembly is conducted for the kids of the parish from the ages of 4 to 12, based on discussions with the Parish Priest.

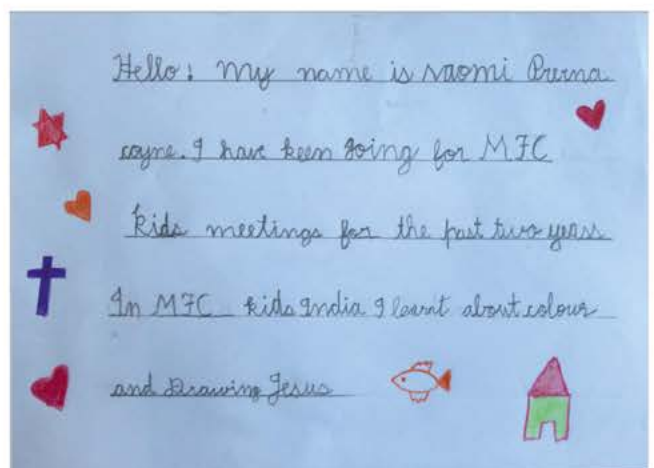
The Mission of MFC Kids India is to create a support environment for children along with the Church and the parents to grow in relationship with God as they grow in loving relationship with their family, friends and the community. It exists to tell the world that no one is too young to know Christ, by re-enforcing the Christian values taught at home while also providing additional resources for parents to guide their kids to grow spiritually.

**Amulya Castelino, Porvorim , Goa**

## TESTIMONIES



**Noletta Raymond, Age 9, Mumbai**



**Noami Coyne, Age 5 , Chennai**

I want to share my testimony about my experience in the kids ministry. After attending the session on holy people, I felt Mother Mary very close to me, talking to me. St. Patrick's poem is dear to my heart and I have prayed to St. Anthony in many instances. Thank you MFC-Kids for the God experience.

**Jake Miranda, Age 11, North Bangalore**

During this lent season, we were asked to make small sacrifices and also help and do charity. I helped my mother in the household chores. I decided that I will not watch TV but watch Bible stories during Lent and also I will not eat non-veg food specially in the Holy Week. I also told my mummy that I will fast on Good Friday. My daddy had given me pocket money and I gave it to the poor lady who was sitting outside my school. I was feeling so nice and good this Lenten season, it was a different experience for me. I enjoy singing during our family prayer. I enjoy doing all the activities and the work sheets that we get during our kids gathering.

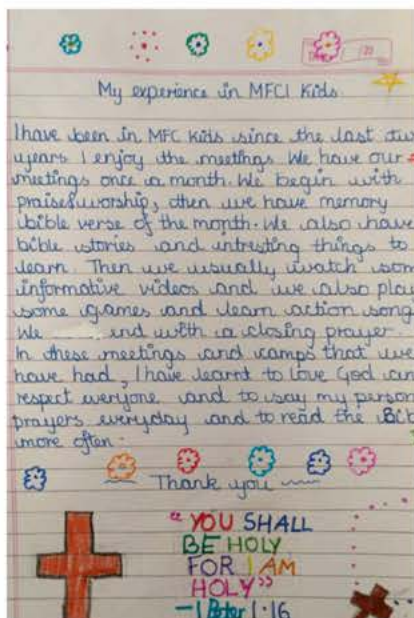
**Seona Girish, Age 12, Pune**

I want to share how Jesus stood by my side and strengthened me. I used to be bullied by my senior in my van. The verbal abuses were getting worse day-by-day. I hated going to school. My parents and grandma kept telling me to offer it to Jesus. The day my senior held my hand and continued to speak badly to me was the time I cried and prayed to Jesus knowing I couldn't do anything by my own. I saw a change in my senior in the days that followed. There was no more fear. I saw the hand of Jesus over me and my situation that I was in. Thank you Jesus for being by my side.

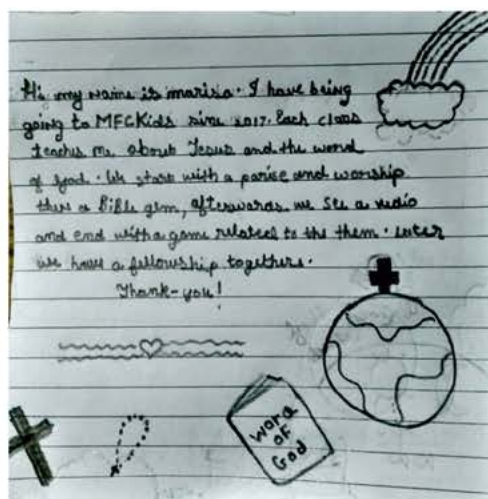
**Audrey Mascarenhas, Age 11, North Bangalore**

I have experienced God in many ways. One of them was during a praise and worship time at a kids meeting, I heard while praying 'Ask and you shall receive'. I prayed about that message and I felt like a voice saying that whatever I would ask Jesus and if it's His will, I shall surely receive it. I asked for courage as I'm scared of the dark, and needed courage to always tell the truth. Thank you my Jesus for blessing me with courage. I love you Jesus.

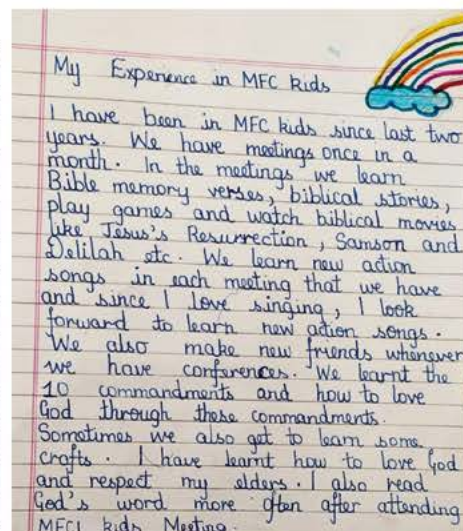
**Kathleen Mascarenhas, Age 8, North Bangalore**



**Erica Fernandes, Age 9, Mangalore**



**Marisa Fernandes, Age 8, Mumbai**



**Esther Fernandes, Age 11, Mangalore**

**Matthew 19:14** But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

# BLESSED AND BEAUTIFUL

A two-day program of spiritual self-discovery and sisterly fellowship for unmarried working singles was conducted in Bangalore and Goa on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2019 and 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 respectively.

The most beautiful aspect of the program was knowing that ***Our Father loves us more than anyone else.***

I struggled to build relationships with other women because of my prejudices against them and my feelings of ***'not fitting in'***. Though MFC has helped me build better relations with women, this program made me realize the need for **sisterhood**.

I realized that I'm precious and beautiful in the eyes of our God which helped me respect and value myself just the way I was created. Such thoughtful reflections were the direct result of the female-led praise and worship, and the interactive sessions that ensured the same at the Blessed and Beautiful program.

How I view God the Father was the first question asked by the ones who conducted all the sessions. They explained that when our earthly father fails us, our heavenly Father finds us, and it is in His arms, that we find our worth and identity. The participants were then reminded that they are the crown jewels of creation and that a woman's greatest genius lies in her being receptive. Mama Mary was posed as the model of ideal receptivity as she open-heartedly embraced her call to Holiness, despite the many challenges that she encountered. The animators gently drew a light on how our brokenness keeps us from being receptive to the will

of God. They helped the participants identify their silent cries and through the group discussions that followed helped the participants pray for specific graces to combat the same.

The morning sessions were succeeded by the Holy Mass followed by lunch. The participants were encouraged to use every meal as an opportunity to get to know all their fellow sisters in the community on a deeper, albeit casual level. The next session taught the participants to travel light in life, advising them on how to avoid carrying baggage from past hurts into future endeavors. The day ended on a glamorous note. The conference room was transformed into a more free and festive space where the young ladies let their hair down and enjoyed a night of games, dance, fun, and fellowship.

The second and final day of Blessed and Beautiful commenced with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The participants then proceeded for a session on the 'Joys of Sisterhood', which focused on the spiritual and health benefits of hanging out with one's girlfriends. The talk highlighted how cliques and romantic relationships may sometimes distance a woman from her sisters, and it advised the participants how to confront such situations without jeopardizing any relationship. Post that, a short session on how a woman should embrace modesty was given, the participants were also given practical tips on how to dress to impress while maintaining the dignity of their body.

The final session paved the way forward by discussing



Participants at Blessed and Beautiful - Goa



Participants at Blessed ad Beautiful- Bangalore

the 3 vocations that awaited the ladies on their path to Holiness. Practically discerning the call of God and trusting that His plan is better than one can even imagine for one's self was the key takeaway of the session.

The day concluded with the pray over session for each of the participants and adorning them with a crown and a pearl necklace. The ceremony reminded the participants that they were far more precious than any pearl and in the

eyes of their Father that they were His phenomenal princesses.

On that profound note, the participants retreated from the venue with a deeper understanding of the Father's love, a stronger bond with their sisters in the community and a blissful assurance of being **blessed and beautiful**.

**Desmona D'Mello, South Bangalore**

## GALLERY



## TESTIMONIES



Blessed and beautiful was an experience I was waiting to encounter since the time of its mention. Often we women find ourselves fighting for basic rights to be respected and acknowledged. But when we accept our femininity in its utmost sense and use it as our way of making changes in people's life for the Kingdom of God, we realise how we fit into the equality equation. It's this element of ours that makes us who we truly are. Blessed and Beautiful opened my eyes not just as a daughter but also as a woman who holds on to her femininity and tries to be more of herself in every battle that the devil pushes us to fight! Mama Mary couldn't be a greater example of this fight that we could rely on for help, persistence and grace.

**Michelle Serrao, North Bangalore**

The program for me was in every sense just Blessed and Beautiful! Reminding me how blessed I am to be the Crown Jewel and to have such a loving Father! The sessions, sharings and activities were enlightening. It was also a wonderful time of bonding with my sisters in Christ and learning about building sisterhood.

**Jocelyn Fernandes, Porvorim**



Blessed and Beautiful truly was a program that lived up to its name. A blessed encounter with the Lord in the company of our beautiful like-minded sisters in Christ. In a world where the world has portrayed women as being constantly at odds with each other, this program was a welcome reminder that each of us is a unique crown jewel of God's Creation.

**Lysanne Fernandes, Madgaon**

Blessed and Beautiful helped me in many ways to understand the worth of self and it helped me start

striving towards an unjudgemental attitude towards other women around me. It gave me a wider perspective about my role as a woman in carrying out the duties in family and society. Knowing that God had an entirely different picture about who I am as a woman, made me feel more responsible towards my body, my thoughts and desires. Much more was that it gave me an opportunity to reflect on my mother and all that she had done for my family and that she was to be seen with much gratitude and respect. I had time to reflect and repent for those moments that I was not able to acknowledge my mother's efforts for my family. I understood that modest clothing of my thoughts, my desires and myself also played a role in drawing others and myself to holiness in Christ.

**Jincy, South Bangalore**



The Blessed and Beautiful weekend was truly a special one for me as it allowed me to bond with the wonderful sisters in my life and helped me understand my cries as well as make me realise what a jewel I am in the eyes of my loving Father. What a

blessing it is to truly experience God's love through my sisters in Christ and know that we are blessed and beautiful!

**Gayle Carvalho, Madgaon**

The Blessed and Beautiful program was an enriching experience. It gave me time to reflect on myself. The session "Joys of Sisterhood" helped me understand how to build communion in our relationships and its importance in our well being. The talk on silent cries made me reflect on the areas that needed healing, to come in terms with my past experiences and faulty attitudes and consciously make a change. Mother Mary is the greatest example of virtue. I ask her to intercede for us to make us more like her.

**Joela Valadares, Madgaon**





# MISSION NEVER STOPS

The ongoing pandemic resulted in the community being unable to meet in person as is the usual custom, but we praise God for the gift of technology that enables us to continue our spiritual growth and community activities online.

Here's a snapshot of the initiatives that we have undertaken for the nourishment of the community as a whole and in the various sections:

**SpeakLife:** This initiative is to facilitate the faithful to collectively read the entire scripture (Genesis to Revelation) every day. This is done through the online portal created by our community members: [speaklife.today](http://speaklife.today) where participants can enroll their names and will be provided scripture passages to read in order to meet the objective of reading the scriptures aloud, to declare The Way, The Truth & The Life to ourselves and to the world around especially in a time like this.



Web series session by Francis and Ana

To enrich the lives of the couples within and beyond the community, **Love Beyond Words** has been launched as a web-series airing on YouTube and Facebook

every Saturday from May 9<sup>th</sup>. The topics are those essential to living out a fruitful and blessed family life in line with the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church. The livestreams have brought in audiences of over 2000 per video from across the country and the world.

Responding to the problem of stranded workers due to the lockdown, the community through its **No One in Need ministry** mobilized resources and working in cooperation with the authorities and the local parishes, reached out to 6120 families to provide kits of essential ration and supplies.



Feed the Hunger Initiative

In order to keep the spirit of worship and community in these times, the Singles section across the country have been tuning in to **Let Praise Arise** sessions conducted

by various worship leaders from different cities live on Instagram every week.

## YouCat Study Meetings

(Youth): The Youth section organized online sessions to study the YouCat which were moderated by Deacon Kevin Santis of the Archdiocese of Mumbai.



Youth attending the Youcat classes on Zoom

These sessions were held weekly over conference calls. The Youth Section are also participating in MFC Youth international online '**Hangout**' sessions as well as workshops that have been conducted nationally.

With children being at home during this time, the kids section has been engaging parents to showcase their children's talents on social media and to join them in making action song videos for social media.

The regular teaching and household meetings have been conducted online wherever possible and individual chapters in cities have also conducted "Challenges" over social media which has brought families together to showcase their altars, dance together for action songs, take part in quizzes and so on.

The work of evangelization has also continued with Christian Life Seminars being conducted wherever possible.



Praise and Worship at the Pentecost Night Vigil

On the feast of Pentecost, prayers in the form of an online night vigil was also aired on Youtube in both English and Hindi at a National level. Families from the community are also participating in the online series "**Family Catechisis with Archbishop Peter**" conducted by the Archdiocese of Bangalore and have greatly benefitted from it.

We praise God for the technology he has blessed us with in order to build ourselves and to reach out to more souls through the use of various media.

# TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION



## Parish Retreat

75 attended the Parish Retreat conducted by MFC Pune at Good Shepherd Church on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February.



## Christian Life Seminar

70 participants attended the program from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of February in Jhanhvav, Gujarat.



## Parish Retreat

41 participants attended the Retreat conducted in Bengali by MFC Kolkata from the 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of February at Kathalechar Parish, Agartala.



## Parish Retreat

69 participants attended Parish Retreat conducted by MFC Goa.



## Christian Life Seminar

27 participants attended the Couples CLS in Arunachal Pradesh.



## Parish Retreat

300 people attended the Retreat conducted at Muzafarpur by MFC Team on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.



## Parish Retreat

200 people attended the Retreat at Holy Rosary Church, Airport Road, Bangalore on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

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# TRAINING & EVANGELIZATION

## MFC Logo - Explained



### Missionary

The Holy Spirit is depicted as a dove, which came down on Jesus at his baptism (Mt 3:16), starting Him off on His earthly mission. In turn, Jesus imparts the Holy Spirit to His disciples, empowering them to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit is the agent of evangelization. MFC recognizes that our Church is a missionary Church, and is committed to help her attain to her destiny.

### Families

We are families empowered by the Holy Spirit to help renew the face of the earth. We are committed to renew the family and to defend life. We are among those to be sent out on mission. We are families that first of all belong to Christ. The outstretched arms of Christ and the slightly inward-bent hands signify both the embrace of Jesus upon the family, and also the presenting of the family to the world, being sent forth to do mission. It is a faceless family. We become the faces of the Christian family. The family is garbed in blue, which is the color of Mama Mary.

### Of Christ

Christ is of course at the very center of our logo. Our primary Core Value is being Centered on Christ. He is the be-all and end-all. We are nothing without Him. The gold ring or halo is a sacred diadem. It first of all represents a crown of royalty, and it signifies holiness, being set apart. Jesus is "the Holy One of God." (Jn 6:69).

We too are called to holiness. We are called to be like Christ, to be another Christ. We are called to Christian perfection. We are to "put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph 4:24). And so we have the faceless Christ. The challenge to us is to be that Christ, to be holy, to be priest, prophet and king, to love and care for our family, and to be sent forth to do God's work.



### Abide 2020

A full day program conducted for 30 couples in Mangalore on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> of March at Milagres Church Hall with a program in parallel for their children.



### Parish Retreat

1100 people attended the Retreat conducted at Rourkela by MFC Team.



### Parish Retreat

2500 people attended the Retreat conducted at Chhattisgarh by MFC Team.



### Redeemed

6 couples attended the Christian Life Seminar conducted on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March in Dubai.



### Abide

15 Couples attended the CLS on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March at Our Lady Of Sacred Heart Church Hall, Bangalore.



### Young Couples Conference

65 couples attended the Young Couples Conference conducted at JDV Campus, Pune on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March.



### Parish Retreat

153 people attended the retreat conducted at Dumchipara by MFC Team on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March.

# 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.

[www.facebook.com/mfccouplesindia](http://www.facebook.com/mfccouplesindia)  
[www.facebook.com/mfcsinglesindia](http://www.facebook.com/mfcsinglesindia)  
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[www.facebook.com/mfckidsindia](http://www.facebook.com/mfckidsindia)

[www.instagram.com/mfcsinglesindia](http://www.instagram.com/mfcsinglesindia)  
[www.instagram.com/mfcyouthindia](http://www.instagram.com/mfcyouthindia)

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



### Parish Retreat

148 people attended the retreat conducted at Garganda by MFC Team on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March.



### Parish Retreat

A Retreat was conducted at Jolda, Rourkela for 1560 people on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March.



### Parish Retreat

A retreat was conducted at Holapara by MFC Team on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March.



### Parish Retreat

300 people attended the retreat conducted at Tejpur by MFC Assam Team on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March.



### Abide In Me

The Handmaids had a Christian Life Seminar for women above the age of 35 at the St. Inez Hall, Goa on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March.



### Face to Face

15 participants attended the CLS on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March at Yuva Vikas, Bangalore.



### Parish Retreat

A retreat was conducted for 61 people at Rangalibazna by MFC Team on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March.