

Newtbec

NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

B E D I S C I P L E S O F H O P E

It is easy to love the people far away. It is not always easy to love those close to us. Bring love into your home, for this is where our love for each other must start.

- St. Teresa of Calcutta

Is our modern day lifestyle becoming incompatible with the demands of the family network? Have our family priorities extended only as far as our immediate needs demand? Have we made ourselves the center of our lives? Despite our weekly profession that Christ is our Lord, are we moving away from Christ just in the way that the modern day family is moving away from the need for ecclesial community structures that were well thought of three decades ago? Is this the basis for the declining participation in BECs? Are we facing the reality of a community that appears to be slowly disintegrating at all levels before our eyes?

Unless we are prepared to accept the consequence of the fragmentation of the family, the pervasive contraceptive culture, increasing domestic violence and single parenthood, we have to start sensitising ourselves to realities around us, and wake ourselves up from the notion that it doesn't involve us. We have to check ourselves against this phenomena. A good way would be to ask ourselves how frequently we visit our own parents, older siblings or other members of our extended family when compared to our visits to the shopping malls and places of entertainment that is mushrooming in our country.

We are reminded today that we have to start looking beyond ourselves. As Christ has directed us, we are meant to be drawn towards each other and to love one another as Jesus has commanded us (Jn. 15:12). We have to begin re-orientating our focus away from ourselves towards the other. The Church starts with the smallest basic unit - the family - and families bound by the Holy Spirit becomes the Church itself. Social studies have affirmed the healing nature of church communities when one is bound by the community of love and faith. **Our Christian faith calls us to love another.** This is the Christian love that Jesus taught. The love of God reveals to us the beauty and power of his love when we love in return. Unless we embrace that, we will sadly remain bound in our individual selves within our own comfort zone. †

FAMILY POWERED IN CHRIST...

TO LOVE ANOTHER



Our first sense of love comes from our family. In most families, the ties that bind its members are naturally more pronounced when compared to any other group. However, unlike past generations that placed great emphasis on family kinship, modern day families appear to somehow depend less on the family network. An example of this can be seen in the numerous cases of the elderly being neglected or worse, even abandoned by their families.

Weekly
WORD

Our Christian faith calls
us to love another

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7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

B E D I S C I P L E S O F H O P E

Love is not blind; that is the last thing that it is. Love is bound; and the more it is bound the less it is blind.
- G.K. Chesterton
(English writer & lay theologian)

that we have known, and love as a result of religious hatred and bigotry. In the face of these realities, Jesus reminds us of our mission, that is, to follow him, to spread his message of love and hope to all corners of the nation and the world. It is a mission by all for all, that is, to the society at large, to the neighbourhood, and to our own families.

For this mission that he has entrusted us, Jesus sanctifies us with his power and love so that we may carry our cross daily with hope. It is a mission for which we draw our strength from him, and which draws us closer to those around us, regardless of their social, religious or economic backgrounds. In our daily challenges, we lean on Jesus as we pray for his protection and for closeness with God. In this way, we find ourselves becoming one with ourselves, with our families, church community and with people around us. It means we no longer live isolated as individual families but as Christ centered families reaching out to the world.

For this, we look to Jesus as he prayed to his Father in heaven (Jn. 17). Jesus asks the Father to protect and guide his disciples, just as parents and guardians pray and entrust continually their children to Jesus and his Father in Heaven. Jesus' prayer that we be protected from the "evil one" does not necessarily mean the absence of problems or challenges in our lives. It is an assurance that he will be with us to guide and accompany us as we go forth in mission. The reality of the Feast of the Ascension, which the Church celebrated last Thursday, moves us, as a Christian, to become a person of hope despite of all the problems in the nation and in the world. It points to a higher reality, that is, **our hope lies in the Divine Jesus** as he assumes his place at the center of our lives and of the world. With him in us and for us, there is nothing to fear! †

Weekly WORD
Our hope lies in the Divine Jesus

FAMILY POWERED IN CHRIST...

To Mission

As families living in these times of political, religious, social and economic uncertainty, we also continually face the barrage of subtle religious and racial persecutions in our daily lives. As a result, some of us may fear what the future holds for ourselves and especially, for our children. Others may fear that we will 'lose' the nation





**As the soul
is the life
of the body,
so the
Holy Spirit
is the life of
our souls.**

- St. Peter Damien

the first greeting was met again with the words, "Peace be with you" and then, "receive the Spirit". Hearing the words, it seemed for them as though life was starting anew. When Christ greets and breathes upon them, he also strengthens them for mission. He gives them the gifts to fulfil their mission - his mission - since the mission of Christ becomes their mission. Renewed, the disciples become reinvigorated as they feel moved with the zeal to go forth in mission.

Likewise, we too may have our moments of despair and darkness when we give in to fear and hopelessness. We may prefer, at these times, to hide in the comfort of our self-pity, sinfulness or suffering. How many times have we turned to self-pity or a sinful habit for our solace and our hope? In such times as these, we may blame God because he seems to be absent. Perhaps, it is because we may have come to believe that life as a Christian is not meant to be filled with trials and suffering. Instead, we feel we are entitled to a comfortable and trouble-free life.

It is in times like this, that we have to be aware of being called by Jesus, of having our lives being breathed upon again and again by him so as we may rise from our fears and hopelessness. God's breath of life is present within the family, when we turn and reach out to others, especially those undergoing fear and doubts, through our life-giving actions of love and mercy. It makes them realise that they have not been abandoned and that God keeps his promises. **There can only be one God, and we are not him.** But we are loved by him for he has assured us that he will not abandon us. We only have to cast our anxieties on him, and he will set us free (1 Pet 5:7). This becomes our mission, for ourselves and our family - to arise as his disciples, and go out on mission and bring peace to others. †

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NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH **PENTECOST SUNDAY**
B E D I S C I P L E S O F H O P E

20 MAY 2018



FAMILY POWERED IN CHRIST...

To Be Set Free

"Peace be with you". These words with which Jesus greeted the disciples who were hiding in fear, was as a breath of fresh air to them. It ignites within them a spark of hope in the days when all appeared as dark and hopeless. The response of the disciples to

**Weekly
WORD**
There can only be
one God, and we are
not him

The faith
of all
Christians
rests on
the Trinity.

- St. Caesarius of Arles

continue to find it hard to unravel the mystery of the Trinity. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the unveiling of God in history finds its full revelation in the Person of Jesus Christ (CCC, 65). Through Jesus, God drew us closer to Him. Our senses now recognises the hand that touched our lives, the face that comforted our anguished souls, and most of all, the heart that saves us. In recognising him, our lives seem to make sense.

The ultimate aim for our being, as taught by the Catholic Church, **is to return to God, and see Him face to face.** This is most poignantly reflected by St Paul (1 Cor 13:12) who speaks of both our will and soul, as reflected in God Himself, as treading the path to the Divine. The synthesis of both our lives and the divine which we draw upon is the grace of the Holy Spirit. Empowered, we seek now the clarity of our being, reflected by our love and actions. Today we are reminded to ask ourselves, "Has my life always reflected the divine, the Christ in me?" "How far have I drawn away from Christ, the center of my life?" "Do I draw my strength and love from him?" "How often have I walked away from the path he has set for me?" "Do I recognise the hand of Jesus in all the graces and countless miracles he has endowed me?"

The path to God is a path together with the Holy Trinity. Only through the Father, Son and Spirit, do we see ourselves for who we are. And only with them, can we be at our best. God loves us and wants us to truly become One with Him. So the path has been laid before our feet. Let us walk now in the love of the Father, the light of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, and more importantly draw others upon the same path. †

Weekly
WORD

The ultimate aim for our being
is to see Him face to face

INTERNAL CIRCULATION ONLY
BUL 21/2018

Published by: Peninsular Malaysia Pastoral Team Print: Steno Print Sdn Bhd
api@archkl.org Design: The Mustard Seed Studio

27 MAY 2018

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NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH THE SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

B E D I S C I P L E S O F H O P E

FAMILY POWERED IN CHRIST...

To See Him Face-to-face

"Let us make man in our own image" (Gen 1:26).
The two plural terms "us" and "our" draws us first and foremost to an understanding that God is not a singular entity. This idea may have probably confounded many people in the understanding of the Holy Trinity. Today, we

