

VAIHARAI

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Contents

<i>From Editor's Desk</i>	01
1. Family Values in the Book of Tobit, <i>Dr David Stanly Kumar.</i>	05
2. Christian Family and Spirituality, <i>Dr A. Pushparajan.</i>	23
3. Breaking the Silence: A Timely Mission of the Catholic Church to Eradicate Spousal Abuse (Domestic Violence) from the Indian Families (Part – II), <i>Dr Jeevaraj Lourdhu.</i>	63
4. Pastoral Challenges of Family, <i>Dr S. Arulsamy.</i>	101
5. Experiencing the Word of God in the Celebration of Sacraments and Para-Liturgical Services, <i>Dr Joseph Rolington.</i>	124
6. Active Participation in Liturgy, An Unfinished Agenda of Vatican II: The Constitution on Liturgy, <i>Dr S. Joseph Lionel.</i>	141

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Family: The Domestic Church

From Editor's Desk

The confident and consoling words of Pope Francis “The secret lies in a *gaze*... if we truly intend to walk among contemporary challenges, the decisive condition is to maintain a fixed gaze on Jesus Christ, to pause in contemplation and in adoration of his Face.... Indeed, every time we return to the source of the Christian experience, new paths and undreamed-of possibilities open up” (*cf. Address of His Holiness Pope Francis during the Meeting on the Family, Oct. 04, 2014*) are the apt and challenging advice to the stressed hearts of today’s men and women. The difficulty is fixing a gaze on Jesus Christ! The concerns of humanity are too many in today’s context that quality time for ourselves is a rare phenomenon. It is only when one has quality time for oneself, one can reflect on the reality of oneself, the reality of one’s relationship with others and with God. In the context family this quality time is a must today more than ever. This quality time helps us to fix a gaze on Jesus Christ. It teaches us ‘his way of thinking, of living and of relating’ (*cf. Address of His Holiness Pope Francis during the Meeting on the Family, Oct. 04, 2014*). This gaze shows us the right path on which members of the family are to walk and the appropriate values to practice.

Biblical personalities who lived amidst challenges help us to fix this gaze. They had experience of God and that experience led them to newness in life. This newness in their life show us the appropriate family values. Consistent and enthusiastic practice of these values slowly becomes the spirituality of family, unique to each family (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 4). When each baptized becomes part of Christian family spirituality, which is the outcome of the gaze on Jesus Christ, there emerges *Jesus Culture*. We know the power of culture in our life, private and public. Naturally the power of *Jesus Culture* will remove all unwanted, unbecoming and wounding behaviours in our relationship with one another especially within family context. The Church at large and the Christian Community particularly should facilitate the members to fix a gaze on Jesus Christ and develop unique family spirituality.

Liturgy is one of the important occasions which guide men and women to fix this gaze and live a personal spirituality. The Word of God which permeates the length, the width and the depth of liturgy becomes the force behind such spirituality. The celebrant and the participants should not ignore the presence of the Word of God in the liturgy and other Christian celebrations. Liturgy is not merely of rituals but rituals loaded with the Word of God. External rituals help the believers to create devotion and this is the first step. But the Word of God that comes along with the rituals gives an opening to the celebrant and the participants towards discipleship. Active celebration and active participation will ensure everyone to recognize this opening. Often one may fail to recognize this opening in liturgical celebration and limits himself/herself with mere

devotion. Mere devotion without making attempt to become an authentic disciple cannot help authentic *Jesus Culture*. The primary concern of the liturgical and other Christian celebrations is to help both the celebrant and the participants to become authentic disciples of Jesus Christ. Thus each believer contributes to *Jesus Culture* amidst us in order to transform the existing *Stress Culture*. It is the need of the hour that each Christian family fix gaze on Jesus Christ and develop its own unique and authentic family spirituality. Our attempt today to venture into this liturgical opening towards authentic discipleship will surely help the formation of tomorrow's generation which can appreciate and embrace faith in Jesus Christ still more eagerly.

Pope Francis is confident that, "Encountering Christ, letting themselves be caught up in and guided by his love, enlarges the horizons of existence, gives it a firm hope which will not disappoint. Faith is no refuge for the fainthearted, but something which enhances our lives" (*Lumen Fidei*, 53). Shall we try fixing a gaze on Jesus Christ to enhance our lives?

Dr T. Xavier Terrence

Editor