



DIOCESAN YOUTH APOSTOLATE
ST. THOMAS SYROMALABAR DIOCESE OF CHICAGO



"That they
may be one,
just as We are."
~John 17:11

YoY

YEAR OF YOUTH
Newsletter

February 2017 |
Issue 2

Authenticity with Self and Others

As we begin this new month, let's take a step back from our busy schedules, and quiet our hearts and minds to consider these few essential questions:

Who are we? Who do we want to be? Who has God called us to be?

Can we respond to each of these questions with the same answer? Our answers can help us determine how authentically we live our faith and lives.

This may be easier said than done—we may find it difficult to be truly honest with ourselves. The positions we hold as parishioners, CCD teachers, parish council members, altar servers, Eucharistic ministers, youth, young adults and priests, may unknowingly prompt us to live double lives. Soon, we may actually convince ourselves that we are the flawless faces that we present to others—which is dangerous because if we think we are perfect, then we have no need for the Mercy of God. Unless we learn to recognize and accept ourselves as the broken sinners that we are, we cannot truly experience the Love and Mercy of God.

On weekends, we dress in sarees and dhotis and follow the traditions of our sacred Eastern liturgy, unsure of where we fit between the incense and G'hantha prayers. On Monday morning we go back to "regular" life, unsure of

how our Sunday experiences relate to our American classrooms or offices. Sound familiar? Every generation in our community struggles with living in both Indian and American cultures. In trying to find a balance between the two, we naturally relate to different aspects of each culture, which may cause tension within our families and communities. Both cultures contain good and bad elements, but the beauty of Christianity is that it does not force us to completely embrace one culture or lifestyle. Rather, it encourages us to actively pursue the Truth and goodness in all things, and to integrate them into our worldview.

Culture may not be the only factor that hinders the authenticity of our faith. Sometimes there is a lack of genuine discussion in our communities regarding Church teaching and culture. We may wave away challenges to our faith, because it can be scary to think that we might be wrong! Perhaps this fear comes from our own misunderstandings, or a fear of being corrected, making us uncomfortable with these tough conversations. We, as a community, need to strive to *welcome* questioning, and engage in genuine conversations to facilitate meaningful and rewarding participation in the Church. Coming to a fuller understanding of our faith will help us take our traditions, cultures and egos and orient them towards our source and summit: the Holy Qurbana.

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Words of Wisdom from the Saints

Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati

"I urge you [to] approach the Communion table as often as you can. Feed on this bread of angels whence you will draw all the energy you need to fight [your] inner battles."

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The Love we experience in the Eucharist should become the foundation of our communities, bringing with it the freedom to question, to explore, to challenge and be challenged

Let us pray for the grace to grow and be grown, to be both laborers and branches in the vineyard of our Lord. Let us attempt to merge the "essential answers" to our "essential questions," to

seek our answers in the heart of God *and encounter ourselves in an encounter with Christ*. It is in our search for Him that we find our own selves; by dying to our own ideas of who we are, that we free ourselves to be who He has called us to be.

Peace be with you!

Suggested Activities of the Month

Youth, Young Adults + Older Adults

1. Try to go to Confession and/or Daily Mass at least once this week
2. Invest time in some cool spiritual reading – check out the YOY Facebook page for suggestions
3. Take some silent time this month and reflect on your interior life – especially in preparation for Lent!
4. Find a prayer buddy you can pray/chill with consistently! Ask your Regional Team for help with finding one

Achans

1. Work with youth team to increase availability of sacraments, particularly during this month
2. Make homily relevant to the themes of this month (honesty with self and others, freedom with the Church)
3. Encourage youth to question and challenge, and work to answer their questions and concerns

Kaikkarans, Parish Council members and other Parish Administrators

1. Prayerfully examine how you could serve the youth and young adults of your parish/mission
2. Initiate conversation with your parish's youth/young adults; offer your help and support for **their** initiatives
3. Spend at least one hour in this month in silent prayer or adoration for the youth of your parish/mission

Contact Us!



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