

Chapter 1

Christian Life: Meaning and Depth

"And it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal2:20).



Have you ever thought about the purpose of your life? What was the answer?

Is it important to search for the meaning and purpose of life and find answers?

The Uniqueness of the Christian Vision of Life

The uniqueness of the Christian vision of life is to find the Messiah as our Savior and God. Jesus is the only Savior. We can reach God only through Jesus. This vision of life stands the test of time and gives direction to life; Given below are some of the characteristics that highlights the uniqueness of the Christian vision of life:

1. A vision that conveys the fullness of divine revelation
2. Jesus is the way, the truth and life
3. All people are children of God
4. The Gospel view on human, universal and social dimensions are always relevant
5. Topics such as environmentalism, social equality, universal brotherhood, women's equality are all embedded in the teachings of Jesus
6. Transforms lives

Life: Different Philosophical Views

Humans have always been inquisitive about the meaning of life. What answers have human beings discovered so far to the question "What is Life?" (Greek Philosophy, Hindu Philosophy, Buddhist Philosophy, Charvaka Philosophy, Confucianism, Gandhism, Marxism etc.).

Apart from these do you have your own personal answers?-

What is

Philosophical View?

The thoughts that give meaning and purpose to life.

Greek Philosophy:

To grow as much as possible in goodness and knowledge.

Hindu Philosophy:

Spiritual Growth,
Salvation,
Self-Realisation.

Buddhist Vision:

Pursue endurance and attain enlightenment by following the Eightfold Path.

Charavaka

Philosophy:

Enjoy physical pleasures and live in momentary bliss.

Confucianism:

Work towards achieving the goal of Ethics, Social Responsibility and Public Welfare.

Gandhism:

Attain self-realisation through truth and non-violence

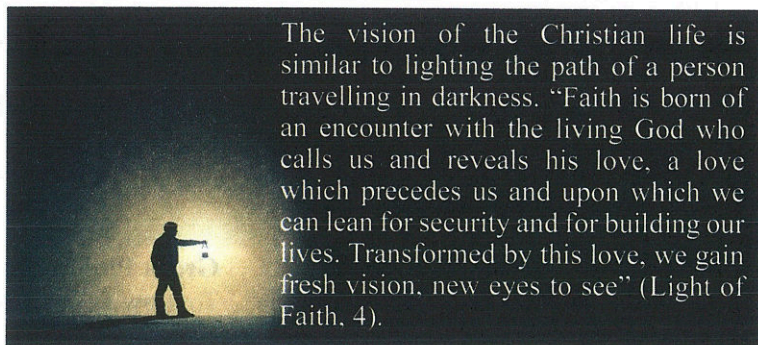
Marxism:

Through social revolution achieve equality and classless society

For life to be more meaningful, don't we need philosophical views?

People's quest for God has always led them to faith in God. Thus, different religions originated.

How Can I Seek the Vision of Christian Life?



The vision of the Christian life is similar to lighting the path of a person travelling in darkness. "Faith is born of an encounter with the living God who calls us and reveals his love, a love which precedes us and upon which we can lean for security and for building our lives. Transformed by this love, we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see" (Light of Faith, 4).

Christian faith begins with an encounter with Lord Jesus.

What is Christian Life?

It is a lifestyle guided by the Holy Spirit according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church.

How Can I Live a Christian Life?

1. Accept and proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, firmly believing in the Holy Trinity
2. Become a member of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ through Baptism
3. Live according to the Gospel of Jesus and the teachings of the Church
4. Lead a mission-oriented life
5. Lead a life with heaven as the ultimate destination
6. Become holy

1. Accept and Proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, Firmly Believing in the Holy Trinity

The foundation of Christian life is the faith in the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity is revealed to us by Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity and God's in carnation as man. No one can live as a Christian without accepting Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the Son of God, (Jn 1:12) and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



What is your ambition in life? How does it differ from your philosophical view of life? What is the relationship between the two? Discuss in class.



Why should I embrace the unique Christian vision of life?

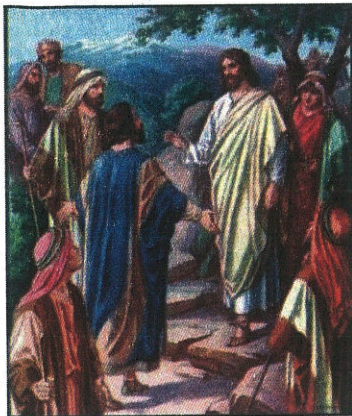


Write the Gospel verse that has influenced your life the most.

Uniqueness of People of God

"The founder of this people is God the Father. Its leader is Jesus Christ. Its source of strength is the Holy Spirit. The entry way to the People of God is Baptism. Its dignity is the freedom of the children of God. Its law is love. If this people remains faithful to God and seeks first the kingdom of God, it changes the world" (YOUCAT 125)

St. Peter's Proclamation of Faith



Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered

him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven" (Mt 16:13-17). Christians are those who confess this truth like St. Peter.



Zachaeus' Path of Salvation

"Today salvation has come to this house" (Lk19:9).



The Jailer's Path of Salvation

"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

2. Be Baptized and Become a Member of the Church, the Mystical Body of the Messiah

Baptism is the beginning and the foundation of Christian life. It is through Baptism that we become members of the Church.

Jesus to Nicodemus

"No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (Jn 3:5).

Jesus to His disciples

"Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk 16:15-16).



Can you share how your favorite saints found joy in Christian life?



What does it mean to accept and proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord?



Lk 19:1-9



In today's world, what are the platforms and opportunities for you to proclaim Jesus? Prepare posters.

Peter to the People

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

These verses make it clear that Baptism is necessary for salvation.

When we accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord, our life will be on the path of salvation.

3. Live According to the Gospel of Jesus and Teachings of the Church

Christian Life Guided by the Gospel

To lead a life according to the Gospel, guidance of Holy Spirit is necessary. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Mt 7:21). "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock" (Mt 7:24).

Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "...If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Mt 19:16-17). Our life will be blessed when we start living according to the words of Jesus.

Christian Life Guided by the Teachings of the Church

Jesus gave the responsibility of his Church to St. Peter and said, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Mt 16:18-19). This verse implies that it is appropriate and natural for us to obey the governing authorities of the Church (Rom 13:1-2).

4. Mission Oriented Life

Evangelization is a mission entrusted by Jesus and accepted by the Church (Mk 16:15). For the same reason every member of the church is a missionary.



What is the salvation given by Jesus?

Baptism and Membership of the Church

Baptism is the door to the Church. Through this, we become a part of the universal Church. As members of the Syro-Malabar Church we are part of the Catholic Church.



As members of the Syro-Malabar Church, discuss the salient features of your ecclesial life.



Acts 16:25-34



Have you come across any one, in real life or media, who leads a life influenced by the beatitudes? Share your experience.

Mission Work in Different Forms

We can participate in the missionary work of the Church in different ways.

1. Proclamation of the Gospel

To proclaim the Gospel to all those who have never known about Jesus Christ.

2. Life Witness and Conversation

Through life witness and conversation, interact lovingly and respectfully with everyone.

3. Through Charity

Through charity, we should strive to propagate spirit of Christian love without discrimination of caste, creed and religion (To the Nation, No 10, 11,12).

In brief, in all situations of life, it is our responsibility to witness Jesus and spread his Gospel.

Throughout the world, large number of priests, religious and lay persons of our Church are serving as missionaries. They contribute to the growth of the Christian community and society around them. Our missionaries work tirelessly in the fields of education, health care and poverty alleviation.

The sole objective of missionary activities is not just preaching the Gospel alone, it is also a life of prayer, sacrifice, charity and being a role model. St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Alphonsa are best examples of missionaries who lead a life of prayer and sacrifice. **It is our duty to pray for the missionaries and support their mission activities to the best of our abilities as missionaries of Jesus.**

5. Live With Heaven as Your Destination

Heaven is the ultimate goal of Christian life. "Heaven is God's milieu, the dwelling place of the angels and saints, and the goal of creation" (YOUCAT 52). The Lord's prayer taught by Jesus begins with the salutation, "Our Father in Heaven"



Mission

Mission is an effort to sow and nurture the Church by proclaiming the Gospel to people or community who have not yet known or have faith in Jesus.

Death is Not the End, Rather a Journey to Heaven

"He makes partners in his heavenly glorification those who have believed in Him and remained faithful to his will. Heaven is the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ"
(CCC 1026).

Heaven

"This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity - this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed - is called "heaven." Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness"
(CCC1024).

Symbols of Heaven in the Holy Bible: Life, Light, Peace, Wedding Celebrations, Father's Home, Heavenly Jerusalem, Paradise.

"But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'" (1 Cor 2:9).

Christian life is not just a personal relationship between an individual and Jesus. It is also a life in communion with the entire worshipping community and Jesus.

6. Become Holy

All are called to holiness: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48) (CCC 2013). God invites all of us to this perfection. When we unite with him, we also participate in his holiness. Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation "Rejoice and Be Glad", describes how to lead a holy life in today's world.

1. We are all called to be holy in our own way. Irrespective of who we are and where we are, our primary focus should be to lead a life filled with love.
2. **Holiness is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).**
3. Everyone can attain holiness. It doesn't deplete our energy, vitality or joy; instead, it nurtures them.
4. Through the beatitudes, Jesus presented a way of life that leads to holiness.
5. Perseverance, forgiveness and meekness are the signs of holiness.
6. The life of holiness is a constant battle against sin. This battle is beautiful because we consistently win with God's help.

Christian Life: A Way of Life

Christian life is a way of life. **Guided by the Holy Spirit, the faithful embrace Jesus as their Savior and Lord. They publicly affirm their faith, receive Baptism, and join the Church community. They commit to follow the teachings of Jesus and the Church, aiming to achieve salvation.**

To live in heaven is "to be with Christ" (CCC 1025).



What is holiness?



Form groups and identify role models from saints of the Indian Church and present them in the class with the help of technology.



What are the personal and social challenges one has to face today while proclaiming Jesus?



"Today's Saint in my perception" Make personal notes on the above topic and share it in the class.

They form a fellowship of believers, living a lifestyle that witnesses Jesus through their lives.



My Convictions

1. Philosophies provide meaning to life.
2. Christian vision of life is unique, goal oriented and timeless.
3. The Christian way of life is embracing Jesus as Savior and Lord and leading a heaven-oriented life in union with the Church.



Let Us Read the Word of God

The Gospel According to Matthew
Chapters 1-7



Let Us Illumine Our Hearts

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification”
(1 Thess 4:3).



My Resolution

In all circumstances of my life, I will proclaim
Jesus as my Saviour and Lord.