

## Lesson 6

# PERSONS WHO LIVED ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD



Once Bl. Virgin Mary went to see Jesus who preaching the Word of God. She was not able to reach her son because of the crowd. Some understood this and said to Jesus: "Then His mother and His brothers came to Him, but they could not reach Him because of the crowd. And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you'. But He said to them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it'" (Lk. 8:19-21).

## The Example of Mary

Bl. Virgin Mary is a person who received the Word of God and lived it in its fullness. From the moment she uttered 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy Word, the Word dwelt in her. She gave flesh to the Word who dwelt in her. The mother who nursed Jesus, surrendered herself to the will of God at the foot of the Cross too. After the death of Jesus, she lived with His disciples and encouraged them and prepared them to become witnesses to the Word, helping them to receive the Holy Spirit. Mary glorified God on earth and God glorified Mary in heaven.

## Persons Who Witnessed to the Word of God

The apostles proclaimed the word of God that was there from the beginning, that they had heard, that they had seen with their eyes, that we have looked at and touched with their hands (1 Jn. 1:1). They formed ecclesial communities through the proclamation of the Word of God. The Fathers of the Church helped the people of God to live according to the Word by giving authentic teachings and correct interpretations of the word of God. They fought with the sword of the word of God when there were crises against faith and communion in the Church. They suffered for the word of God and were martyred by the enemies of faith and entered heaven.



**Activity- 1.** Prepare a write up on missionary works of St. Francis in India and present it in class.

A great number of saints are in heaven. Those who tried to live the Word with a spirit of sacrifice and those who sacrificed their lives to witness to the word of God are in the group of saints. Each Christian is called to this great communion of saints.

## Life of the Saints



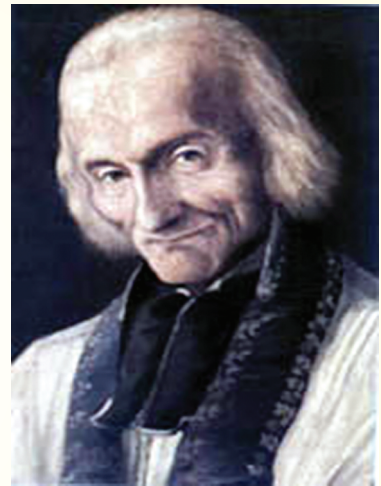
The church is the community of saints. Saints are those who received the word of God and lived heroically. The lives of saints inspire the members of the church to move forward courageously in the path of the word of God. According to the teachings of St. Paul all those who received baptism are saints. He addresses each church community as 'saints' (1 Cor. 1:2, 2 Cor. 1:1; Phil. 1:1). The Church officially announces saints, the persons who lived the Gospel message heroically.

"If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me". (Mt. 19 : 21). This word of God prompted St. Antony to give up worldly pleasures and riches and to take to solitude and do penance. The same word of God prompted St. Benedict and St. Francis Assisi to lead religious life. "What will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life or what will they give in return for their life?" This word of God inspired Francis Xavier, the son of a rich lord to give up wealth and positions and come to India as a great missionary. He is known as the second apostle of India.

St. Augustine heard an interior voice saying 'take and read'. When he took up the Bible and read the word what he got was this: "The night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus

Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (Rom. 13 : 12-14). St. Augustine realised that it was an invitation from God to turn away from his sinful ways became a changed man and turned to the path of goodness. He became one of the Fathers of the Church who gave authentic teachings in the Church. There are many saints in the Church who lived according to the word of God and led a blissful life. Saints like St. Francis Assisi, St. Clare, St. Antony of Paduva, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John Maria Vianni, St. Don Bosco, St. Pius X, St. Theresa of Lissieux, St. Maria Goretti and so many other saints enriched the Church by living the word of God. St. Chavara, St. Alphonsa, St. Euphrasia, St. Mother Theresa, Bl. Mariam Thresia, Bl. Kunjachan Thevarparambil and Bl. Devasahayam Pillai of India also attained holiness by living the word of God. There are so many others in the present Church like pastors / bishops and priests, religious, lay apostles, social workers etc. who are the living witnesses to the word of God.

**Activity -2.** Study and prepare a brief note on the dedicated life of St. Maria Goretti.



## **The Pastors**

Bishops and priests, the shepherds, are appointed to help the members of the Church to grow in holiness through pastoring, teachings based on the word of God and the administration of sacraments. Second Vatican council exhorts that “the priests who are to administer the word of God should read and meditate the word of God which they ought to teach others. (Priests 13). After appointing Timothy as the Pastor of the ecclesial community which he formed, St. Paul exhorts. “Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching” (1 Tim. 4:13). These words remind us of the responsibility of Pastors to receive the word of God, to live it and to proclaim it. St. John Vianny, who converted thousands of people of Ars who lived in tepidity and immorality by the proclamation of the word of God, confession and other sacraments and above all, by his own exemplary life, is the crowning glory of priestly missionary activity.

## The Religious

The religious are persons who are prompted by the Holy Spirit to take in a special way the vows of chastity, Poverty and obedience, to live the evangelical counsels. The most fundamental principle of religious life is to imitate Jesus in the Gospel. (Religious Life. P.C-2) Pope John Paul II through his apostolic teaching 'Vita Consecrata' (Religious Life) exhorts the religious to bear living witness to Jesus who is chaste, pure and obedient unto death. They bear witness to the holiness of the Church by living according to their state of life and moving towards the fulness of love. They inspire others to grow in holiness. There are many religious who go to the mission giving up pleasures, comforts, home and homeland to do mission work among those who have not known Jesus even today. The attempts that the religious make, imitating Jesus, the total liberator, to conscientise the ignorant and exploited and to keep them away from exploitation, have led some of them even to martyrdom.



## Lay Missionaries

The duty and right of the laymen for mission work originates from the same union with Christ that arises from baptism. They are called to bear witness to Christ in the world around and to offer spiritual sacrifices through all their activities. Only through the meditation of the word of God in the light of faith can one see God everywhere and at all times and to bear witness to Him (Lay Apostolate AA 3,4). They are obliged to sanctify the milieu they move in, events and experiences by the spirit of the Gospel. Saints like St. Monica, Bl. Frederick Ozanam, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Mumma Margret, the mother of St. Don Bosco, St. Geanna Beretta Jhanna Molla who gave up her life to save the child in the womb etc. teach us how lay people can become saints through lay missionary activities.



Bl. Frederick Ozanam

## Charitable Workers

The essence of the word of God is love. It is love that prompted God the Father to send His only Son, the Word itself, to the world. (Jn. 3:16). Those who read and meditate the word of God and desire to live accordingly will naturally be engaged in charitable work. Because charitable work is the expressions of love. The measuring rod to evaluate how much we have put into practice the word of God is charitable deeds. "I was hungry and you gave me food" (Mt. 25: 31-36) The word of judgement which God gives on the last judgement day is also clearly based on acts of love. The services of the Church like protecting the orphans and the widows and helping those who suffer spiritually and mentally, are living witnesses of the word of God. St. James (Jacob) reminds us that faith without action is dead (Jam. 2 : 14-17).

The word of God purifies us. Jesus said to his disciples: "You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you". (Jn. 15:3). Those who meditate on the word of God and live in its Spirit will become holy. Let us read and meditate on the word of God and live it in daily life and join the group of saints who lived the word of God.



**Let us Read the Word of God and Meditate**

Mk. 3:31-35

### **A Word of God to Remember**

“But He said to them: ‘My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it’ (Lk. 8 : 21).

### **Let us Pray**

Jesus, our Lord, just like the saints who attained holiness through a life of service, help us to attain holiness through a life of hard work.

### **My Decision**

I will constantly strive to grow in holiness through a life obeying the word of God.

### **Let us think with the Church**

All Christians, whatever be the state of life or circumstances are called to attain the fulness of love and Christian life. This holiness encourages us to live in a more human way in society. Christians should follow the footsteps of Jesus by seeking the will of the Father in all things and dedicating themselves totally for the glory of God and service of humanity. (L.G. 40)

### **Let us find out the answers**

1. How did Mary become a model of a life lived in accordance with the word of God ?
2. How did the apostles and Fathers of the Church become witnesses to the word of God ?
3. Saints lived the word of God heroically Illustrate.
4. What is the influence of the word of God in religious life ?
5. How does the word of God influence charitable work ?