

INNER PURIFICATION  
Purification of the heart  
Teaching for Oct.5<sup>th</sup> Contemplative Prayer Session

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Introduction.

Reflecting on the Lord's Prayer in the previous sessions we have already seen the first two stages in Contemplative prayer. There we learned that receiving the infinite love of the Heavenly Father by celebrating the gift of Jesus is the first stage. We learned how to do it in a practical way: As a little child in its mom's bosom, sitting in the lap of God the Father I should enjoy the fondness and caressing of the Father, external signs of His incomparable love, manifested in giving his beloved Son Jesus to me. On accepting Jesus as my Savior and Lord I should immerse in praise and thanksgiving in gratitude for that great gift and entrust all my cares and worries to God with full trust in His promise: "*He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him?*" ( Rom. 8:32).

We also learned that this practical "method" in which we experience God as our "Abba" and Jesus as our Lord is not an imagination or intellectual speculation but a reality because it is precisely for that, that the Holy Spirit dwells in us ( cfr. I Cor. 6: 1!9& Rom. 8:26-27). According to the Sacred Scripture what the Holy Spirit does in our prayer are mainly two things: Firstly He helps us to experience the tremendous love of the Father God: "*For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father! The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..."*" ( Rom. 8: 15—17; see also Rom. 5:5). Secondly, the Holy Spirit helps us to accept Jesus as our Lord: "*He shall praise me and bring me great honor by showing you my glory*" ( Jn. 16:14); "*No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the holy Spirit*" ( I Cor. 12:3). Therefore, this experiencing of God as Abba and Jesus as Lord is possible for all of us because all are invested with the same Holy Spirit.

Last Wednesday we reflected on the second stage in prayer, namely, asking God's forgiveness that comes from genuine repentance, which is generated from the experience of God's infinite love. We used two examples from the Scripture to explain it—prophet Isaiah and St. Peter. Both of them felt a intense repentance on account of their God-experience. Obviously what they experienced was God's infinite love for them. It was such a shaking experience that made them compare their love for God with the love God had for them. It led them to a profound repentance that drove Isaiah to utter: "Woe me I am lost" and Peter to weep bitterly. I hope that since the last session all of you have had an extraordinary encounter with Loving God to the point of weeping bitterly for your past unfaithfulness and ingratitude. I have been practising this prayer for the last 15 years ; but from last Wednesday night I began to experience a far, far deeper repentance and thereby a greater closeness to God. If there is anybody who didn't have this experience, please try once again.

Today's theme is the Inner Purification—the 4<sup>th</sup> stage in prayer. But before we switch on to that, we need to reflect a little bit on the third stage of prayer which we couldn't complete last Wednesday. It is about reconciling with our fellow beings.

### **Reconciliation with others—3<sup>rd</sup> stage in prayer**

In fact in the order of Lord's Prayer, reconciliation with our fellow beings precedes reconciliation with God. Besides, it is a pre-requisite for our reconciliation with God: *"forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"* (Mt. 6:12). Hence it is of paramount importance to forgive during prayer everyone who has hurt or offended us.

Jesus has emphasized this aspect of prayer several times in his teaching on prayer else-where. For instance: *"Therefore I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours. When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions"* (Mk. 11:24-25). *"If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift"* (Mt. 5:23-24).

Again, Jesus employed a very long parable to highlight the point that our sins will never be forgiven even if we had deep repentance unless we forgive our debtors generously. In that parable, Jesus introduces a king and a servant. The servant owes the king 10,000 talents. One talent is worth 15 years work. So a debt of 10,000 talents == 150,000 years of hard toil or 150,000 years' wages or salary! It is an impossibly huge amount for the slave to pay back. As he could not pay, his king ordered him to be sold with his wife and children and all that he had and the debt. But the servant, falling on his knees implored: "have patience with me, and I will pay you everything". Out of pity for that servant, the king released him and gave up the debt. But this same servant who has received the annulment of an enormous debt sends his fellow servant to jail over a small amount of one hundred dollars or so! Hearing of this hard-heartedness the king cried out thus: *"You, wicked servant, because you begged I forwent all your debts; weren't you obliged to show mercy to your fellow servant like wise? And he handed him over to the prison guards to keep him in the prison until all his debts were repaid"*. (Mt 18: 33-34) *And Jesus concluded that parable with the warning, "So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart."* (Mt 18: 35)

Jesus wants to bring out the imperative need of forgiving others offences by highlighting the incomparable difference between the gravity of our offences against God and of those committed by others against us. Our sins against God are as huge as 10,000 talents, and our fellowmen's offences against us are as small as 100 dollars. Because, the seriousness of an offence depends on how much love the offended person had for the offender. Thus, our sins are as big as 10,000 talents because they are done against infinitely loving God. Whereas, even the greatest offence on the part of our fellow beings can be no more than 100 dollars because we the offended are highly sinful and selfish whereas God is untainted and unfurnished. And, since God has forgiven all our sins totally and unconditionally in Jesus — God forgave the 10,000 talents— for that very reason, we are under an obligation to forgive our offenders, no matter how serious their offences may be.

Therefore, in the third stage of contemplative prayer, which follows deep repentance and pleading for God's mercy, prayer of giving forgiveness to others is quite pertinent. It, in fact, boosts up our intimacy with God in prayer because it pleases God immensely. And it gives us much joy and relief in getting healed all the wounds in our hearts that were caused by alienation from our offenders.

### A practical method—the prayer of giving forgiveness:

As you sit in the lap of the Heavenly Father, pleading for his mercy, envisage the crucified Christ in front of you, bidding you to forgive your offender.

Reflecting on Jesus' suffering and death for your offender, realize how precious he/she is for the Lord and how much compassion and love the Lord has for him/her.

Considering Jesus' request to you to forgive him/her, joyfully forgive him/her remembering Jesus' ever memorable words: *'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'* ( Mt. 25:40). (In spirit) look at the face of your offender lovingly and tell him, 'Brother/ Sister, I forgive you wholeheartedly; may you forgive me completely'.

(In spirit) embrace and kiss him/her with as much love Jesus has for that person. Bless him/her whole-heartedly. Your blessing will make a great difference in his/her life.

Pray for him/her as fervently and sincerely as you do when you pray for one whom you love most dearly.

Meet your reconciled brother/sister as soon as possible to celebrate Christ's love with him/her.

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## Fourth stage: Purification of heart

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In elucidating the Contemplative Prayer, Catechism of the Catholic Church says: "Contemplative prayer is a covenant established by God within our hearts. Contemplative Prayer is a communion in which the Holy Trinity conforms man, the image of God "to his likeness"( 2713).

This description gives us a clue to the purpose and essence of the contemplative prayer—transformation of our hearts to the likeness of God. Since prayer is a communion of the soul with the infinitely Holy God, the transformation of our inner being is a natural outcome. But it depends largely on how we work on that, making use of the grace available. Hence, the 4<sup>th</sup> stage of prayer is a spiritual exercise aiming at the transformation of our hearts.

Transforming our hearts is actually the response from God to our deep repentance. It is God's most effective way of hearing our prayer to him to save us from our sins. It is needless to say that what we need is not mere forgiveness of the past sins alone but also the grace to keep away from those sins all through our life. And it is possible only if our hearts are purified because evil heart is teasingly susceptible to sin. Jesus' words make it very clear: *"He summoned the crowd again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile" ( Mk. 7:14-15, 21-23). " You brood of vipers, how can your speech be good when you are evil? For words flow out of what fills the heart. A good man's speech reveals the rich treasures within him. An evil-hearted man is filled with venom, and his speech reveals it" ( Mt. 12: 34-35)*

This significant revelation of Jesus explains why we happen to repeat some sins again and again, sometimes all through our lives, in spite of sincere repentance and frequent confessions.

Unless we make a conscious effort to purify our heart, the source of all sin, we won't be liberated from them.

It is to be noted that the word "heart" used in the Bible really refers to mind or will( cfr. Dictionary of the Bible by Mckenzie). Therefore by "heart" we mean the core of our being, namely our conscience and mind ( the unconscious, subconscious and conscious mind).

As a doctor first tries to understand how much a particular organ is damaged before he starts any treatment for it, we need to know first to what extent our "heart" is evil before we start praying for its purification.

### God created man's heart as a God-centered heart

When God created man, God created him in such a way that man's heart was filled with nothing but goodness. In other words his heart was filled with God, the source of goodness. This is what is understood when we say: "*God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him*" ( Gen.1:27). It means that man's heart was after the heart of God. He was totally God-centered and selflessly loving. And it was God's laws that were the ruling principles of his life. Hence, all the convictions and values in his conscience were God's thoughts and God-given laws only. Eve's answer to Satan's question, before she succumbed to the temptation testifies to this: "*The woman answered the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die'"* ( Gen.3:2-3). Yes, Eve was fully convinced beyond any doubt that eating the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden was wrong. She even knew God's desire about that. So she added one more thing to what God had actually commanded: "*The woman answered the serpent: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die"*"

### Man made his heart self-centered

By disobeying God what Eve did was making herself *the lord* of her heart. "*The instant you eat it you will become like God*"—it was these words of Satan that gave Eve the audacity to eat the forbidden fruit. It was very attractive because it was a self-oriented promise. In fact, Satan's temptation was to dethrone God and enthrone her own self in her heart. Satan used the best strategy to make man fall because he knew very well from his own experience that an attempt to enthrone self will automatically lead to the total destruction of the person( You said in your heart: "I will scale the heavens; Above the stars of God I will set up my throne; I will take my seat on the Mount of Assembly, in the recesses of the North. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will be like the Most High!" Yet down to the nether world you go to the recesses of the pit! Is. 14:13-15. —See, how this attitude of Satan led to his eternal ruin!).

As soon as Eve obeyed Satan and enthroned herself in her heart, there occurred a total change in her sense of values and evaluation of realities. Everything was evaluated on the basis of how much it is beneficial to satisfy her self. The fruit that was so evil till then began to look *very inviting*: "*But the serpent said to the woman: ." The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it"* ( Gen. 3:5-6). See the disastrous effect of dethroning God and enthroning self! Black seems white and white seems black!!

### Self-centered heart is a wicked heart

"*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the*

*air, for I am sorry that I have made them” ( Ge. 6:5-7). These words of the Scripture show that the very moment man threw out Gods laws from his heart and enthroned his own values, man’s heart became wicked. It became the breeding ground of all kinds of evil imaginations and evil thoughts because God alone is the source of good. Before God’s infinite wisdom this degradation of man’s heart was so appalling that God’s heart was grieved to the extent of feeling sorry for creating man and thinking of blotting out man from the earth altogether.*

#### The Sacred Scripture speaks on the wickedness of the heart

*“ The heart is the most deceitful thing there is, and desperately wicked. No one can really know how bad it is! Only the Lord knows! ( Jer. 17:9).*

*“...All these nations, like the whole house of Israel, are uncircumcised in heart” ( Jer. 9:25).*

*“Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am cleansed of my sin"?( Proverb 20:9).*

*“ These people claims to worship me, but their words are meaningless, and their hearts are somewhere else” ( Isaiah. 29:13 GN Version).*

*“From the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are what defile a person”( “Mt. 15:19-20).*

*“Cleanse your heart of evil, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved. How long must your pernicious thoughts lodge within you? “ ( Jer. 4:14).*

#### Evil heart brings forth evil words and deeds

Though sin in the heart may seem to us as harmless, in reality it is very dangerous because it produces evil words and deeds though it may be dormant for quite a some time. See the analogy Jesus used to explain this truth: *“Either declare the tree good and its fruit is good, or declare the tree rotten and its fruit is rotten, for a tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you say good things when you are evil? For from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things ( Mt.12:33-35).*Here, what Jesus indicates by calling his audience ‘brood of vipers’ is that we are bad trees badly in need of renewal of heart and that if we continue to be bad trees we canl produce only evil.

The tragedy of King David illustrates this point well. He lived a very chaste life for long. He never knew that he was a sinful man until all on a sudden lust overpowered him. “Whoever thinks he is standing secure should take care not to fall” ( I Cor. 10:12)—Are not these words of Paul a warning for all of us who do not give enough importance to purifying our hearts? But after his unexpected fall David learned the fact that at heart he was sinful and it was that sinfulness of the heart that caused him to sin in a favorable situation: *“True, I was born guilty, a sinner, even as my mother conceived me” ( Ps. 51:7).* Hence changed his mode of prayer itself he began to pray thus: *“A clean heart create for me, God” ( Ps. 51:12).* By this prayer he was admitting that his was not a clean heart.

The grievousness of the sins of the heart is very clear from Jesus’ words: *“You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has*

*already committed adultery with her in his heart” ( Mt. 5:27-28). Here, Jesus almost equals the adultery in the heart to the physical act of adultery.*

#### Attitude of the heart—more important than the outward actions

In his exposition of the moral principles Jesus always emphasized the importance of the heart—its motivations and attitudes. *“Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father. When you give alms, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets to win the praise of others. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward” ( Mt. 6:1-2).*

*All the churches come to know that I am the searcher of hearts and mind” ( Rev. 2:23).*

The reason why Jesus was so antagonistic to the Pharisees, who were considered highly righteous in the eyes of the public was that they were sinful in heart though righteous outwardly. Jesus told them about this very plainly: *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth. Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing” ( Mt. 23:27-28).*

#### Sinfulness of the heart is the greatest slavery

St. Paul who knew the mind of Christ speaks very clearly about the dreadful result of the sin within, sin in the heart: *“I am carnal, sold into slavery to sin. What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I concur that the law is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me...For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want. Now if (I) do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me....Oh, what a terrible predicament I'm in! Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord!. He has set me free” ( Rom. 7:14-15, 19-20, 24-25).* Here, what St. Paul exposes and proves by his own experience is that as long as we do not take special care to purify our heart we will never be totally free from sin in spite of all the good decisions and frequent confessions we make.

#### Jesus sets us free from the slavery of the heart's sinfulness

The greatest good news that the world ever heard is that Jesus is powerful enough to give mankind freedom from the sinfulness of the heart. At the end of the above given text St. Paul goes on to say: *“Oh, what a terrible predicament I'm in! Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord!. He has set me free” ( Rom. 8:25).*

This is exactly what Jesus meant when he said: *“That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” ( Jn. 8:24).* *“Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin” ( Jn. 8:34).* *“If the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free” ( Jn. 8:36).*

#### Renewing the heart--the essence of the salvation

The prophets identified the salvation that Jesus gives as giving a new heart: *“I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts” ( Ezek. 36:26).. “But in the land of their captivity they shall have a change of heart; they shall know that I, the LORD, am their God. I will give them hearts, and heedful ears( Baruch. 2:30-31).* *“One heart and one way I will give them, that they may fear me always, to their own good and that of their children after them. I will make with them an eternal*

*covenant, never to cease doing good to them; into their hearts I will put the fear of me, that they may never depart from me” ( Jer. 32:39-40).*

#### Giving a new heart means, first and foremost, cleansing the heart of all idols

By giving a new heart what God means primarily is cleansing our hearts from idols. Ezekiel tells this clearly “*I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts” ( Ez. 36:24-25).* St. James says that cleansing of the heart is what matters in piety: “*Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you of two minds” ( James. 4:8)*

What is the most dangerous idol in our heart? It is nothing but our self itself. Our self is the greatest idol in our heart. Our enjoyment, our satisfaction, our taste, our freedom, our opinion, our authority etc, etc are in the fore front. Even in our practice of faith and in our spirituality this craving for self is predominant. Even in spiritual matters our priorities are totally self-centered: we choose what we **like** than what God wants us to. We do many good things, but in the ultimate analysis they are meant to satisfy the yearnings of our own self not for the sake of God. Even though our love for others may seem to be selfless concern for their well-being, in the final analysis, it betrays selfishness. It means, we love them so that they may love us, they may like us, they may return it someday or other. ! If we analyze each of our actions we can find our self behind everything we do. Hence, cleansing of the heart primarily means dethroning of the self. This is what exactly Jesus laid down as a condition to become his followers: “*Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” ( Mt. 16:24).*

#### Giving a new heart means, secondly, filling our hearts with God .

After uprooting the idols from our hearts what God does is that He enthrones himself in our hearts: “*But this is the covenant I will establish with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds and I will write them upon their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people” ( Heb. 8:10).* It is this that St. Peter urges to do: “*In your hearts reverence Christ as Lord” ( I Pet. 3:15—Revised Standard Version).*

#### To be cleansed by Jesus’ blood and to be filled with the Word of God

Jesus shed his blood precisely to cleanse our hearts. “*The blood of his Son Jesus cleanses us from all sin” ( I Jn. 1:7).* When we understand sin basically as sin of the heart, we will understand that the meaning of the verse referred to is more of the cleansing of the heart than of our outward acts.

Once, the heart is cleansed by the holy Blood, it is to be adorned with the word of God. About this God says thus: “*But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts” ( Jer. 31:33).* It means after purging our heart of all impurities, God will re-plant his laws on our hearts once again as he did in the beginning when he created our first Parents.

#### It is by praying that our hearts are purified.

It is absolutely certain that by Jesus’ death our hearts are purified once and for all: “*He died under God’s judgment against our sins, so that he could rescue us from constant falling into sin and make us his very own people, with cleansed hearts and real enthusiasm for doing kind things for others” ( Titus. 2:14—Catholic Living Bible version).* But this purification becomes ours only when

we personalize it by praying for it (through the merits of Jesus' holy Blood). King David is an example for this. In his prayer of repentance David constantly begged for purifying his heart: “*Sprinkle me with the cleansing blood and I shall be clean again. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow...Don't keep looking at my sins—erase them from your sight. Create in me a new, clean heart, O God, filled with clean thoughts and right desires...Then I will sing of your forgiveness...*” ( Ps. 51: 7, 9-10, 15). He who had the grace to foresee the details of Jesus' dolorous suffering and death might have also foreseen the power of Jesus' blood to purify human hearts!

Therefore the fourth stage in our contemplative prayer is a fervent prayer for the cleansing of the heart. We need to pray for the cleansing of all the components of our *heart*, our core--conscience, unconscious mind, sub-conscious mind and conscious mind.

### **Purification of the Conscience**

It is an undeniable fact that the inducements for our actions are the convictions in the conscience. And it is equally true that many of the values of this self-centered and evil-ridden world have influenced the shaping of our conscience. That is why we justify many of our non-Christian ways by saying that it is our culture. Let us think over a few channels of our non-Christian thinking and how they are opposed to the Word of God:

HUMAN THINKING	WORD OF GOD.
‘I shall not press my children or family to be truly religious because I need to respect their freedom’	<i>“ I want you to be quite uncompromising in teaching all this, so that those who now believe in God may keep their minds constantly occupied in doing good works” ( Titus 3:8)</i>
‘Seeking my will is part of my freedom and necessary for self- fulfillment’	<i>“ Who ever wishes to come after me must deny himself...” ( Mt. 16:24)</i>
‘It is money that makes life happy and comfortable’	<i>“Take care to guard against all greed, for life does not consist in possessions, even when someone has more than he needs” – Jerusalem Bible( Lk. 12: 15)</i>
‘The money I make by my hard work is for meeting my needs’	<i>“ God said to the rich fool, ‘you fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared , to whom will they belong? Thus will it be for the one who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich in what matters to God” (Lk.12: 20--21 )</i>

<p>‘There is nothing wrong in availing of all the possible comforts and luxuries for the relaxation of the body’</p>	<p>“ <i>Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me</i>”( Mt. 16:24) ; “<i>I punish my body and bring it under control, to avoid any risk that, having acted as herald for others , I myself may be disqualified</i>”( I Cor. 9:27)</p>
<p>If I take care not to miss the Mass I can use the rest of the time on Sundays to satisfy my whims and fancies’</p>	<p>“ <i>If you refrain from breaking the Sabbath, from taking your own pleasure on my holy day, ...if you honor it by abstaining from travel, from seeking your own pleasure and from too much talk, then you will find true happiness in Yahweh, and I shall lead you in triumph over the heights of the land</i>” (Isaiah. 58:13---Jerusalem Bible)</p>
<p>‘Since I am a grown- up person and I have my own family and responsibilities, I am not bound to look after my parents’</p>	<p>“<i>My son, take care of your father when he Is old; grieve him not as long as he lives</i>” (Sirach 3:12)</p>
<p>‘If it doesn’t exceed the limit drinking is ok’</p>	<p>“<i>Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God</i>” ( I Cor. 6:10) “ <i>If they drink they may forget their duties and be unable to give justice to those who are oppressed</i>”( Proverbs 31:5)</p>
<p>‘The number of my children should be determined by economical and social factors.’</p>	<p>“<i>Take wives and beget sons and daughters... There you must increase in number , not decrease</i>”( Jer. 29:6)</p>
<p>‘ Enjoying some sexual pleasure at times is not anything bad, provided major sexual acts are avoided; it may be even helpful to lessen the mental stress and after all it is part of human nature’</p>	<p>“<i>The body, however, is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body</i>” ( I Cor. 6: 13)</p>
<p>‘The manner of clothing is to be left for individual freedom and weather conditions’</p>	<p>“<i>Women are to wear suitable clothes and to be dressed quietly and modestly</i>” ( I Tim 2:9)</p>

‘I need not worry about other peoples’ poverty because I won’t be able to help every one who needs help’	“ <i>Refuse no kindness to those who have a right to it, if it is in your power to perform it</i> ” ( Proverb 3:27) “ <i>Almsgiving saves from death and purges every kind of sin</i> ” ( Tobit 12:9)
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It is not possible to live a purely spiritual and moral life in this consumeristic society’	“ <i>You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of people who are crooked and stubborn. Shine out among them like beacon lights holding out to them the Word of Life</i> ” ( Philip 2:15—16)
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The above examples show the convictions of our conscience are contrary to the ways of God. It is to be remembered well how Jesus rebuked the Pharisees who followed their traditions and culture instead of strictly following God’s values: “*You have nullified the word of God for the sake of your tradition. Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy about you when he said: This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.*” ( Mt. 15:6-9). Therefore, it is highly essential to replace our human values by Christian values. This can be done only if we pray for the purification of the conscience by the blood of Christ and filling it with the gospel values by constant reading and meditation of the Word of God. This is the essence of prayer needed for the purification of conscience. We may need to do this prayer every day for quite a long period of time because the worldly values have already taken deep roots in our hearts over the past years.

### **Purification of the Unconscious mind**