



# Jesus Youth Jubilee Conference

28th Dec. 2010 to 1st Jan. 2011, Rajagiri College of Engineering & Technology, Kakkanad, Ernakulam, Kerala

## Preparation Material

[The celebration of the International Year of Youth in 1985 occasioned a youth conference in Cochin called 'Jesus Youth '85' and later that became the name of a wide and varied movement. Now we celebrate the Jubilee of that event, that name and that of a fast growing movement. The members of the movement are getting ready to come together for the Jubilee Conference to be held at the end of December 2010 and the following set of reflections are intended as a help for a meaningful participation in it. This could be read and reflected on personally and also read and discussed in cells and groups. In this Advent season, a revisiting of this text and questions, reading and reflecting related bible verses and praying as well as fervently interceding for a fruitful Conference will transform our participation into a grace filled pilgrimage.]

## As the graces of the Jubilee overflow

As the graces of the Jubilee overflow and we reflect on what the Lord has done in the life of each of us as individuals and also in and through the Jesus Youth movement in its long journey, our hearts turn to the Lord with gratitude and praise. "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" (Ps 126:3). It becomes yet another opportunity to recapture the sentiments of praise which is the core strength of the movement. With Mother Mary we sing out in joy, "The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name" (Lk 1:49).

### 1. Jubilee is about yesterday, today and tomorrow

The Jubilee of the movement is a historic moment for each of us to gratefully turn to the Lord, the Lord of all ages, who works in and through 'the little steps in time'. In the movement we speak of the promise of the Lord from its initial days, that He would lead this little flock 'step by step' to greener and larger pastures. And we look back and reflect on how the Lord has led us from one measure of depth to another, to this moment of 'kairos' that would fill us with 'power from on high' (Lk 24:49) and send us forth with added resolve for greater labour and harvest in His vineyard. Our hearts resonate with the words of Pope John Paul II, one of the key inspirations of our movement, at the conclusion of the Great Jubilee that this becomes an opportunity "to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm and to look forward to the future with confidence".

The Old Testament command on the Jubilee (Leviticus 25) helped a person root one's personal spirituality firmly in the wider community and longer history, providing a strong antidote to what could become a self-centred religion. Among its many dimensions, mending the past formed a key element of Jubilee. For us in a very special way this could mean paying back our debts of words and deeds, and forgiving others their debts. Jesus' example of underscoring forgiveness in prayer, life, actions and teachings must be our guiding light. In our lives forgiveness can be very difficult. It is important to remember that we may build up a Christian lifestyle and missionary dynamics that completely avoid the chances of hurt as well as the need for forgiveness, resulting in groups and ministries highly efficient, yet shallow in love and holiness.

*Jubilee is a time of praise, a time to count blessings: How have I been blessed by the Lord? The Jubilee of the movement helps me examine: How faithful have I been to the initiative by the Lord? And have I walked with Him the whole way, being led step by step? And when the Lord asks me to "Go," will I be ready, and joyfully move ahead? And what are the areas and relationships that require correction and forgiveness on my part?*

## 2. Jubilee calls me to put my house in order

This surely is the acceptable time, the time of special grace for us. The Gospel is full of instances of people opening their lives to Jesus or calling upon Him when He was passing by. This milestone of the movement can be a moment of transformation for each of us if we too turn to the Lord in a meaningful way. There is certainly a special area in my life that I need to open up and there the Lord is waiting to pour in His special Jubilee grace.

Jesus Youth has been for most of us a challenge towards a deeper walk in the Spirit that followed a very personal encounter with the Lord. That new start opened me up to a whole new heaven and earth, a fresh joy of living and a transforming novel purpose in life to live for and even risk my life for. May be I have abandoned this love I had at first (Rev 2:4). This is a time to renew and relive my encounter, especially to put off the old nature which belongs to the former manner of life and instead be renewed in the Spirit (Eph 4: 22, 23). When I gave up what was mine, the Lord filled my emptiness with His riches. My walk in the Spirit has been enriched by these gifts of the Spirit that made me a joyful and fruitful Child of God. Today the Lord invites me to renew the once found yet lost riches in the Spirit in my life.

To take a close walk with Him daily and also to grow little by little in loving Him with their whole heart, soul and strength becomes the joyful purpose in the life of all active Christians. For a person who has discovered a new life in the Spirit, the movement becomes a nursery of discipleship, offering an itinerary of holiness. It proposes certain "pillars" that facilitate this active walk with the Lord and with one another. While Jubilee is a call to return to my original portion (Lev 25:10, 13), it is also a time to rebuild my spiritual foundations. In order to be perfect like the heavenly Father (Mt 5: 48) and grow to the stature of the fullness Christ (Eph 4:13), there is an urgent need to sit at His feet daily, to search the Word diligently and to have fellowship of the Spirit with all eagerness.

*A way of renewing my 'first love' is to revisit the significant 'return to the Lord' in my life that transformed me. Consider what I gave up and how the Lord specially loved and blessed me. Have I been faithful to the Spirit given gifts and talents and nurtured them? This is also a time to check and mend my fidelity to the six pillars.*

## 3. Jubilee is for a renewed spirit of communion

It is a time, says the Leviticus text, when each of you shall return to your family (25: 10). Nurturing warm friendships in Christ, frequently gathering in houses of prayer and sitting down in cells of communion, characterise the ordinary life of the movement. Moving from a mere joyful experience to a fervent commitment for the Kingdom becomes the mark of Discipleship and this Jubilee should be a time for me to build steadfastness in my fellowship. As the demands of duty, leisure and relationship vie with one another for our time and attention, so as not to neglect this fundamental requirement for our inner life and mission (Heb 10:25), the words of John Paul II should become our watchword, "To make the Church the home and the school of communion: that is the great challenge facing us in the millennium which is now beginning, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and respond to the world's deepest yearnings" (NMI, 43).

My participation in a Jesus Youth fellowship starts with my personal decision followed by a promise to the group. A genuine Catholic attitude of readiness to be under authority (Lk 7:8) and not merely follow my personal whims and nice feelings is essential to a firm commitment in a fellowship. Building community is fashioning a Christian lifestyle, committed relationships and a counter culture, devoutly observing the little things of life faithfully (Lk 16:10). The Jubilee should be a repeat call for me as well as for the whole movement to set our minds on this "millennium challenge" of attending to little things with a view to building the big dream of Christ.

*Spending quality time with and receiving life guidance from mature and committed Christians is vital to a joyful and fruitful living. How can I ensure this? Then again, have I found a Christian friendship circle to belong to? By way of time, concern and commitment, how central is this in my life?*

#### **4. Jubilee is for greater fidelity to the life in the Body of Christ**

'A little light brightening the wider Church' has been a distinctive image of the movement, as Jesus Youth is a rich fruit as well as a potent leaven of the life of the Church. With its special call to be 'at the service of the Church', the Jesus Youth movement constantly endeavours to be a portal to many of the new generation for an active life in the Body of Christ. To be an active Jesus Youth is to have a fervent sacramental life, to be alive in the local Church community and to contribute one's share to its pastoral concerns. Jubilee that does 'proclaim liberty throughout the land' (Lev 25:10) should be a time to enliven our commitment to the spirit and life of the Body of Christ.

Many of our friends in the movement have found their special call and mission in the local Church and some have even decided to go to the ends of the earth, responding to the urgent appeal of the Universal Pastor to 'go' (Mt 28:19). And Jubilee should be a call of the Lord for each and everyone in the movement 'to think with the Church' and to sharpen the tools to build with the Church.

*How frequent am I in my Eucharistic participation and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Do I actively contribute to my parish life and also to the life of the wider Church? Have I taken time to learn about and love the Church and her teachings? How can I build a youth ministry in the area that I live which will actively participate in the pastoral life of the Church?*

#### **5. Jubilee will set us on fire in Christ**

Jubilee, for every one of us, is a time of renewed proclamation of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 4:18) and sharing of the freedom with everyone (Lev 25: 10, 54), or in other words, a time of renewal of the movement's missionary commitment. Over the years Jesus Youth has been led, little by little, into specific styles and areas of sharing the Good News and building a Christian culture. Young people of all kinds and their varying situations have evoked the deep interest of the movement, bringing Jesus and His message to them. Different youth categories, professions, media, migration and numerous other related issues have all been receiving keen missionary focus in the movement. A variety of formation approaches have developed in the movement serving the highly challenging need to lend motivation and skill to reach out and build.

Each one of us has received abundantly from the Lord, from the Church and from this our fellowship, but how much have we given and continue to give? This is a moment for a fresh resolve to launch out and persevere in what we begin. In the movement we have innumerable examples of dedicated missionaries who are zealous in their path of prayer and so very devoted to the life of mission, spending their time, talent and resources for the Kingdom. Modern life and technology have gifted us with a variety of gadgets and conveniences. This is a good time to examine if they have facilitated or blunted our mission zeal for the Lord's Kingdom.

Jubilee especially calls us to bring 'the Good News to the poor'. Our priority for as well as proximity to the poor and the suffering are indicators of the genuineness of our Christian commitment. Has my walk with the movement helped me to progress in my fidelity to the cause of those who are closest and dearest to the Lord?

*How much time do I regularly set apart for the work of the Lord? My life and circumstances have changed, but have they helped or stifled my Christian mission? How faithful have I been in continuing what I begin? What will I do for the needy and the poor? What change will the Jubilee bring in my life especially in the area of my commitment to mission?*

#### **6. Jubilee - we celebrate together**

The whole Jesus Youth movement has been walking in the path of the Jubilee during the past one year and is now looking forward to its concluding phase in the grand Jubilee Conference. How do we meaningfully participate in the Conference? More than a casual participation in a 'programme', a deep thirst to be surprised

by the Lord has to be the right predisposition to attend the Conference. And don't forget that some form of cross or suffering goes before any significant meeting with the Lord. So may be in these days, or even during the Conference if I have to go through "the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps 23:4) I will not be surprised, but a deep planted hope of the Lord's hand working towards a new creation will surely 'comfort me'. To ask, to seek and to knock, not for a blessing for my personal benefit, but to be baptised with a new baptism of fire of the zeal of the Lord will be my eager desire. When you come to any Jesus Youth programme you don't come to receive, but to give; you don't come to listen to speakers, but to witness a glorious vision taking bodily shape or a loving community in its dynamic formation.

As you come to the Jubilee Conference look forward to deep moments of praying in the Spirit, intense moments when the Lord will speak to you, meeting very dynamic and genuine Jesus Youth missionaries, getting to know the beauty of the Church today and what the Lord wants it to be in the days to come. You will surely see a very different Jesus Youth movement there; you will witness a dream of what the Lord wants Jesus Youth to be in the days to come and more than all this you will receive a deep call to be a missionary for Him with a new sense of mission.

*These days, what is it that I want to see happening in me? What preparation will I do to ensure my lively participation in the Conference? What will be my contribution for a very fruitful Conference, before, during and after?*

## **Let us go out in joy**

We are reaching the highpoint of the Jubilee. We witness the Lord's graces raining down on the movement and on all who claim a share in its spiritual heritage. The Holy Father has very kindly granted special blessings on those who gather together for the Jubilee Conference.\* The encouragement and accompaniment of numerous Bishops and elders in the Church makes this gathering of the nations an unforgettable occasion of spiritual blessings. 'We will enter His courts with thanksgiving' and come with the firm resolve to fan the flame of our missionary zeal into a burning fire. The mighty presence of the Lord will overshadow us and the joyful spirit of our friends and companions in the Lord will kindle this fire within us. When the Star of Bethlehem fills our hearts and homes with His peace and joy, may we become refined, renewed and radiant in His Spirit to listen to and shout along as "we hear the sound of a multitude rising". See you there!

\*The Holy Father has granted special indulgence to the participants of the Jubilee Conference to be held from 28 Dec 2010 to 1 Jan 2011 at Cochin, South India. How does one avail of this? "To acquire an indulgence," says the official handbook, "it is necessary to perform the work to which the indulgence is attached and to fulfill the following three conditions: sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff. It is further required that all attachment to sin, even venial sin, be absent." The work referred to in the passage is attending the Conference and coming prepared, especially by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



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