

## **Missionary Families of Christ**

### **COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

The Covenant Recollection (CR) is part of the first-year formation program in MFC. It is given about three months after the Christian Life Seminar (CLS). After the CR, participants are invited to formally make the covenant of MFC and thus become regular members.

The CR is mounted over an extended period, in four different sessions, with eight talks, as follows: CR1 – Talks 1 and 2, CR2 – Talks 3 and 4, CR3 – Talks 5 and 6, and CR4 – Talks 7 and 8.

The four sessions are given on four separate days over four consecutive months, normally on the week of the month that is the teaching week for CLS graduates. It may be given by the chapter or it may be offered by the Center for Pastoral Formation (open university), where graduates from different CLSs may attend. Household servants may not be present.

#### **Goals of the course**

1. To deepen the spirituality of participants by teaching them about our relationships—with God, in the family, within community, and in the world.
2. To expound on the meaning and importance of our covenant and life in MFC.
3. To allow participants greater understanding of what will be expected of them if they become members of MFC, and to get them to desire to commit to God through MFC.

#### **Topics of the talks**

1. Our covenant with God
2. The call to holiness
3. Strengthening the Christian family
4. Living a Culture of Life
5. Living in Christian community
6. Financial Stewardship
7. Being a Christian witness
8. The MFC Core Values

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 1 : OUR COVENANT WITH GOD**

**Expanded Outline**

**A. Introduction.**

1. Our basic relationship with God is one of covenant.
2. In MFC we encounter the word “covenant.”
  - a) After the CLS, we spoke about the “MFC Covenant.”
  - b) As we read the Bible, we find out that its two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament, are covenants.
  - c) All Christians actually have a covenant with God by virtue of baptism.
  - d) Also, as baptized Christians, we have a covenant relationship with one another. We have a commitment of loyalty, unity, and service.
3. We need to understand more about our covenant.
  - a) Being our basic relationship with God, our covenant directs us in the way we live our Christian lives.
  - b) We need to appreciate the concrete situation, which allows us to live out our covenant.

**B. What is a covenant?**

1. A covenant is a solemn agreement between parties through which they commit themselves to certain relationships, tasks, obligations or ways of living.
2. Two types of covenant relationships.
  - a) Between parties equal in power and position.
    - \* Gen 21:22-32. Abraham and Abimelech.
    - \* 1 Sm 18:1,3-4. David and Jonathan.
    - \* Marriage partners.
  - b) Between parties unequal in power and position.
    - \* In this case, it is unilaterally bestowed by the greater on the lesser.

- \* E.g., a conqueror with his new subjects. He provides military protection while exacting loyalty and tribute.
  - \* God and His people.
3. Covenant agreements do not just bind persons to something outside themselves (e.g., a business contract). Rather, the parties are bound in a personal way. What is established is a significant family-like relationship between the agreeing parties.
    - \* Gen 15. God with Abraham.
    - \* Gen 31:44-54. Laban and Jacob.

### **C. Some important basic truths from the Old Testament.**

1. Covenant = treaty or contract which established a relationship between two parties and bound them together.
  - a) Conditions and clauses were important, but more important was that which these were meant to safeguard: a lasting relationship.
  - b) Through the covenant, God and His people are joined together.
2. The covenant was not a treaty between equals, but between a mighty person and a lesser person.
  - a) It was between God Almighty and a people owing their existence to Him.
  - b) It was issued by the stronger king at his initiative. The old covenant was initiated by God.
3. The contents of the covenant.
  - a) Usually began with an introduction in which the mighty king identified himself as the one initiating the treaty and then proceeded to summarize the history of the relationship between the two parties, with emphasis on what the mighty king had already done for the lesser party.
    - \* Dt 5:6 and Ex 20:2. Introduction to the Ten Commandments.
    - \* God freed the people first, then entered into a covenant (God did not give the commandments first, then free the people if they obeyed).
    - \* Our covenant with God is based on what He has done for us, and only secondarily on what we do in response.
  - b) Next listed what the weaker party needed to do.
    - \* The obligations flow from what the other had already done.
    - \* Ten Commandments. Dt 5:7-21.
    - \* All other commandments are part of our covenant.
  - c) Concluded with a list of blessings (if obey) and curses (if disobey). Dt 28.

- \* Breaking God's commandments = breaking our relationship with Him. There are consequences.
- \* Being faithful = blessings, Promised Land.

#### **D. New Testament teaching.**

1. God wants to make a covenant with us and enter into a personal relationship with us.
  - a) Jesus came to bring about a new covenant.
    - \* Lk 22:20. Jn 6:56.
  - b) The New Covenant is not merely a matter of obeying a set of laws, but of entering into a living relationship with Jesus.
2. As with the old covenant, the new covenant is not an agreement between equals, and is not done on our initiative. Rather, God acted first by sending Jesus.
3. All that God asks of us flows from what God has already done for us.
  - a) 1 Jn 4:19.
  - b) God's commands are taken in the light of His action in Jesus.
    - \* Jn 13:15,34. A new commandment of love. Jesus' example.
4. There are also blessings and curses. Our response has eternal consequences.

#### **E. Our response.**

1. Jn 13:34-35. To love one another is the commandment of the new covenant.
  - a) But in the Church today, there is a tendency to interpret this as a call to love all men and women.
  - b) True we must love everyone, but the New Testament distinguishes between love for those who are not Christians and the covenant love of Christian brethren.
    - \* Gal 6:10. It is important to note the distinction and have a special love for our brethren.
2. We form community, where we can live the practical expression of our love.

But many Christian groups are unsuccessful because:

- a) Their models are secular in nature.
  - \* Democratization of personal relationships. Majority rule.
  - \* Aim is self-fulfilment. Promotes selfishness.

- \* Priority of personal independence, of individual freedom.
  - \* Relationships proceed from feelings.
- b) Relationships are not based on a covenant.
- c) There is no authority to oversee the relationships.
- d) There is no common life, no significant relationships within the body.
3. The Biblical model for relationships.
- a) Like a family.
- \* Membership in one body, interdependence, unity, common life.
  - \* Loving relationships (brotherhood and sisterhood), sharing.
  - \* Authority and order.
- b) If so, there are practical needs:
- \* Need to express commitment and love to a specific, concrete group of people.
  - \* Need for such group of people to learn a specific set of relating and living out their commitments.
4. The nature of our commitment in MFC.
- a) We are to love and serve God.
- \* We are to be God's own servant people.
- b) We are to love and serve one another.
- \* We are no longer our own masters.
  - \* We are to lay down our lives for one another.
  - \* Practically, we should be willing to meet our brethren's needs with our personal resources.
- c) We are to live our lives in true righteousness and holiness.
- d) We are to be a people that the Lord can use as a body.
- \* Have unity, order, peace, and support for our common life.
- e) We are to be light and leaven to the world.
5. Practical considerations.

When people agree to put their lives in common, the following are necessary:

- a) Clearly spelled out commitments.
- \* Thus our written covenant.

- b) An authority to govern the body and oversee the set of relationships.
  - \* Our pastoral structure of household, unit and chapter leaders.
  - \* Our overall governing and pastoral authorities.
- c) Taking responsibility for one another and for our common life.
  - \* Not just the responsibility of the leaders, but of every member.
  - \* Fraternal correction, intercession, financial help, etc.
- d) A visible common life.
  - \* Our various meetings, gatherings and events.

## **F. Conclusion.**

1. The Old and New Testaments are God's old and new efforts to establish a relationship with His people.
2. MFC is a vehicle, an opportunity by which we can respond fully to God.

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 1 : OUR COVENANT WITH GOD**

**Participant's Handout**

1. Our basic relationship with God is one of covenant.
  - a) A covenant is a solemn agreement between parties through which they commit themselves to certain relationship, tasks, obligations or ways of living.
  - b) Covenant agreements do not just bind persons to something outside themselves. Rather, the parties are bound in a personal way, in a family-like relationship.
  
2. God wants to make a covenant with us and enter into a personal relationship with us. Lk 22:20. Jn 6:56.
  - a) The New Covenant is not merely a matter of obeying a set of laws, but of entering into a living relationship with Jesus.
  
3. Our response: Jn 13:34-35.
  - a) To love one another is the commandment of the new covenant.
  - b) We form community, where we express our love in practical ways.
  - c) The biblical model for relationships is a family.
  
4. The nature of our commitment.
  - a) Love and serve God.
  - b) Love and serve one another.
  - c) Live our lives in true righteousness and holiness.
  - d) Be a people the Lord can use as a body.
  - e) Be light and leaven to the world.
  
5. When people put their lives in common (like us in MFC), some elements are necessary:
  - a) Clearly spelled out commitments. Thus our covenant in MFC.
  - b) An authority to govern the body and the common life.
  - c) Taking responsibility for one another.
  - d) A visible common life.

**Discussion starter**

For discussion in the household meetings.

1. How has God initiated a relationship with you? How have you responded?
2. How can MFC help you in living out your covenant with God and with His people?

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 2 : THE CALL TO HOLINESS**

**Expanded Outline**

**A. Introduction.**

1. The very first item in the MFC covenant is this:

I shall live as a follower of Christ.

- \* Pray and read the Bible daily.
- \* Strive for holiness and Christian perfection.

2. As Christians we are called not just to repent of sin, not just to turn to Jesus in faith, not just to be a good person, but we are called to be holy. 1 Pt 1:15-16. We are to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48).
3. To grow in holiness, we need to know God and His ways more, and have the means by which to live out His ways. The most basic way we can know God more is by communicating directly with Him (prayer) and by studying His word (Scripture). Further, we need supernatural grace that can only come from God. For this we have the sacraments.
  - a) Prayer and Scripture are crucial tools to growth in the Christian life. In MFC, we commit to a daily personal prayer time and to a daily reading of the Bible.
  - b) The ongoing sacraments of grace are the Eucharist and Reconciliation. We go to Mass and receive Communion every Sunday, and we go regularly to confession.

**B. Some reasons why we do not have a personal prayer time.**

1. I already go to Church services (Mass) and that's enough.
  - a) What we are speaking about is personal prayer time.
    - \* Alone by ourselves with God.
    - \* This is necessary for us to develop a deep intimate personal relationship with Jesus.
  - b) Mass, rosary, novena, etc., are all important means of prayer. However, we must not neglect personal prayer.
2. Lack of understanding about prayer.



- a) Most of us may have been taught to pray early in our childhood. But what we may not have learned is why we should pray.
    - \* Most see prayer as just asking God for things.
  - b) Prayer for us should be a means of communicating with God and establishing a personal relationship with Him.
    - \* As we communicate, we get to know God more, and thus have the basis for loving Him more.
3. I don't have the time.
- a) We have a lot of time for the many different things we do in life.
    - \* Our problem is not lack of time, but our attitude.
    - \* If we considered prayer important enough, we would find the time.
  - b) Let us ask ourselves two questions:
    - \* If I were not too busy working, would I be busy praying?
    - \* If God gave me some extra hours today, will I automatically allocate it to personal prayer?
4. I am unworthy.
- a) Some may be so filled with guilt due to our sins and weaknesses that we create a feeling of unworthiness to come before the Lord.
    - \* Yes, we are unworthy to enter into the presence of a holy God.
    - \* But we have forgiveness for our sins through the blood of Jesus. We are restored to our relationship as children of God.
  - b) The devil would always try to convince us of our unworthiness.
    - \* We should not allow Satan's lies to keep us from the intimacy God desires to have with us.
  - c) Remember that as long as there is a desire to pray, it is a clear sign that the Lord is prodding us to spend time with Him.
    - \* The Lord will not plant this desire only to frustrate us. He would never lead us to seek something that is impossible.
    - \* Thus even when we feel unworthy, we should just pray.
5. It is too difficult.
- a) The difficulty is often of our own making.
    - \* We expect too much from ourselves, imposing a heavy burden.
    - \* We raise up as a standard the lofty prayer times of others.
  - b) Prayer is really very simple: it is coming into the presence of a loving God and allowing Him to love us and touch our lives.

- c) Techniques can help, models can guide, but it boils down to our very own personal relationship, done in our own personal way.

### **C. What should we do?**

1. Make a commitment to pray at a scheduled time.
  - a) Decide when is prime time for the Lord.
    - \* When would I be most alert or attuned to fellowship with God?
    - \* This is not simply leftover time.
  - b) If possible, make this your regular prayer time each day of the week.
    - \* Getting into this “routine” of prayer makes it easier to pray faithfully every day.
    - \* Be flexible in making adjustments if necessary due to your varied weekly schedule.
    - \* Defend this time of prayer.
2. If you are just starting to pray, start with a short time of prayer.
  - a) Try at least 15 minutes.
    - \* But if you would still find this long, then start with what you would be comfortable with and can sustain.
    - \* Again, we are not legalistically concerned about the amount of time, but are after your developing a personal relationship with God. The length of time will grow as this happens.
  - b) Spend more time as you grow in prayer.
    - \* You will find that 15 minutes will be very short.
3. Look for the right place where you will not be distracted.
  - a) Jesus’ example. Lk 5:16; Lk 6:12; Mt 14:23; Mk 1:35.
  - b) Jesus’ instruction. Mt 6:6a.
  - c) We owe God our undivided attention.
4. Resolve to be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
  - a) Techniques, like ACTS (adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, supplication), are all right, as long as we are not locked in to them.
  - b) Be open to variety in the Holy Spirit.
    - \* Quiet versus expressive.
    - \* Different physical postures.

- \* Speaking and listening.
  - \* Praying in tongues.
- c) The goal is not “to pray well,” but to enter into communion with God.
5. Deal with obstacles to prayer.
- a) Anxieties and concerns that distract us.
- \* Know that you are coming into the presence of your loving Father, Who is able to provide richly for all your needs.
  - \* Intercede for your concerns and leave these in God’s hands.
- b) Too much concern about the quality of our prayer.
- \* God is not concerned about our technique or the loftiness of our prayers, but simply with our desire to be in communion with Him.
  - \* Prayer is the simple reality of a child coming into the presence of his/her Father.
  - \* The Holy Spirit will help us. Rom 8:26.
- c) Dryness.
- \* Spiritual dryness in prayer and even in our Christian life may happen. It is normal and nothing to be alarmed about.
  - \* Sometimes dryness comes from God Himself. He seeks to find out if our faithfulness comes from the consolation and joy we experience in prayer, or simply from the reality of being in His presence.
  - \* Thus we should just persevere in prayer through times of dryness. Prayer is our commitment, not just an emotional experience.
- d) Difficulty in listening or hearing the Lord.
- \* Prayer is not just talking to God, but listening to Him. We listen in the silence of hearts.
  - \* Prayer is not just asking God for things, but allowing Him to form our hearts and our minds.
  - \* But perhaps our human nature makes it easier to talk and harder to listen. We need to learn how to do both.

#### **D. Scripture and inspirational reading.**

1. Aside from daily personal prayer, we also need to read and meditate on the Word of God.
- a) The Bible is our book of wisdom for living a Spirit-filled Christian life.
- b) The Bible has power to convict us and change our lives. Heb 4:12-13.
- c) The Bible can inspire and strengthen us as we face the difficulties of life.
- \* Frequently, our Bible reading will lead us to passages that speak directly and personally to our situation.

2. It is recommended that we incorporate our Bible reading into our daily prayer time.
  - a) The two are interactive.
  - b) A useful tool is to use a Scripture-based daily prayer guide (like “God’s Word Today,” “The Word Among Us,” “Our Daily Bread”).
3. We should spend some other time during the week to study the Bible.
4. We should read Christian books.
  - a) We recommend reading one Christian book every month.
  - b) We should focus mainly on the books written by our founder.
    - \* These books are very much Scripture-based. Thus reading these books become Bible studies as well. Like the Bible, these books should be re-read every so often.
    - \* These books, aside from Christian teachings, impart to us the fullness of the life and mission of MFC.

#### **E. Mass and Confession.**

- a) Our great privilege as Catholics is to actually receive the body of Christ at Communion. Our bodies literally become temples of Jesus and his Spirit.
  - \* If we can go to Mass more often than once a week, that is even better.
- b) We go to regular confession.
  - \* The Church requires us to go to confession at least once a year.
  - \* But we should go to confession whenever we commit serious sin.
  - \* If there is no mortal sin, we should still go to confession regularly. We recommend once a month.

#### **F. Conclusion.**

1. A lack of a regular prayer time reflects a lack of faithfulness to the Lord. When we neglect prayer, we will reap the consequences in the form of a powerless Christian life, devoid of peace and direction.
2. If we pray and read the Bible, we tap on to God’s power. When we receive Jesus in the Eucharist and when we confess our sins to a priest, we receive supernatural grace that enables us to become holy.
3. We are made in the image and likeness of God, and we are privileged to be called to be holy for He is holy.

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 2 : THE CALL TO HOLINESS**

**Participant's Handout**

1. We are called to holiness and Christian perfection. Prayer and Scripture are crucial tools to growth in the Christian life.
2. Reasons for not having a personal prayer time.
  - a) I already go to Church services and that's enough.
  - b) Lack of understanding about prayer.
  - c) I don't have the time.
  - d) I am unworthy.
  - e) It is too difficult.
3. What we should do:
  - a) Make a commitment to pray at a scheduled time.
  - b) Start with a short time of prayer.
  - c) Look for the right place.
  - d) Be open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
  - e) Deal with obstacles to prayer.
    - \* Anxieties and concerns.
    - \* Concern about the quality of prayer.
    - \* Dryness.
    - \* Difficulty in listening.
4. Aside from daily personal prayer, we also need to read and meditate on the Bible.
  - a) We can incorporate Bible reading into our daily prayer time.
  - b) We need to set aside some other time during the week to study the Bible.
5. We should also read Christian books.
  - a) Recommendation: one book every month.
  - b) Read all the books of our founder.
6. We should go to Holy Mass every Sunday and go to confession regularly.

**Discussion Starter**

For discussion in the household meetings:

1. Share about your personal prayer time and your Bible reading.
2. Share about your understanding of God's call to holiness and perfection. How can you grow as such?

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 3 : STRENGTHENING THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY**

**Expanded Outline**

**A. Introduction.**

1. The second item in the MFC covenant is this.

I dedicate myself to the task of building a strong family for Christ.

- \* Invest myself in time and effort for home and family.
  - \* Live out and defend the culture of life.
2. The family is the basic unit of society.
    - a) The condition of individual families will determine the condition of society as a whole.
    - b) The work of strengthening family life is the best way to work for the moral regeneration of society.
  3. MFC is a Christian family life renewal ministry.
    - a) We want to support not just couples, but to strengthen our families as well.
    - b) The strength of our families in MFC will determine the extent that the Lord can use us for His purposes.
    - c) We are called to build our families for Christ, and to live out the culture of life.

**B. The situation in the world today.**

1. Take a look at the family as an institution today. Its very basis and stability are under attack.
  - a) Many broken homes, separations, live-ins, unwanted children.
  - b) Even the traditional definition of family is being challenged (same sex marriage, gay couple adopting a child).
2. We want to face up to this attack, and to come out with our families intact and even stronger.

3. For this we need to put on God's mind and to follow His plan for the family.

**C. God's plan for the family.**

1. The family is the basic unit of society.
  - a) The family as the basic unit of society is no accident of history. It was meant to be so from the very beginning.
    - \* Gen 1:27-28. Gen 2:18-24.
  - b) God created man, male and female, with their physiology so formed as to enable man to increase and multiply and fill the earth.
  - c) God intended man and woman to be one, no independent individuals producing babies, but husband and wife raising a family.
2. The family is a place for teaching and training children.
  - a) A place to transmit wisdom and values of life.
    - \* Wisdom is not just knowing a lot of things, but refers to practical ways of living according to God's ways.
  - b) Teaching is not formal, but rather comes in the everyday activities in the home.
  - c) You need to review your own values and see the place of Jesus in your life, because these are the values your children will learn.
3. The family is a place for training leaders.
  - a) 1 Tm 3:4-5.
  - b) A man who is a proven leader in his home can be a church leader. He receives his basic training in his own home.
4. The family is a domestic church.
  - a) Parents, especially the fathers, are to be the priests in their families.
  - b) They present God to their family.
    - \* By their example of a living Christianity.
    - \* By diligently teaching about Scripture. Dt 6:7.
    - \* By the use of symbols. Dt 6:8-9.
  - c) They present their family to God.
    - \* By family prayer.
    - \* By blessing the children.

**D. But God's plan for families is not happening. Why not?**

1. God has lost His central place in the family. This is manifested by the following:
  - a) Parents no longer bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Eph 6:4.
  - b) More and more parents look to psychology as a source of wisdom for raising their children.
    - \* An example of wrong teaching: since two-year-olds are supposed to be negative, tell them to do the opposite to actually get them to do what you want.
  - c) Husbands and wives do not follow God's order for them.
    - \* Eph 5:22-25. There is a confusion of roles today.
    - \* For others, their commitment is shaky. Therefore they cannot be depended on and the partners become insecure.
  - d) Stress on materialism and an easy life.
2. The family itself is losing its importance.
  - a) Through the years, many of its responsibilities have been taken over by other groups in society.
    - \* Education in schools.
    - \* Livelihood in factories or offices.
    - \* Recreation in malls.
  - b) Modern recreation facilities allow very little interaction among family members.
    - \* TV, electronic gadgets, etc.
    - \* Explosive growth of the Internet.
  - c) The family has become dispensable.
    - \* Live-in situations.
    - \* Divorces or separations.
3. The pace of modern life has become fast. This has made it difficult for lasting relationships to develop.
  - a) People are constantly on the go and are too busy to interact with others.
  - a) Livelihood is taking a big chunk of the time of fathers, and oftentimes of the mothers as well.
4. The family is under attack by evil forces. 1 Pt 5:8.
  - a) The devil wants to break up the family, which is the basic foundation for a healthy society.



- b) The devil promotes many things that work to undermine the family, such as secular humanism, materialism and even such abominations as same-sex marriage.

**E. Ways of strengthening family life.**

1. Make a decision that in your family, you want God's plan to happen.
2. Understand better the meaning of our commitment to our spouse in marriage.
  - a) Marriage is a relationship of commitment and service.
    - \* It is not based merely on emotion, but on covenant fidelity.
    - \* Commitment and service means entrusting oneself completely to the other. It is denying oneself for the good of the other.
  - b) Live more fully the principles of Christian personal relationships.
    - \* Before we are husband and wife, we are brother and sister in the Lord.
    - \* The demand of Christian personal relationships is more than just the practice of human virtues. We are called to unconditional love and service.
3. Take time and give attention to the task of building a strong family.
  - a) Examine your daily life to ensure that your family has enough time together. Be ready to cut down on other activities if you see a need to do so.
  - b) Pray together as a family. Make prayer a common and daily occurrence in your family.
  - c) Make the home a center of family life.
    - \* In many families, the relationship between parents and children is much weaker than it should be. Parents are not sufficiently available to their children. They are often preoccupied and inaccessible, physically or psychologically. In turn, children are resistant to direction and indifferent to parents' wishes, values and beliefs.
    - \* Thus families should develop opportunities to expand the range of tasks and services and activities in the home in ways that bring parents and children together. Parents need to make a decision to bring back life in the home and make time for it (e.g., family meals, family recreation, shared chores, etc.). Make children desire to be together because it is fun to be together. We must make our home not merely a physical structure, but a place where family members experience love, warmth and encouragement.
    - \* Exercise greater control over the family use of media and of time. Media dampen family activity and communication. We should monitor and control the flow of books, magazines, comics, records, radio, television programs and use of the Internet in our home.

4. Become pastors of our children.
  - a) Parents must work actively to train and form their children in Christian faith and character.
    - \* The ultimate goal of raising and training our children is not to make them what we want them to be, but to help them fulfil their God-given destiny.
    - \* Our goal is to train them for life, imbued with Christian ideals and values. We should give them our Christian heritage.
    - \* Our example: the Israelites. Dt 6:20-25.
  - b) Fathers should take steps to assume full responsibility for the spiritual and material needs of the family.
    - \* This is a dual role, that of both priest and provider. Neither should be neglected.
    - \* The wives should support their husbands and not take over their roles.
  - c) We must be determined to wrest the initiative from school, peers and the media.
5. Learn more about God's vision for your family.
  - a) Attend teachings on marriage and family life.
    - \* We will have these in MFC, especially a Marriage Enrichment Retreat.
  - b) Read Christian books and magazines.
    - \* Mention some of our printed literature in MFC.
6. Seek other Christian individuals and couples who share your concern about family life, and be in regular fellowship with them.
  - a) This is what you can look forward to in our MFC community.
    - \* MFC will provide you support and formation.
    - \* We are already such a network of families.
  - b) You can look forward to developing real friendships and life-giving relationships.
    - \* Do not limit yourselves to regular meetings, but look for opportunities to be together.
    - \* Some practical activities: attending prayer assemblies together, having socials, going on vacation and family outings together.
7. Develop Christian peer environments for young people.
  - a) Age-peer environments are important.
    - \* Peer groups are a powerful force in the lives of young people.
    - \* We do not seek to avoid these, but to redirect them.

- b) We should strive to get our children into our Young Ministries (Kids, Youth, Singles).
  - \* They will develop strong supportive relationships with their own peers, as they go through the different stages of life.
  - \* We will have a real alternative to the often intensely secular peer environments that are not Christian in orientation.
  - \* They will be tied intimately into the life of the larger body (MFC).

#### **F. Conclusion.**

1. Pope John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio*: “the future of humanity passes by way of the family.”
2. We need to strengthen Christian family life, in order to defend God’ creation, and to renew the face of the earth.

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**TALK NO. 3 : STRENGTHENING THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY**

**Participant's Handout**

1. God's plan for the family.
  - a) Basic unit of society.
  - b) Place for teaching and training children.
  - c) Place for training leaders.
  - d) A domestic church.
  
2. God's plan for families is not happening.
  - a) God has lost His central place in the family.
  - b) The family itself is losing its importance.
  - c) Pace of modern life is fast, making lasting personal relationships difficult.
  - d) The family is under attack by evil forces.
  
3. Ways of strengthening family life.
  - a) Make a decision that you want God's plan to happen.
  - b) Understand better the relationship between spouses.
  - c) Give attention to the task of building a strong family.
  - d) Become pastors of your children.
  - e) Learn more about God's vision for your family.
  - f) Seek other Christians and be in fellowship with them.
  - g) Develop Christian peer environments for young people.

**Discussion Starter**

For discussion in the household meetings:

1. Share about your understanding of God's plan for the family.
2. Are you building up your family life in accordance with Christian principles?
3. What are the ways of strengthening family life that you have not used?

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 4 : LIVING A CULTURE OF LIFE**

**Expanded Outline**

**A. Introduction**

1. The second item in the MFC covenant is this.

I dedicate myself to the task of building a strong family for Christ.

- \* Invest myself in time and effort for home and family.
  - \* Live out and defend the culture of life.
2. We are called to renew the family and to defend life.

**B. The situation in the world today**

1. The culture of death is rampant throughout the world.

D - Divorce  
 E - Euthanasia  
 A - Abortion  
 T - Total population control  
 H - Homosexual unions

2. The root of the culture of death is secularism, i.e., having no sense of God, or living as if God does not exist. Secularism has brought about modern man's confusion and immorality. "And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God handed them over to their undiscerning mind to do what is improper." (Rom 1:28).
3. The culture of death is marked by:
  - a) Hedonism -- seeking pleasure as the highest goal
  - b) Individualism -- self-centeredness
  - c) Materialism -- valuing material goods more than people
  - d) Consumerism -- obsessively accumulating more and more goods
  - e) Utilitarianism -- valuing people for their usefulness

From these the culture of death manifests itself in casual sexual relationships, marital infidelities, separation and divorce, homosexual acts and unions, contraception and abortion, reproductive technology, sterilization of the poor, euthanasia, etc.

### C. The foundation of our Pro-Life stance

1. We look at the very beginning and draw basic realities according to the plan of God for the life of the world. We see this in the book of Genesis.
  - a) Gen 2:7 -- “the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.” It is God who is the Creator, the Author of life.
  - b) Gen 1:27 -- “God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.” Man is made in the very image of God. As such, man is endowed with profound dignity. David was awed. “Yet you have made them little less than a god, crowned them with glory and honor.” (Ps 8:6).
  - c) Gen 1:28a -- “God blessed them, saying: ‘Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.’” God intends man to procreate and to populate the whole earth.
 

Gen 1:28b -- “Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth.” God gave authority and rule over the whole world to man. “The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.” (Gen 2:15). God has given man the task of caring for His creation.
  - d) Gen 1:29 -- “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food.” God provides the food that man needs in order to survive.
2. According to the above realities, what are the implications? What principles of life can we draw?
  - a) Since God is the Creator, only He has the right to take away the life that He has created.
    - \* There is no place for abortion, where women claim they own their bodies and thus the child within their womb. There is no place for euthanasia or assisted suicide.
  - b) Since we are created in the image of God, then there is an innate dignity that reflects the very glory of the Creator. As such, no one has the right to demean or denigrate that life or image.
    - \* There is no place for degrading sexual practices, for pornography, for sex trafficking, for the culture of drugs, for substance abuse, for torture and acts of violence like hazing.
  - c) Since God created only male and female, then there is no third sex. There is no LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender). Aside from male and female, there is no diversity of sexuality and gender identity-based cultures.
    - \* There is no place for same-sex unions, much less same-sex marriage.

- d) Since God created a suitable partner for man (Gen 2:18), with whom he becomes one body (Gen 2:24), and with whom he brings children into the world (Gen 1:28a), we are to look to marriage that is permanent, that reflects both the unitive and procreative intent of the Creator.
    - \* Thus there is no place for divorce.
  
  - e) Since God commanded man to be fertile and multiply, we are to obey and procreate. We are to have as many children as we can reasonably and responsibly care for. We should not look to subtracting from the peoples of the world, but rather to add, nay, to multiply.
    - \* There is no place for population control, as we certainly have not filled the earth. There is no place for contraception or sterilization. There is no place for Reproductive Health, where its universal understanding and practice include abortion, apart from contraception and sterilization.
  
  - f) Since God has given rule over the world to man, we are to care for our world and for the environment. We are to help ensure that life according to God's intent truly happens.
    - \* There is no place for corruption, pollution, environmental degradation, wanton destruction of forests, irresponsible mining, overfishing or filling outer space with junk.
  
  - g) Since God provided everything that man needed in order to have a satisfying and full life, we are to look to abundance and prosperity.
    - \* There is no place for poverty or subhuman living or unjust deportation of aliens.
3. When God finished creating, He "looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good." (Gen 1:31a). What God created is good, and the principles He established for His creation are what will sustain such goodness. Unfortunately, man has tampered with God's design. Man has overturned the very wisdom of God. Hence we are now reaping the bitter fruit of such folly.

#### **D. Living the culture of life in MFC**

We in MFC are pro-life. How do we live this out?

1. As a young married couple
  - a) Be generous in bringing new life into the world.
  - b) Practice Responsible Parenthood and Natural Family Planning (RP-NFP)
    - \* In exercising Responsible Parenthood, be responsible for the care of the children you beget.
    - \* As such, you can space births, but make use only of natural methods.

- \* Periodically, check on your intentions in spacing births, ensuring that the natural method has not become a form of contraception.
2. As a parent or head of the family
    - a) Parents are the primary educators of their children, including age-appropriate sex education, given in the context of love, marriage and family.
    - b) Caring for our children
      - \* Young Children – Provide a balanced home environment for our children where we can truly build up their identity and their values. At the crucial and formative stage in the life of the kids, parents and family play a vital role in their formation and development. We should bring them into KFL.
      - \* Youth and Single Professionals – The youth and singles are very much exposed to pornography and distorted values towards sex in the media including the Internet. This easily leads to masturbation or casual sex. We should bring them into YFL and SFL, with emphasis on our LivePure Movement.
  3. As a MFC member
    - a) Educate yourself about Pro-Life causes and concerns.
      - \* Attend community teachings.
      - \* Seek formation on Responsible Parenthood and Natural Family Planning.
      - \* Grow in knowledge of our Catholic faith and what official Catholic teaching says about the issues that we are facing.
    - b) Every MFC member must be a pro-life advocate.
      - \* Care for one’s health and well-being (mind, body and soul) because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.
      - \* Participate in community pro-life activities.
      - \* Consider serving in the community pro-life ministry.
      - \* Spread the message of pro-life as widely as possible within one’s circles.
      - \* Speak out against the culture of death as events unfold in society.
    - c) Be open to serving in the parish Pro-Life Ministry.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

1. The fight for the culture of life is the defining battle in this third millennium. The enemy has focused his vast resources to destroy life, together with destroying the family and the Church.
2. God raised MFC as His army in this war.



**Missionary Families of Christ  
COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**TALK No. 4 : LIVING A CULTURE OF LIFE**

**Participant's Handout**

1. The culture of death is rampant throughout the world. D = Divorce, E = Euthanasia, A = Abortion, T = Total population control, H = Homosexual unions.
2. The root of the culture of death is secularism, marked by hedonism, individualism, materialism, consumerism and utilitarianism.
3. The foundation of our pro-life stance is God's plan from the very beginning.
  - a) Gen 2:7 – God is the Creator and the Author of life.
  - b) Gen 1:27 – Man is made in the very image of God, thus endowed with profound dignity.
  - c) Gen 1:28a – God intends man to procreate and to populate the whole world.
  - d) Gen 1:28b – God gave authority and rule over the whole world to man.
  - e) Gen 1:29 – God provides what man needs to survive.
4. Implications of God's plan.
  - a) Only God has the right to take away the life that He has created. There is no place for euthanasia or assisted suicide.
  - b) We have an innate dignity that reflects the very glory of the Creator. There is no place for degrading sexual practices, pornography, sex trafficking, drugs, torture, violence.
  - c) God created only male and female. There is no place for same-sex unions or marriage.
  - d) God created a suitable partner for man with whom he becomes one body. There is no place for divorce.
  - e) God commanded us to be fertile and multiply. There is no place for population control, contraception, sterilization, RH.
  - f) God gave rule of the world to man so we are to care for it. There is no place for corruption, pollution, irresponsible exploitation of natural resources.
  - g) God provided man everything he needed, so we look to abundance. There is no place for poverty or subhuman living.
5. Living the culture of life in MFC.
  - a) Be generous in bringing new life into the world
  - b) Practice Responsible Parenthood and Natural Family Planning (RP-NFP).
  - c) Educate and care for your children.
  - d) Educate yourself about pro-life causes and concerns.
  - e) Be a pro-life advocate.

**Discussion starter**

For discussion in the household meeting:

1. Share about your understanding of what it means to be pro-life.
2. How do you intend to be involved in our pro-life ministry?

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 5 : LIVING IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

**Expanded Outline**

**A. Introduction.**

1. The third item in the MFC covenant is this.

I shall be a committed and active member of Missionary Families of Christ.

- \* Faithfully attend meetings and participate in community events.
- \* Give generously of my time and finances for the furtherance of our mission.
- \* Undergo all formation courses.
- \* Relate in love, loyalty and respect with all members of the MFC family.

2. We have a covenant with God and with one another. We are to be His people, and our lives are to reflect our intimate relationship with Him. More specifically, we are called together in MFC to live out a common life. Part of this life is a distinct culture as Christians in general and as MFC in particular.

**B. The New Testament teaching.**

1. What did God do for us? Col 1:13.

a) From darkness to God's kingdom.

b) Christians, because of their new birth in Christ, are to be a new people, God's people, with a new way of life, which is in harmony with God's nature and purposes.

c) What is our proper response? Eph 4:17-18.

- \* Involved in this transfer of kingdoms is a concrete change in behaviour. Eph 4:22-24.

2. Our new identity as Christians. 1 Pt 2:9-11a.

a) From darkness to light. Once no people, now God's people.

b) Also, we are strangers and in exile.

- \* We live in the midst of other people whose way of life is different from us.
- \* We are "resident aliens," subject to the laws of a country but also a "nation apart," bound by a separate district culture.
- \* We are followers of Jesus, with its implications. Lk 9:58; Phil 3:20; Heb 13:14.
- \* Thus we are a nation set apart. Thus we are to have our own culture.

### **C. What is a culture?**

1. Culture = the way of life of a people.
  - a) It is the sum total of attained and learned behaviour patterns of a people, regarded as expressing a traditional way of life. It is the sum total of what makes a people what they are.
  - b) Culture includes a people's beliefs, values, social structures, customs and expressions.
2. Christianity is a culture.
  - a) As a natural consequence of Christian beliefs and values, Christians ought to have a distinctively Christian way of life that reflects and supports such values and beliefs.
    - \* We ought to be distinguishable from other worldly cultures. In fact, Christianity is a counterculture.
  - b) We can be Christian and Filipino (or Indian, African, American, etc.). But we are Christians first and foremost.

### **D. Our Christian culture in MFC.**

1. MFC is a Christian community with distinctive beliefs, values and patterns of life.
  - a) Of course, our basic Christian beliefs and values are those held in common by all orthodox Christians.
    - \* Beliefs: Jesus is Lord, life after death, etc.
    - \* Values: What we consider desirable, e.g., loyalty, dependability, dignity of life, etc.
  - b) In addition, we stress the importance of marriage and family life.
2. Further, who we are is stated in various documents.
  - a) Our statements of vision and mission provide our direction and the rationale for our existence.
    - \* Read the statements of vision and mission.
  - b) Our "Statement of Philosophy" contains the beliefs and ideals of MFC, which govern our thrust and mission.
    - \* Read the statement of philosophy. Paraphrase its contents.
  - c) Our statement of Core Values provides the parameters for living out our vision and mission. These will be taken up in CR #8 next month.

## E. Expressions of Christian culture in MFC.

### 1. The way we relate to one another.

#### a) Honor and respect.

- \* This is as befits each one's dignity as a child of God.
- \* We are one family, brothers and sisters in the Lord.

#### b) Loyalty and commitment.

- \* We should be loyal and committed to one another and to the body. We are to look out for the good of the other.
- \* We should resolve conflicts in the Lord.

#### c) Christian speech.

- \* Our speech is of tremendous importance for the life of the body. Prv 18:21a.
- \* We are to avoid slander, gossip and negative humor.
- \* Our speech must be gracious. Col 4:6. Eph 4:29.
  - Express praise and affection.
  - Correct with meekness.
  - Communicate faith and joy.
  - Show courtesy.

#### e) Our goal in the way we relate is to build one another up in love, and to build up the body, MFC. Eph 4:15-16.

### 2. Faith. We are to be men and women of faith.

#### a) What is faith? Heb 11:1.

- \* Have the faith of our ancestors (Heb 11:4-40).

#### b) We can depend on divine providence. Lk 12:22-31.

#### c) Jesus is our focus. Heb 12:2a.

### 3. Prayer and Scripture.

#### a) We are to have a daily conversation with God.

- \* Eph 6:18. Col 4:2.

#### b) We are to receive wisdom, guidance and life from God's Word daily.

- \* Col 3:16a. Heb 4:12.

### 4. Order in the family.

#### a) The Christian family is at the very center of God's plan.

- \* As the basic unit of society, the condition of families will determine the condition

of societies.

- b) We need to strengthen the family.
  - \* God's order: headship and submission. Eph 5:22-25.
  - \* We are to fulfil our responsibilities in the Lord.
    - Husband: govern, provide, protect.
    - Wife: partner, support, and homemaker.
    - Parents: raise children in the Lord. Eph 6:4.
  - \* Always have Jesus at the center of family life.

#### 5. Life as a body.

- a) We are one body, with a common life.
  - \* Not individualistic, but brethren.
  - \* Not pursue holiness just individually, but also corporately.
- b) One concrete expression is the household.
  - \* A concrete manifestation of being "family."
  - \* Our weekly "spiritual filling station."
  - \* A place to truly love our brethren.
- c) Respect for order and authority in the body.
  - \* We need order and authority for the body to function effectively.
  - \* The Lord places various people in positions of authority. We are to obey and respect them. Heb 13:17.
- d) Christian finance.
  - \* We have a common responsibility to support God's work.
  - \* We are to make available to the Lord not just our time and our talents, but also our treasure.
  - \* MFC's work is supported by the freewill contributions of its members. We are encouraged to be generous.

#### **F. Conclusion.**

1. MFC is one body throughout the world, with one vision, one mission, and also one culture.
2. God wants to create a new humanity, one that would live His life on earth. We are to be witnesses to His work in our lives. Our response will determine the effectiveness of our witness. Our positive response will keep us united and will enable the Lord to use us for mission.
3. We should be faithful to our life together in community, and relate in love and loyalty to one another.

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 5 : LIVING IN CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

**Participant's Handout**

1. The New Testament teaching on Christian culture.
  - a) What did God do for us? Col 1:13.
  - b) What is our response? Eph 4:17-18.
  - c) Our new identity as Christians. 1 Pt 2:9-11a.
  
2. Culture is the way of life of a people. It includes a people's beliefs, values, social structures, customs and expressions.
  
3. Christianity is a culture.
  - a) As MFC, our basic beliefs and values are those held in common by all orthodox Christians. In addition, we stress the importance of marriage and family life.
  - b) Our statements of vision and mission, our statement of philosophy, and our core values.
  
4. Expressions of Christian culture in MFC.
  - a) The way we relate to one another.
    - \* Honor and respect.
    - \* Loyalty and commitment.
    - \* Christian speech.
  - b) We are to be men and women of faith.
  - c) Prayer and Scripture.
  - d) Order in the family.
  - e) Life as a body.
    - \* One body, with a common life.
    - \* Households.
    - \* Respect for order and authority.
    - \* Christian finance.

**Discussion Starter**

For discussion in the household meetings:

1. Is your life a reflection of Christianity, which is a counterculture to the world's ways?
2. How are you trying to live out faithfully the culture of MFC in all its various expressions?

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 6 : FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP**

**Expanded Outline**

**A. Introduction.**

1. Part of the covenant for a committed and active member of MFC is to give generously of one's finances for the furtherance of our mission.
2. Our Lord Jesus Christ wants all the dimensions of our lives, including our financial responsibilities and finances, to be directed and guided by the Holy Spirit.
3. There are three basic ways we use our finances in the Lord:
  - a) ALMSGIVING – Giving money or goods to the needy and poor both in and out of one's community.
  - b) RESOURCE SHARING – Sharing or lending our material resources to care for the specific needs of our brothers and sisters.
  - c) TITHING – It is giving ten percent (10%) of an individual's income after taxes from whatever legal source, i.e. wages, rents, bonus, commissions, business, retirement pay, etc.

**B. Why should we do the above?**

1. We acknowledge that all belongs to God.
  - a) God created everything. And everything—the heavens, the earth, and all that they contain—belongs to God. God is the owner of everything without exception. This includes what we normally call our own: our house, our car, our clothes, our investments, and our money.
    - \* Ps 24:1. Hg 2:8.
  - b) We are merely stewards of what belong to God.
    - \* One definition states that a STEWARD is a person who MANAGES the affairs of a household or an estate FOR THE OWNER.
    - \* In the Christian sense, a steward is a manager of the affairs of God on earth. We are stewards (or managers) and not masters over the things God has entrusted to us. We are to manage what has been entrusted to us wisely, unselfishly and in accordance with God's plan.

2. We owe our prosperity to God.
  - a) Without God's blessings, we would not have the good things we have. Prv 10:22.
  - b) Our minds, our education, business opportunities, all are ours only by God's grace. 1 Cor 4:7. Sir 11:14b.
  - c) We should use our finances (wealth and possessions) to glorify God and participate in the spread of His Kingdom. Prv 3:9a.
    - \* Though God allows us to enjoy our possessions, these are not exclusively for our benefit. We need to see how we can use our possessions to serve God, further Christian mission, and help others.

## C. THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

### 1. ALMSGIVING

- a) Almsgiving means giving money or goods to the needy and poor both in and out of one's community. Such is an outright grant.
  - \* Usually the needs of the members are met through resource sharing; i.e. interest-free loans.
  - \* However, there are times when members in need clearly do not have the capability to repay a loan. In such situations, the best way to serve them could be outright alms.
- b) Scripture texts on almsgiving:
  - \* Prv 19:17
  - \* Mt 6:2-4
- c) Alms are given over and above tithes (not to be deducted from one's tithe).

### 2. RESOURCE SHARING

- a) Resource sharing means sharing our material resources to meet the specific needs of our brothers and sisters (i.e. use of car, accommodating brethren to stay in their house, lending money free of interest).
  - \* These may at times be extended to the needy outside of our community.
- b) However, direct loans between members are discouraged. Many times when a borrower is unable to pay a loan, personal relationships are disturbed or even damaged. To preserve peace, unity and good order in the body, such direct financial lending is to be avoided.
  - \* If a borrower and lender in community agree on a loan, this should be coursed through the community, and the borrower guided by his/her household leader.
  - \* If there are cooperatives associated with the community, it is best that loans be secured from there.



c) Resource sharing is also given over and above the tithe.

### 3. TITHING

a) The tithe consists of ten percent (10%) of an individual's income after taxes from whatever legal source, i.e. wages, rents, investments, business, retirement, inheritance, etc.

- \* It is a priority over everything else we need to spend on.
- \* It is given to the immediate body of Christ of which one is a part, and where one draws support for one's Christian life. For us this is MFC and our parish.
- \* It is given to support the work of the Lord. In MFC, your tithes will be used for: evangelization, members' formation, leaders training, community activities, administrative expenses, and other expenses related to our worldwide work. .

b) Scriptural basis: Mal 3:7b-10.

- \* We rob God if we don't tithe. Simply because the money is His in the first place and He's just asking us to turn over 10% of His own money.
- \* We tithe so that there may be "food in God's house." Food is life-giving. The tithes support our work for the Lord, which work gives life to many people.
- \* "Open the floodgates": God can never be outdone in generosity. We will always receive more than we give (not necessarily in terms of money).
- \* On the other hand, we are accursed if we do not tithe.

c) Tithing is an essential part of our life as a growing Christian. How we respond to tithing can be a measure of our spiritual growth. It reflects on the following areas of our life.

- \* Our stewardship. Do we accept that everything belongs to God and we are merely stewards? In which case, do we obey God as to how to handle our finances?
- \* Our gratitude. Do we acknowledge that whatever good things we have come from God? That without God's blessings, we would not enjoy the things we do?
- \* Our priorities. Are God and His Kingdom first in our lives, even before our own needs?
- \* Our faith. Do we believe that as we put God first, He will provide whatever we need in life? Read Mt 6:19-34.
- \* Our conversion. How have we grown in Christian generosity, in selflessness, in simplicity of lifestyle, in detachment, etc. Mt 6:21.
- \* Our zeal for God's Kingdom. What is the extent of our desire to see God's dominion expanded? Do we realize the financial needs for doing such mission?

d) Let us not lose the proper perspective.

- \* It is important to give not because of the need for our money, but because it is just the right thing to do.
- \* In fact, while we see that God's work needs money, God Himself does not! He owns the universe.
- \* The practical need for money is just His way of giving us the privilege of being

His co-workers in Kingdom-building.

- \* Focus not so much on the 10%, but on the 90% we keep for ourselves! Remember, it is God's money. He owns it all, but He allows us to keep the bulk of it for our own uses.

e) What if I don't have enough?

- \* Relate the story of the widow's mite. Lk 21:1-4.
- \* She gave out of her poverty.
- \* In Malachi, God promises that He will open the floodgates. God will not only provide, but He will be very generous. We often do not experience God's bounty because we ourselves are not generous. Lk 6:38.
- \* However, there might be some situations where we really feel we cannot afford to give a full tithe (e.g., affect food for our family). In this case, it is acceptable to give what we can.

#### **D. Conclusion.**

1. MFC is doing a wide work. We are evangelizing the world!
1. Your generosity is needed. Your contribution will make a difference.
3. 2 Cor 9:6-8.

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 6 : FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP**

**Participant's Handout**

1. There are three basic ways we use our finances in the Lord: almsgiving, resource sharing and tithing.
2. All belong to God and we are mere stewards. We also owe our prosperity to God.
3. Tithing is giving 10% of our income for the Lord's work.
  - a) Scriptural basis: Mal 3:7b-10.
    - \* We rob God if we do not tithe.
    - \* We tithe to support God's work.
    - \* God will never be outdone in generosity.
  - b) Tithing is a measure of our spiritual growth.
    - \* Stewardship.
    - \* Gratitude.
    - \* Priorities.
    - \* Faith.
    - \* Conversion.
    - \* Zeal for God's kingdom.
  - c) The proper perspective.
    - \* Tithing is God's way of giving us the privilege of being His co-workers.
    - \* Focus not so much on the 10% we give, but on the 90% we keep for ourselves.
    - \* The widow gave out of her poverty. Lk 21:1-4.
4. 2 Cor 9:6-8.

**Discussion starter**

For discussion in the household meeting:

1. Do you understand that everything belongs to God and you are just a steward?
2. How do you see yourself in terms of the measures of spiritual growth?

**Handout:** Financial Handbook.

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 7 : BEING A CHRISTIAN WITNESS**

**Expanded Outline**

**A. Introduction.**

1. The fourth item in the MFC covenant is this.

I shall be a witness to the world of God's love.

- \* Actively evangelize and do mission.
  - \* Love and serve my parish.
  - \* Love and care for the poor.
2. God's love is personified in Jesus who went to the cross for us.
    - a) Jn 3:16.
    - b) Salvation and eternal life comes through belief in Jesus.
  3. We are called to be Christ's witnesses.
    - a) This is part of the marching orders of all Christians. Lk 24:48.
    - b) Our empowerment through baptism in the Spirit is to enable us to be witnesses to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8.

**B. We are an evangelistic and missionary community.**

1. To evangelize is to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus.
  - a) This is the so-called Great Commission. Mk16:15. Mt 28:19.
  - b) God has entrusted this work to us. We are essential in God's plan of salvation.
    - \* Rom 10:13-15.
2. Every MFC member is to become an evangelizer.
  - a) We are to evangelize in the normal day-to-day circumstances of our lives.
    - \* With relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, schoolmates, even strangers.
  - b) We share about what God has done for us.
    - \* Even as we are still sinners, we can already share about how God is starting to

transform us.

- \* Our simple goal is to get them interested in what God has to offer, and thus accept our invitation to the CLS.
- c) Actively evangelizing others benefits us, allowing us to grow in faith.
- \* We reflect on how we have changed in the Lord, and grow in gratitude and praise.
  - \* We unselfishly give of our time and effort to connect others to Christ.
  - \* God will continue to bless us as we become a blessing to others.
3. MFC is a worldwide community.
- a) It is a ministry for the universal Church.
- \* Though it started in the Philippines, God intended for it to be for all nations.
  - \* Now our membership includes many different nationalities, races, cultures and tongues. Rev 7:9.
- b) We strive to become families in the Holy Spirit renewing the face of the earth.

### **C. Loving and serving the parish.**

1. The parish is the territorial subdivision of the Church.
- a) The pastoral care of a parish is entrusted to a pastor (parish priest) as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop.
- b) The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life.
- \* Sunday celebration of the Eucharist.
  - \* Formation on Christ's saving doctrine.
  - \* Practice of charity in good works and brotherly love.
- c) A number of parishes make up a vicariate. A number of vicariates make up a diocese.
2. We are called to actively participate in the life of our parish.
- a) MFC, in the life and service of its basic subdivision that is the chapter, is parish-based.
- \* The chapter is the mini-MFC.
- b) We will serve the parish in the many different ways available, but especially in the area of family renewal and pro-life advocacy.
- \* Mount our CLS.
  - \* Establish our MFC Sections.
  - \* Do work for justice,, work with the poor, and work for life).
- c) We will participate in the life and mission of the parish.

- \* Our members are encouraged to serve as Eucharistic ministers, in the parish pastoral council, as the choir, etc.
- \* Participate in Church feasts and other very important events.
- \* We look to parish service but do not neglect our basic work of evangelization.

#### **D. Loving and caring for the poor.**

1. We are called to have a preferential option for the poor.
  - a) Faith without good works is dead. Jas 2:14-17.
    - \* The gospel has both spiritual and social dimensions.
  - b) This is the very mission of Jesus. Lk 4:18.
    - \* This is how the presence of the Messiah among people is shown. Mt 11:5.
  - c) This is crucial for our own salvation.
    - \* The parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Lk 16:19-23.
    - \* Judgment at the end of time. Mt 25:31-46.
2. Ways of serving the poor in the parish.
  - a) Look on the poor as beloved brethren.
    - \* Beyond material goods, the poor need respect and acceptance.
  - b) Do charitable works.
    - \* Financial help, feeding programs, livelihood assistance, children's education, etc.
    - \* As individuals, as MFC, or as part of parish programs.
3. Our personal response.
  - a) Simplicity of lifestyle.
    - \* We should be content with the basic necessities of life. 1 Tm 6:7-10.
    - \* We should look to our needs and not our wants.
    - \* We should not accumulate and merely store what we do not use.
  - b) Sharing our resources.
    - \* Everything we have belongs to God and is due to God's blessings.
    - \* We are merely stewards. We look to being instruments for God to provide for all His people.
    - \* We should contribute our share for the equitable distribution of the world's goods, so that no one is in need.
  - c) Working for social justice.
    - \* Justice is giving to each person what is his due.
    - \* It starts with us. We need to live lives of honesty, integrity and respect for others.
    - \* We concern ourselves about the situation of injustice in the economic, political

and environmental realms.

**E. Conclusion.**

1. We are called to be witnesses to the world of God's love.
2. We share to the world the good news of salvation in Christ and the Church's preferential option for the poor.

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 7 : BEING A CHRISTIAN WITNESS**

**Participant's Handout**

1. We are all called to witness to God's love.
  - a) God's love. Jn 3:16
  - b) Called to be Christ's witnesses. Lk 24:48.
  - c) Our empowerment in the Spirit. Acts 1:8.
  
2. Being an evangelistic and missionary community.
  - a) The Great Commission. Mk 16:15. Mt 28:19.
  - b) God's need for us. Rom 10:13-15.
  - c) Every member is to be an evangelizer.
  
3. Loving and serving the parish.
  - a) Serving the parish through our various ministries and programs.
  - b) Active participation in the life of our parish.
  
4. Loving and caring for the poor.
  - a) Preferential option for the poor.
    - \* Faith and works. Jas 2:14-17.
    - \* The mission of Jesus. Lk 4:18.
    - \* Importance for our salvation. Mt 25:31-46.
  - b) We serve the poor in the parish.
  - c) Our personal response.
    - \* Simplicity of lifestyle.
    - \* Sharing of resources.
    - \* Work for social justice.

**Discussion Starter**

For discussion in the household meetings:

1. Share about how you think you might begin to evangelize those you know.
2. Share about any service you are doing in the parish.
3. Share about how you understand the Church's preferential option for the poor.



**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 8 : THE MFC CORE VALUES**

**Expanded Outline**

**A. Introduction.**

1. Our Core Values describe who we are and what we are called to do in the world.
2. They provide parameters and constant guideposts in our moving on in our life and mission.

**B. The MFC Core Values.**

**1. Centered on Christ.**

- a) In everything that we are and do, we look to Jesus, who is our Savior and Lord.
  - \* Jesus is our model in our obedience to the Father, in our faithfulness to His call, and to total submission to His divine will.
- b) As He who called us is holy, we ourselves will strive for holiness of life. 1 Pt 1:15-16.
  - \* We strive for Christian perfection. Mt 5:48.
  - \* We look to exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit in our day-to-day lives. Gal 5:22-23.

**2. Evangelistic and missionary.**

- a) We are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus to the whole world. Mk 16:15.
  - \* We are his witnesses. Lk 24:48.
- b) Every MFC member is an evangelizer.
  - \* In the normal day-to-day environments of our lives.
  - \* We look to doing mission beyond our own environments to the very ends of the earth.

**3. Focused on the family.**

- a) Our life and mission is founded on strong families in Christ.
  - \* We recognize that the future of humanity passes by way of the family.
  - \* The family is seriously under threat. Abortion, contraception, sterilization. Valueless sex education. Euthanasia, assisted suicide. Same-sex marriage.

- b) Our focus on family renewal is an all-encompassing work.
  - \* We defend and strengthen Christian marriage.
  - \* We grow as a Christian couple.
  - \* We raise our children to be the next generation of God's people.
  - \* We establish our homes as pieces of Kingdom ground.
- c) We are called to a strong advocacy and defense of the culture of life.
  - \* The culture of death pervading in the world seeks to destroy the family.
  - \* We are concerned about quality of life, for God's people to live according to their inherent dignity.

#### **4. Being community.**

- a) We not just individual families, but a family of families.
  - \* We need to support one another.
  - \* We are part of the larger family of MFC, a worldwide family of many different nationalities and cultures but all sharing brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ.
- b) We desire to move forward together in our life in the Lord.
  - \* We provide love, affirmation, friendship, fraternal correction and healing.
  - \* We are committed to the good of our brethren, always living the truth in love. Eph 4:15.

#### **5. Living a preferential option for the poor.**

- a) We recognize Jesus' mission to bring glad tidings to the poor. Lk 4:18.
  - \* We look to both the spiritual and material upliftment of the least among our brethren.
- b) We will be in solidarity with the poor.
  - \* Live a simple lifestyle.
  - \* Share our resources with those in need.
  - \* Fight for social justice in society and in the world.

#### **6. Exercising servant leadership.**

- a) We have been purchased at the cost of Jesus' precious blood. We now belong to him.
- b) We are privileged to serve God and His people, both in and out of MFC.
  - \* We serve with the mind and heart of Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served. Mt 20:28.
  - \* We look not to human recognition or reward. Lk 17:10.
  - \* We do not build turf or seek power.

- c) Leaders are to serve with humility, self-sacrifice and submission to the Chief Shepherd.
  - \* He who wishes to be great shall be the least of all. Mt 20:26-27.
  - \* We will render an account. Heb 13:17.

#### **7. Being a servant to the Church.**

- a) We in MFC are an integral part of the Catholic Church.
  - \* We are submitted to our bishops and to the pope.
  - \* Our life, formation and service will conform to Catholic values and ideals.
  - \* We make ourselves available to be of service in the parishes and dioceses, especially in the areas of family and life.
  
- b) We look to Mary, the mother of the Church, as our inspiration and help.
  - \* MFC has been consecrated to Our Lady of the Rosary.

#### **C. Conclusion.**

1. The MFC Core Values keep us on track in our life and mission.
2. We must always strive to be faithful to our charism and call, and never veer away.

**Missionary Families of Christ**  
**COVENANT RECOLLECTION**

**Talk No. 8 : THE MFC CORE VALUES**

**Participant's Handout**

1. Centered on Christ.
  - a) We are called to holiness. 1 Pt 1:15-16.
2. Evangelistic and missionary.
  - a) We are Christ's witnesses. Lk 24:48.
  - b) Every MFC member is to be an evangelizer.
3. Focused on the family.
  - a) Our life and mission is founded on strong families in Christ.
  - b) We are pro-life.
4. Being community.
  - a) We are a family of families.
  - b) MFC is a worldwide family of many nationalities and cultures.
5. Living a preferential option for the poor.
  - a) Jesus' mission is to bring good news to the poor. Lk 4:18.
  - b) We live in solidarity with the poor.
    - \* Simple lifestyle.
    - \* Sharing of resources.
    - \* Social justice.
6. Exercising servant leadership.
  - a) We are Christ's servants. We belong to him.
  - b) Like Christ, we come to serve and not to be served. Mt 20:28.
  - c) Leaders serve with humility, self-sacrifice and submission to the Lord.
    - \* We will render an account. Heb 13:17.
7. Being a servant to the Church.
  - a) We serve in the parish and diocese.
  - b) We are consecrated to Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace.

**Discussion Starter**

For discussion in the household meetings:

1. Share about your appreciation of the MFC Core Values.
2. Do you now desire to fully become a member of MFC by making the covenant?

(SG. Oct. 7, 2019)