

Reflections

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Are You Living in the Flesh?

The New Stigmata Saint of India Who Levitated

The Silent Addiction to Technology

The Real Easter Hallelujah Message

Blessing to All:

By: Richard Pickard

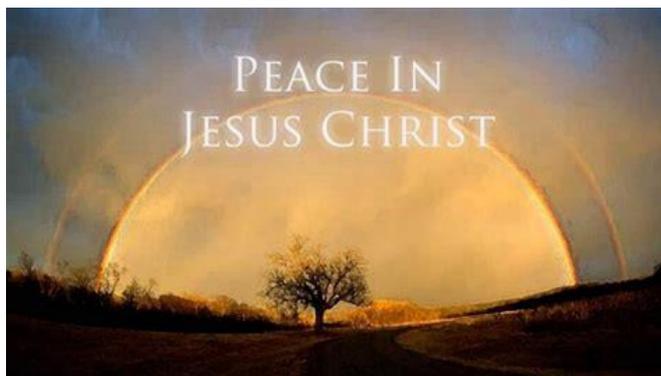
"For those who live according to the flesh are concerned with the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit with the things of the spirit."
(Romans 8:5)

St. Paul was not talking about us acting as people created by God, but to those who have closed themselves to **only matters of the flesh**. He is talking about people who **live only** to satisfy their own desires. They care not for others, except for what others can do for them to satisfy their desires.

In Philippians 1:21-24 we see a better example from St. Paul on the true meaning of Romans 8:5. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart [that is, to die and leave behind the body] and be with Christ, for that is far better. **But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.**"



Paul wants to help others understand the eternal and joyful salvation that Christ has to offer. Our life on earth is a series of frustrations, pains, sicknesses, hardships, and mental anguish when we live without the Spirit of Christ within us.



We cannot escape the suffering in life as these things are part of being human. But there is peace and joy available to us when Christ rules our hearts and souls. We can be an image of Christ when we sacrifice for our family and friends to help them with their own problems and shortcomings. Listen to family members and friends who are

having major problems. Pray for them and for a resolution to those problems. Be an example of Christ to all you meet. The world is full of pain and evil and we cannot escape these things. Therefore, *'we can make a world within a world'* by trusting in Jesus and His words. He will transform you and give you **Peace**, which the world cannot give.

"Jesus please help me be a better husband (wife, aunt, uncle, brother, sister)." **Let your heart and soul trust that your prayers are heard.** If you believe in God, then believe in His Son. For Jesus is the way, and the life and the truth. **All who come to him will not lose their eternal reward.**

Each of us will experience death. But there is a beautiful heaven awaiting those that believe in the only Son of God and abide in His word. We all have doubts and worries about many things each day. But listen to what Jesus tells Martha and Mary in John 11:25-27. They were in deep sorrow because their brother Lazarus had died. They only saw death as death and not as a journey to heaven for those who believe in Jesus.



Jesus must have been deeply saddened to see them in such a state and He wanted to reassure them that their brother was going to live again and be the means to bring Glory to God's and to Jesus. He said to them, "I am the resurrection and the life; the one who believes in Me will live, even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" She [Martha] said to Him,

"Yes, Lord; I have come to believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God..."

Meet India's newest recognized Saint!



By: Verghese V Joseph - published on 02/14/19

A mystic and stigmatist who levitated, she also braved cultural norms, going out without a male escort to care for the poor.

Pope Francis this week recognized a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Mariam Thesia Chiramel Mankidiyan, founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family (CHF) in Kerala, India, making her the third nun to be elevated to the status of sainthood from Kerala.



She was born April 26, as the daughter of Thoma and Thanda Chiramel Mankidiyan in the village of Puthenchira, Trichur District, Kerala. Though once a rich and noble family with extensive property, they became poorer and poorer as Thesia's grandfather married away seven daughters one after the other, selling the property to pay for each a costly dowry. To forget the poor straits to

which the family was reduced, Thesia's father and brother took to drinking.

Mariam Thresia was called during the first half of her life simply Thresia, the name given to her at Baptism on May 3, 1876. Beginning in 1904, she wanted to be called Mariam Thresia, as she believed that she was asked to add "Mariam" to her name by the Blessed Virgin Mary in a vision. And it was as Mariam Thresia that she was professed in 1914, the foundress and first member of the Congregation of the Holy Family.



Such was the family background in which the future pioneer of the family apostolate was born. The third of five children, two boys and three girls, Thresia grew up in piety and holiness under the loving guidance of her saintly mother Thanda.

As she wrote later in her autobiography (a small document of barely six pages written under obedience to her spiritual father), from early childhood Thresia was moved by an intense desire to love God. For this purpose, she fasted four times a week and prayed the Marian Rosary several times a day. Seeing her thinned down at 8 years of age, Thanda tried to dissuade Thresia from her severe fasts and night vigils. But Thresia wanted to be ever more in the likeness of the suffering Christ; to him she also consecrated her virginity when she was about 10 years old.

Discerning her vocation

When Thresia was only 12 years old, her mother died, which was the end also of Thresia's elementary school education. She now set out on a long search to discern her own vocation in life. She longed for a hidden life of prayer and hatched a scheme in 1891 to sneak away from home and lead an eremitical life of prayer and penance in the solitude of the far away hills. But this scheme proved too naive. She continued to frequent the church with three of her companions, to clean it and decorate the altar.

In her love for Jesus, she wanted to be like him in his toil and apostolate. Hence, she helped the poor, nursed the sick, visited and comforted the lonely people of her parish. She nursed even hideous and revolting cases of leprosy and smallpox,

often abandoned to their lot by their poor relatives who had no means of caring for them. Upon their death she took care of their orphaned children.

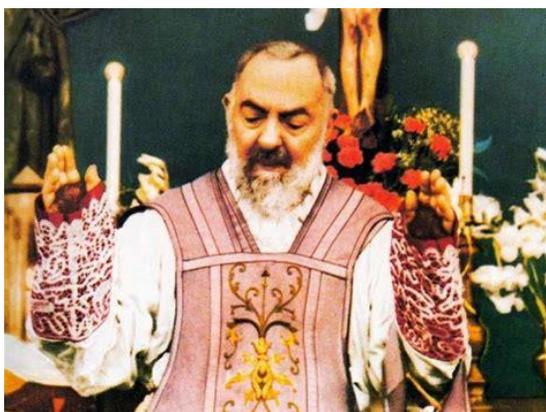
Thresia and her three companions formed a group of prayer and of apostolate. Breaking with the custom of not leaving the house unless accompanied by men, they went on the roads and visited the families in need. This was a revolutionary novelty in their little world, which did not spare its criticism (not without moralizing clerical support) of “the girls taking to the streets!”

Thresia placed her trust in the help of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.



She saw them frequently in visions and received guidance in her apostolate, especially for the conversion of sinners. She prayed for sinners, fasted for their conversion, and visited them and exhorted them to repentance. Her ascetic and penitential practices remind us of the extreme rigor of the ancient hermits and monks. She received several mystical gifts, such as prophecy, healing, an aura of light, and a sweet odor.

And like St. Teresa of Avila, she had frequent ecstasies and levitations. **On Friday's people used to gather to see Mariam Thresia lifted high and hanging in the form of a crucifix on the wall of her room.**



Like the well-known St. Pio of Pietrelcina, she too bore the stigmata, carefully hiding it from public view. Perhaps to help her keep humble amidst such mystical favors, the Lord let her be tormented by diabolical attacks and vexations (again like Padre Pio) almost all through her life. She was repeatedly submitted to exorcism between 1902 and 1905 by Father Joseph Vithayathil, the parish priest of Puthenchira,

acting under orders of the bishop, who wondered if she was simply a plaything of the devils.

Thresia submitted to the bishop's orders with exemplary humility, but the exorcisms seem to have made some people regard Mariam Thresia as a dubious saint, even as St. Mary Magdalene, who was exorcised by Jesus Christ of seven demons, was eventually identified with the unnamed sinful woman in the Gospel of Luke (7: 36-50) on the wrong presumption that a possessed person must be a sinner. Mariam Thresia had also to fight temptations, particularly against faith and chastity, and she passed through the dark night of the soul. From 1902 till her death, she had Father Vithayathil for spiritual director. She opened her heart fully and confidently to him and followed his advice and obeyed him blindly. Of her extant letters 53 out of 55 are addressed to him, seeking advice and spiritual guidance.

The foundation of the Congregation of the Holy Family

In 1903 Mariam Thresia requested her bishop's permission to build a prayer house of solitude, but Mar John Menachery, the Vicar Apostolic of Trichur, first wanted to test her vocation. He suggested to her to consider joining the newly founded Congregation of the Franciscan Clarists, but she did not think that she was called to it. In 1912 he made arrangements for her to live in a convent of the Carmelite nuns at Ollur.



Though the Sisters would gladly have admitted her into their Congregation, she did not feel that it was her call. Finally, in 1913 Mar Menachery permitted her to build a prayer house and sent his secretary to bless it. Thresia moved in, and her three

companions joined her soon. They led a life of prayer and austere penance like hermits but continued to visit the sick and help the poor and the needy irrespective

of religion or caste. The bishop discerned that here was in gestation a new religious Congregation for the service of the family. On May 14, 1914 he erected it canonically and named it the Congregation of the Holy Family (C.H.F.), while receiving the perpetual profession of Mariam Thresia. Her three companions were enrolled as postulants in the new Congregation, while she was appointed its first Superior with Father Joseph Vithayathil as chaplain.

Nurturing the new Congregation

The newly founded Congregation had no written Constitutions. The bishop himself procured the Constitutions of the Holy Family Sisters of Bordeaux from their house in Ceylon (today, Sri Lanka), adapted it and gave it to the foundress. Mother Mariam Thresia saw to its strict observance in the new Congregation, which she nurtured with great care. During and after the difficult years of the First World War, with indomitable energy and utter trust in divine providence, she built, in less than 12 years, three new convents, two schools, two hostels, a study house, and an orphanage.



Education of girls was Mariam Thresia's theology in action, without the slogan. Several young girls were attracted to her by her simplicity, humility and shining sanctity. At the time of her death at the age of 50 there were 55 Sisters in the Congregation, 30 boarders and 10 orphans under her care. The co-founder *Father Joseph*

Vithayathil continued, till his death in 1964, to nurture the Congregation, which grew steadily. In the year 2000, this Congregation of the Holy Family had 1584 professed Sisters, serving in Kerala, in the mission areas of North India, in Germany, Italy, and Ghana, with a total of 176 houses in 7 provinces and 119 novices.

Death and reputation for sanctity



Mother Mariam Theresia died on June 8, 1926, from a wound on the leg caused by a falling object. The wound defied cure owing to her diabetes. After her death, the fame of Mariam Theresia spread as she continued from heaven to succor the sick and the needy through miraculous favors. In 1971 a historical commission collected the necessary evidence regarding her life, virtues and writings and presented it in

1983 before an eparchial (diocesan) tribunal, which also collected the depositions of 15 of the surviving eyewitnesses. On June 28, 1999, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints promulgated a decree stating that the Servant of God Mariam Theresia had practiced the Christian virtues heroically, and so she was entitled to be called Venerable. Of the numerous miraculous cures reported, the following one was examined canonically in 1992.

Mathew Pellissery was born in 1956 with congenital clubfeet and till he was 14 he



could only walk with great difficulty on the sides of his feet. After 33 days of fasting and prayer invoking the help of Mother Mariam Theresia by the whole family, his right foot was straightened during night sleep on August 21, 1970. And similarly, after 39 days of fasting and prayer his left foot was straightened overnight during sleep on

August 28, 1971.



Ever since then Mathew has been able to walk normally. This double healing was declared inexplicable in terms of medical science by as many as nine doctors in India and Italy and was

declared a miracle obtained through the intercession of the Servant of God Mariam Theresia by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints on January 27, 2000. This miraculous cure thus met the last canonical requirement for her beatification in April 2000. Pellissery was grateful to be able to be present at this solemn celebration of beatification in Rome.

The Silent Addiction to Technology

By: Richard Pickard



We are growing into people all over the world who preoccupy themselves with spending hours and hours; watching TV; being on their iPhones; texting on Facebook or Twitter. This steals our time and makes us anxious about so many things. We think we are connecting with others, while in reality, we are distancing ourselves from everyone around us...Including family and friends.

We have to stop being a slave to these devices. ***Try starting each day with a prayer to Jesus instead of reaching for your iPhone.*** Time with family or friends is important. How often do you see people out for dining at a restaurant, ***glued to their iPhones?*** No conversation is taking place. **What is on the iPhone is of greater 'interest' than the other people at the table.** That is what they are telling everyone they are with. Many people are ***addicted*** to the tech world and little by little, people are being conditioned to believe whatever is presented to them through the Internet and iPhones. We are becoming robots for technology. Our conversations begin to center around what we heard or saw on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.

I recently read some articles about iPhone addictions. And it is scary what is happening to all of us who cannot seem to put down these phones. Here is just a

snippet of one of the many articles on this subject. "The problem is in your brain. Specifically, it's called dopamine, and scientists has been able to pinpoint this chemical as the primary reason we keep checking our phones. It's a neurotransmitter, sending a signal to your nerve endings. A new Instagram message or text arrives on your iPhone, and you get a chemical signal in your brain. It's a reward, almost like a tingling sensation. Someone has contacted you with new information--you're important, you are needed." Yes, this is an addiction that we do to ourselves, but most people do not know about the chemical connection.

The photo below is not photoshopped. It is real. If you have teenage children with iPhones you know in your heart, this addiction is not good for them.



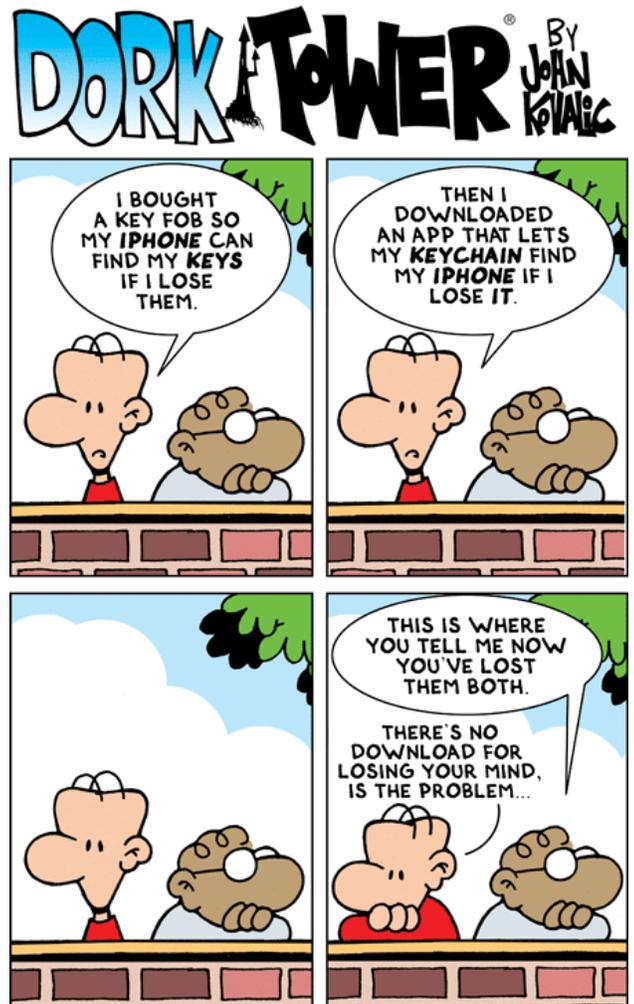
Once you are hooked then you get bombarded with ads that center around what you have been watching or listening too or texting about. You become enamored with technology and you can't seem to live without your iPhone in your hands. You are constantly being distracted from real life into the virtual world that you place yourself into for many hours. Young people especially are being targeted. How young is too young to get an iPhone? I have seen iPhones in the hands of a 2-year-old. Who cannot even talk yet but have one in their hands? This keeps the child entertained and the parents from being distracted by the child. **Do you think this child will grow up loving the family values or what they learn through technology?** I am not talking about the occasional time when you give a child a phone or laptop to watch a cartoon, etc. I am talking about conditioning a child to reach for an iPhone rather that be a part of a family conversation or just being with family.

Satan knows that he can use distractions to promote his evil agenda. The iPhone and the Internet are not evil, but how they are used, can be. Breaking up the family unit by limiting quality time tighter is a sure way of controlling people and destroying the family bond. How many hours do you or family members or friends spend in the 'virtual world?' **Recent studies peg this at 6 hours each day! That is half of the day.**

Here is a test for you (and your family) to do. Put all iPhones away for an hour and turn them off!

Could you do it? Or did you fail? How did this make you feel? Did you feel **anxious**? Or was this time away from the phone, no problem for you? No one is grading you but be honest with yourself.

The iPhone and the Internet are here to stay, so it is important for us to understand that **"we"** are in control and not technology. Here are some simple rules to follow to help bring back time with friends and family. (1) When you are out with friends for lunch or dinner, make it a rule for everyone to turn off the phones. (2) At home when the family sits down for breakfast or lunch or dinner, make it a habit of turning off the phones. *You will get some resistance at first or rude comments, but sooner or later, if you don't start taking back your time with family and friends, you will just be another addict. You will be under the control of technology!*



The Real Easter Hallelujah Message



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For PDF, place Mouse over link and when hand appears, Left Click Mouse

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I am watching over you. Pray my children,
Pray, Pray, Pray My Rosary For The Salvation of Sinners

