

Adv. J. S. Rebello



The Testimony



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Born on 16th Nov 1950, in Chinchinim - Deussua Vellore Salcete Goa, to late Nepomociano T. Rebello and late Paciencia Rebello. Married to Doris Yvonne Rebello on 16th December 1984 and is blessed with four children, daughter Lianne, sons Neil, Clinton and Alison. Worked as a Principal of Don Bosco Secondary and Higher Secondary Night School at Panaji, for 40 years. (1970-2010).



Left to Right: Lianne, Doris, Alison, Clinton,
Neil & Sandy

Testimony of Life Conversion to a new life in Jesus Christ follows:-

Dated: 13-09-2004

I was in the world of my own making, engrossed in my work as, an Advocate, as a Principal of the Night Secondary and Higher Secondary school at Don Bosco, Panaji and later also in real estate business and dealings on behalf of my clients. I used to firmly believe "work is prayer" and there is no need of any other prayer. I was hardly available at home, used to leave early in the morning, and return at night, after having a couple of drinks along with my friends, after the night school was over

In the year 1995, our third child Clinton was born on 3rd Dec, 1995. On his birth my wife's depression, which she was suffering earlier for several years, became acute and she could not sleep without tranquillizers. Added to that, quarrels between us reached to an unbearable proportion and there was no peace at home, in spite of having all material things and pleasures of the world. "I am the vine and you are the branches, those who abide in Me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) Now I know it was because; there was no God in our home and in the family at that time. Even Sunday Mass I did not attend for many years, much less confession, or say Rosary or followed any other religious practice as ordained by the Church.

Since 1994, my wife was after me to go to the Divine Retreat Centre in Kerala and in fact, she booked the tickets for us to go to Divine, but I turned down her request arguing that, "God is not only in Divine Centre but everywhere' In fact, I used to dislike mass, confession, Rosaries etc. as I never believed in the existence of Heaven and Hell at all. I used to say Heaven and Hell are here on earth only, and those who are rich are in Heaven and poor are in Hell and the church and priests want to fool the people and keep them poor telling them, if you suffer here on this earth you will have reward in Heaven. What a blasphemy it was! And to add to this, I used to call myself a "virtuous person" and proudly insist that I don't have any sin, but now I know who was speaking in me then, it was none other then Satan himself. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and his word is not in us". (1 John 1:10).

Meanwhile, the disputes and quarrels among us continued and children particularly our then small daughter suffered immensely. In short, life and home became hell on earth. With no other solution in sight I was contemplating to file

divorce proceedings in the Court. Only my daughter's fate on divorce used to keep me back, from filing for divorce. Now I know that, through the great blessing of our only daughter Lianne, exactly within nine months of our marriage on 13th September 1985, in the first instance God saved our marriage from breaking. However, there was no peace at all and life became really unbearable, by the year 1996 and hence finally I took a decision to file for divorce in the Court.

At this crucial and critical juncture, loving and merciful God, again miraculously intervened in our lives. Now I know that, when God sends us great sufferings or great troubles, it is a sign that he designs great things for us, to raise us to great holiness, and on those occasions, God is closest to us. "It is good for me that was I humbled so that I might learn thy statutes". (Psalm 119:7) It so happened, that, at Calangute Church in October 1996 a 3-day retreat was held, led by Fr. Augustine Vallooran from Divine Retreat Centre. On my wife's constant persistence, and as I was also in a desperate condition, I accompanied her, for some of the sessions carrying our son Clinton with us who was then 10 months old.

After hearing the Word of God for the first time ever, proclaimed by indomitable charismatic preacher Fr. Augustine, which made some sense to me, I decided to go to Divine Centre and see, if my wife will be healed, since the doctors failed to cure her, so also I decided in advance in my mind, if my wife does not get healed at Divine Centre, on my return, I will go ahead and file the divorce proceedings as decided earlier. So, with my family I went to Divine Centre in November 1996 during Diwali vacation. Willingly, I did not go to the Divine Centre, but I was taken on my knees by force of circumstances which were beyond my control. Now I know that, it was the merciful, faithful and ever loving God who love us all the time, took us there with his triumphant and victorious hand, in order to know Him and to save our family from the clutches of Satan and to bring new freedom and joy given by Him. "Taste and see that the Lord is good. Happy are those who take refuge In Him. (Psalm 34:8)

At Divine after hearing the word of God for a week, I realized that, I was not at all a "virtuous person" that I thought and claimed to be all along my life. All my unrighteousness and sins were exposed before my eyes. I realized for the first time that in many areas of my life, I was living a sinful and wretched life and yet claiming to be a virtuous person. Now I know, it was Satan who captured my mind then, to keep me as his slave and it is his tactic which he adopts, with every one, who is ignorant of the word of God "The word of God is alive and active, sharper than the double

edge sword; It cuts all piercing until it divides soul and spirit, joints from marrow, It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before Him nothing can be hidden but everything in all the creation is exposed and lies open before His eyes". (Hebrew 4:12-13)

My wife and I were greatly strengthened by the word of God at Divine. Before we left Divine I asked my wife to throw away all the tablets and tranquilizers outside the gate of the Divine Centre and claim that she was healed of the depression. Truly from that day till today never more my wife Doris touched those tranquilizers again. I praise and thank you Almighty Healer and Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. "No medicine or ointment cured them; they were restored to health by your Word which heals humanity". (Wisdom of Solomon 16:12)

I wish to tell you all, that it was for the first time only at Divine I came to understand and realize the power of our Catholic faith. Though I was brought up as a Roman Catholic, I never understood the real of power of mass or other sacraments. It is only at the Divine Centre, I clearly understood the immense spiritual value of Eucharistic Celebration and the awesome power of our faith, "The power of the Holy Spirit". As a result, I never missed a Sunday mass after I returned from Divine, which I earlier failed to attend for more than 10 years. And now for the last 2½ years, I attend the mass daily. It is not that, all our problems ended on our returning home from Divine, but certainly, God took away the depression of my wife, resulting much peace in our family, and the question of filing divorce in the Court did not arise at all. "Come to me, all you who are tired of carrying heavy loads, and I will give you the rest". (Matthew 11:28)

It is through the priceless gift of our 3rd child darling Clinton, who I thought then, to be an unexpected arrival, as per worldly standards, as we had a pair Lianne and Neil, the merciful, loving and compassionate God brought us out, from darkness to His marvelous light by taking us to Divine. It was only the acute and unbearable depression of my wife on Clinton's birth resulting constant quarrels forced me to go to Divine. God works in marvelous ways. "My thoughts, says the Lord are not like yours and My ways different from yours". (Isaiah 55:8) Our Clinton is a lovely, loving, friendly, intelligent, sensitive child. He is like a live wire bubbling with energy all the time and childish naughtiness and keeps us on our toes even now, unlike our other children. His absence in the house even for a short while makes the house empty.

I made second retreat at Divine Centre all by myself in July 1997, again at the

insistence of my wife, along with my friend late Cyril Pacheco. At that retreat I was cleansed of most of my capital sins. "Now let us settle the matter, you are stained red with sin, but I will wash you and clean you as snow". (Isaiah 1:18) On our way back home by bus, a thought came to my mind if only we had a retreat Centre In Goa like Divine Centre of Kerala, the whole Goa which is very small compared to the other states, would be renewed in faith. I expressed my thought to my late friend Pacheco when the bus stopped for the tea break. He responded by saying that his aunty, wished to donate a property for a charitable and religious purpose and he will request her to donate the same to establish retreat center. On reaching Goa within a week's time, we jointly wrote a letter to Fr. Augustine about it.

Only after one year and four months when I almost forgot about it, I received a reply from Fr. Augustine saying that their Society is willing to accept the land for said purpose and the concerned Fathers will visit Goa to see the land. Finally on 16th December 1998, late Dr. Rui D'Cruz and his late wife Maria Paras D'cruz from Margao made the gift deed donating the land at Belloy, Nuvem admeasuring over 1.50 Lakh sq. metres to establish Divine Centre in Goa similar to the one like in Kerala. Presently, Fr. Paul of Divine is looking after the land and the place since 1 February 1999. According to God's time, if it is His Will, Divine Centre will be established in Goa. We have to wait patiently for God's time. We must all pray that, God may grant Goans this privilege out of His bounty and love, so that many more Goans and people from neighbouring areas will be able to hear the word of God, to renew their lives, enjoy the peace that Christ promises and grants to everyone, who believes and come to HIM.

Meanwhile a tragedy struck in our family, which left a deep and lasting effect on my life, the sudden, unexpected death of my eldest brother late Dr. F. M. Rebello after heart operation in March 1999. "We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up". (2 Samuel 14:14) It came like a bolt from the blue. "Who can live and never taste death". (Psalm 89:49). The main pillar and corner stone of our house suddenly crashed and was no more. I was not able to accept his death for nearly three months, until I went to Divine in May 1999, where God revealed to me that, no one can refuse to accept His will. "My days are swifter than a runner, they flee away. They see no good". (Job 9:25). I learnt a valuable lesson of my life that the same can happen to me as well or anyone else. With death every thing vanishes in the thin air all our riches, degrees, power, grandeur, greatness, highest honors, great fortunes and attachments of this world. "Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring . What is your life? For you

are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes". (James 4:14). It gave me food for thought on death for the first time and made me realize the folly of dearly attaching and running after things of this empty world. "Remember his fate, for yours like it, yesterday it was his and today it is yours". (Sirach 38:22).

I last visited Divine along with my family in May June 2001. My wife has been going to Divine three or four times a year for the last 5 years since the conception and birth of our 4th child Alison in April 1999. Her religious pilgrimages all the time and devotions throughout the year caused many heartaches to me and children. I used to argue and quarrel with her over it, as to why she needs to go to Divine so many times and attend devotions all the time, until God gave me the revelation two and half years back, that, He is preparing both of us separately to use us as His Special Vessels for His works of proclaiming Good News of salvation and that was a part of preparation for her. After that preparation is completed, He will join us together, to jointly proclaim His kingdom. That day onwards, I stopped objecting and quarrelling over it. Presently, she takes many new people to experience Jesus the Saviour to Divine with a missionary zeal accompanied by Clinton.

At my last retreat at the Divine Centre in 2001, which was 8th one in succession, God made me aware of my non-obedience to His word in my life. God directly spoke in my heart and asked me a question, "what is the use of visiting Divine Centre repeatedly, and hearing His Word every time and not obeying it"? "Who ever says that I have come to know Him, but does not obey His commandments is a liar and in such a person the truth does not exist". (1 John 2:4). This question struck me in my heart, so much so, on my return from the Divine in June 2001, I continuously made one sentence prayer to God, "Lord give me the grace to obey your word in my life". Teach me oh Lord the way of thy statutes and I will observe it to the end, give me understanding that I may keep your Law and observe with my whole heart". (Psalm 119:33-34) I also sought the intercession of our Blessed mother, Virgin Mary and recited daily many rosaries. "Whoever loves me, will obey my teachings, My Father will love him and My Father and I will come to him and live with him". (John 14:2)

After 7 months of waiting in prayer through the intercession of Mother Mary, the loving and merciful God gave me the grace to obey Him. I now pray daily, that I may endure until last. "Whoever holds out to the end will be saved". (Matthew 24:13). Right in the beginning, God made me aware that legal practice in the Court and obedience to His law cannot go hand in hand and side by side. It is just

impossible. "For your hands are stained with blood, and your fingers with iniquity, your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness and no one brings suit justly, no one goes to law honestly, they rely on the empty pleas, they speak lies, conceiving mischief and begetting iniquity". (Isaiah 59:2-4).

Thereafter, for nearly 3 months every morning when I had go to the Court, I used to get the feeling of ache in my body; so much so, I began to hate to attend the Court, which I used to attend happily until then, for almost 20 years. It was a big struggle, whether I should give up legal practice in the court or not. The real struggle was the anxiety as to how I would support and maintain my large family. Finally time came to make a choice between the legal practice and the Lord. At last, one day at Konkani retreat in Nerul church, it was finally revealed to me by God in clear terms that I must give up the my legal practice in the Court, if I wish to obey His Law. The direction from the Lord came in no uncertain terms. So I came back from the retreat and on the very next day, I wrote letters to all my clients to take back their files. It was at the end of year 2001 and the beginning of 2002. What a feeling of relief and peace descended on me thereafter, I cannot explain to you in words. "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free". (John 8:32). Praise and thank you Jesus, you liberated me and set my soul free from that great bondage. "You will take your idols plated with silver and gold, and will throw them away like a filth, shouting "out of my sight". (Isaiah 30:22).

Prior to giving up the legal practice in the Court, my wife has been ceaselessly praying for me for a long time to give it up and also asking me to give it up. I used to argue and ask her how we would maintain our family without money. In answer to that, she always used to remind me of the promise of the Lord, "So do not start worrying; where will my food come from or my drink or my clothes. Your Father in Heaven knows that you need all these things. Instead be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and what He requires of you and He will provide you all these other things". (Matthew 6:31-33). I still lacked enough faith then, to hold on to that promise, but now that promise had been truly fulfilled by the Lord. My mother unlike others in the family never liked me becoming an Advocate and she was never happy that I became an Advocate. She used to quote to me, the Konkani saying "Eke dilo Poak (People), (My eldest brother was doctor), Ek dilo Devak (God) (My second brother is a priest) Ek dilo devcharak (Devil) (Myself is for Devil). The wish of my mother and wife has been granted by the Lord; and I am at last redeemed. "Gods love was revealed among us in this way, God sent His only Son in to the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we

loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be atoning sacrifice of our sins". (1 John 4:9-10).

Thereafter, I made consistent and conscious efforts to obey the Word of God in other spheres of my life. I also gave up real estate business and dealings on behalf of my clients in which I used to earn a lot of money. "I hold my feet from every evil, in order to keep your word; I do not turn away from your ordinance, for you had thought me". (Psalm 119:102). Last 4 years I had to pass through "the furnace of humiliation" "the test for the obedience of word of God" and trials and tribulations, in every sphere of my life. My relatives, professional colleagues and other friends mocked and laughed at me for what I have done and still doing. But, it is too small a sacrifice compared to what you receive "LOVE OF CHRIST", which no one in this world can give or understand, unless one experience it on one's own accord. "Whoever loves me, will obey my teachings, My Father will love him and My Father and I will come to him and live with him". (John 14:23).

The Good Lord continued to pour out His graces on me to obey Him more and more day by day. Living waters came flowing down like a river breaking down barriers within me, at feet of the Lord before the Blessed Sacrament, each day during one hour adoration, for the last 2 years at Bambolim Holy Cross Church and now at the St. Inez Church, Panaji. Every iniquity -- anger, hatred, unforgiveness, pride, lust, fear, stubbornness, bitterness of the bad memories of the past life, so also that fruitless greed for money and wealth were slowly but surely were being burnt away from my heart. Come, everyone who is thirsty here is water! Come, you that have no money, buy corn and eat! Come buy wine and milk it will cost you nothing, why spend money on what does not satisfy, why spend your wages and still be hungry? Listen to me and do what I say and you will enjoy the best food of all, listen now my people, and come to me; again come to me and you will have life". (Isaiah 55:1-3). The Lord has set me free from all the cares of this empty world. In fact Jesus has given me a new birth and new life, hope of everlasting life. Jesus said, I telling you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again". (John 3:3).

Just prior to giving up my legal practice in the Court, the Lord forced me with an alternate job of a Notary in the year 1999. Now I only work, as a glorified clerk, earning my daily bread in peace and joy, and even earn more than I used to earn in my legal practice in the Court. God has now also given me the gift of satisfaction to be satisfied with what I have. By the great love, mercy and grace of God I have been

given the grace for regular personal prayer very early in the morning. Today by the grace of God I teach the Bible to the staff and students in Don Bosco Night Secondary and Higher Secondary School for the last one and half year. I did not and could not do it, for the past 32 years that I spent in the night school. Now, I also teach Bible to another group, mostly Hindu brethren who are very eager to learn it on their own accord. The grace of God has led His Spirit to guide me to compose more than a dozen of Divine Hymns both in English and Konkani early in the morning based on the scripture. Also the grace of God led His Spirit to guide me to start a Counseling Centre for the Youth and married persons more particularly having marital disputes, in my office, since 1st July 2004, on my wife's birthday. Do not cling to the events of the past or dwell on what happened long ago. Watch out for a new thing I am going to do. It is happening already - you can see it now, I will make road through the wilderness and give you streams of water there". (Isaiah 43:18-19) .

The Lord by his gracious, bounty and love, have also provided to me a new place consisting of a hall, counseling and media Centre in the heart of Panaji city in Alfran Plaza near Don Bosco , which is now nearing completion; again the grace of God has led His Spirit to guide me to name it JESUS CENTRE. The grace of God also led His spirit guide me to use the same to proclaim the Good News of Salvation and for the work of evangelization. How the Good Lord provided the said place to establish Jesus Centre, by installing a new person, to complete the said Alfran Plaza, which was lying dormant and incomplete for more than 6 years, with His great signs and wonders, is another testimony by itself. The grace of God has led His Spirit to guide me to give the said testimony on the commencement of the Jesus Centre. PRAISE you and thank JESUS. If the Lord is willing, He will give us all the power through His Holy Spirit to proclaim the Good News and propagate His kingdom in the capital of Goa and save souls for Him. "But when the Advocate has come whom I will send from the Father, he will bear witness concerning Me". (John 15:26).

I wish to publicly admit and acknowledge that the following events from 1996 - 2004 led to my conversion:

(i) My renewal in new life commenced in November 1996 with hearing of the word of God proclaimed by Fr. Augustine at Divine and he is the one who first brought me to Jesus. I had several counseling sessions with him when I went to Divine each time. I must admit without any hesitation, I was deeply touched with his counseling and the trust he put in the Lord for the solution of every problem no matter how big the problem appeared. In fact, it was his tender, loving, affectionate,

non-partisan approach and sweet inimitable smile attracted me to him, and helped and made me, to accept what he said about Jesus. I know now, he was portraying the true image of Jesus being His true loving witness. "I will give them a new heart and new mind. I will take away their stubborn heart of stone and will give them an obedient heart. Then they will keep my laws and faithfully obey all my commands. They will be my people and I will be their God". (Ezekiel 11:19-20). May the Good Lord continue to bless him for many more years to come to proclaim His word in his vineyard in order to change stubborn and wretched hearts like me and turn them to God.

(ii) It was by sheer accident that, I started to go since May 1999 for the prayer meetings then conducted by Bro. Edmund at Don Bosco. Later I joined as a member and volunteer of the Association of Crusaders for Jesus with Mary. The same has led to my growth and progress in my renewed life. Although I have not gone to Divine for over the last three years, the growth retreats attended by me during Ganesh and summer holidays conducted by the Association for the last 4 years brought me closer and closer to Jesus. The breaking of the word of God by Bro. Edmund at those retreats was so deep and heart-breaking that any stubborn heart like me had to break open to receive the message of Jesus Christ given by him.

At every retreat, without fail, he reminded us as to what is more important than the mere knowledge of the word of God; it is nothing but the obedience to the word of God. And if one does not obey the word of God in one's life, then all that he says and does is meaningless and no power will ever come to him from God through His Holy Spirit. Every time it reminded me the question posed in my heart at my last retreat at the Divine Centre in June 2001 as I have mentioned earlier "what is the use of the knowledge of the Law without obedience?" and virtually led me to make that prayer to the Lord for obedience. Without those growth retreats I would have never come closer to the Lord as I am now. I pray to the Lord that, He may continue to bless Bro. Edmund for many more years to come to work in His vineyard and to bring back many souls to HIM. "Do not deceive yourself by listening to his word, instead put it into practice. Whoever listens to the word but does not Put it into practice is like a man who looks in to the mirror and sees himself and then goes away and at once forgets what he looks like". (James 1:22-24).

(iii) My testimony would be incomplete if I omit to mention my wife's contribution towards my conversion. I remember just a month before we got married, I received a card from her wherein she expressed her great desire to establish "a beautiful Christian home after our marriage", but I then a Catholic

unbeliever shattered her dreams and destroyed her faith, but God never fails in His purpose. God has now revealed to me that, I was married to her only to bring about of my conversion. On account of my stubbornness and pride she suffered a lot and pass through severe hardships and mental torture. She also passed through the furnace of humiliation, as everyone mocked and ridiculed her and I was not an exception, for what she did for the Lord; but she never gave up. It is through her sufferings, tears and prayers through fasting at the feet of the Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mother Mary whose fervent devotee she is, has brought about my conversion. Initially when she was sick, I used to wonder why on earth I have been given this kind of wife by God, but now I know, those who love God, He turns all sufferings for their good. "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God who are called according to His purpose". (Romans 8:28). At present there is peace is our home. Now at all times, I try to discern His will without using or operating my will or intelligence; with a total surrender to Him and never do anything without discerning His will. Now I fully and completely trust in Jesus who till today, has taken care and solved every problem concerning us through His great signs and wonders. I am confident, without any doubt in my mind that, He will continue to take care of every future need of our family and I have nothing to worry or fear. "Believe in Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your family". (Acts 16:31).

Before I wind up this long testimony, it reminds me of an incident happened years back, which now seems to be coming alive. Some years ago at Porvorim Chapel, one Bro. Lawrence used to give Counseling. Presently the said Bro. Lawrence gives counseling at Assonora Church where Fr. Savio is a parish priest and also at Divine. At that time, I was forcibly taken to him by my wife. After counseling session was over, he prayed over me and said to me. I quote him, "the Lord says that, you and your wife would bring thousands of souls to Him and the Lord would use all our talents and knowledge of the Law, for the proclamation and the spread of His Kingdom". At that time I simply laughed at it, as I found it ridiculous to believe, and it appeared to me like asking the devil to quote the scriptures. But now I know that it was a pre- revelation given to Bro. Lawrence by the Lord 7 years earlier, which I mocked on account of my ignorance of God's law as many people do. If God had marked my guilt I would have not survived but instead He poured out His endless mercy, compassion and love on me and our family. "If you O Lord kept a record of our sins, who could escape being condemned? For you forgive us, so that we should stand in awe of you". (Psalm 130:3-4).

Now, if God is willing, and He desires to use me for His work to proclaim good news and spread of His Kingdom, (although I am not worthy of it at all) I shall not fear nor lag behind and I am sure so too will be my wife. What then we are to say about these things, "If God is for us who can be against us". (Romans 8:31). I know that cost and the price to be the disciple of Jesus is very high. "Who ever Comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes even life itself cannot be my disciple". (Luke 14:26). If Lord is willing, one can undertake the said task with the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus commanded to one and all before He ascended to Heaven. "Go then to all the people everywhere and make my disciples, baptize them, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always to the end of the age". (Matthew 28:19-20).

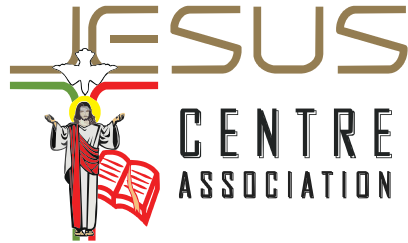
PRAISE THE LORD!!

Prayer

Father in heaven, we praise your infinite goodness for giving us the gift of Jesus, as Saviour of the world. Thank you Jesus, for your passion, death on the cross and glorious resurrection by which we were redeemed from sin and satan. Oh, Holy Spirit be with us always as Comforter, Counselor and our Advocate before the throne of God until we reach eternity.

Mother Mary, all you angels and saints pray for us so that we by the merits of Jesus may attain eternal happiness, to praise and thank and worship God forever.

Spiritual Counselling is provided on weekdays
from Monday to Saturday
11 p.m. - 1 p.m. & from 4 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.



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