Columns
Spirituality



Sr. Molly Fernandes prays before the Blessed Sacrament at the chapel of the Sisters of the Holy Family in Goa, India, on Nov. 10. (Courtesy of Molly Fernandes)



by Molly Fernandes

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There was a time in my life that I started searching within to discover what I wanted. Like those who at one time or another wonder and question their existence, I wondered what God was asking of me. The goal itself wasn't enough; I had realized my talents and beauty within, understood what I was capable of, and found joy in what I was passionate about.

The words of Jesus, "Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled and the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12), became the epitome of my life's journey, guiding me to grow in love for God and my neighbor. I keep seeking and drawing toward this ideal. I remember how often I would contemplate the purpose of my life while sitting at the feet of Jesus, especially when I was going through troubled waters after standing my ground and raising my prophetic voice, which doesn't always go well, as we all know how challenging it can be to live in a community.

God has called us to glorify Him as St. Paul says, "do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). And then St. Paul spells out the purpose of life in writing to the Ephesians, telling them they are "called to be holy and blames before Him" (Ephesians 1, 4). This call to be holy and blameless is universal and applies to every follower of Jesus, not just religious or consecrated men and women, or the clergy. To fulfill the purpose of life, one needs to have a clear goal and aim. It is like focusing on the pinnacle you want to reach.

No doubt, holiness entails action, and this action is connected with one's emotions, feelings, behavioral patterns and attitudes. It requires participation in communion with others — family, community, society, the church and the world at large, all working together for a greater mission. Holiness is not something that one can buy, rather it is attained through and by doing ordinary things in extraordinary ways. Holiness is being who you really are without putting on a façade, embracing all your strengths and weaknesses.

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To be holy, one needs to define their true purpose of life by establishing a clear aim and goal. Knowing the purpose will motivate one to achieve it and when we truly understand the purpose, we can pursue it with passion. When this aim and goal are

carried out with sincerity, zeal, passion and truthfulness, the purpose of life becomes meaningful and fulfilling.

When you have a purpose in life, you can make a difference in the world. You are the driving force behind your goals and aims in life, gaining a deeper understanding of the world around you, including what makes you or breaks you. Having a purpose prompts you to prioritize your goals and to learn from both failures and broken relationships and appreciate those who stand by you and support you.

The importance of having purpose in life became evident to me when I read a short story. Seven angels were sitting in a circle in the heavens, discussing what they would do when God sent them down to the earth. Each angel shared their passions and plans: a doctor, a composer, a politician and so on. But the seventh angel did not answer.

Then, according to the story, God pushed the angel to identify his purpose. The seventh angel responded that he'd like to be a writer to "bring all the light that I have seen in the heavens down to earth."

To know the purpose of our life and to bring it to completion with much passion and zeal ought to be our greatest desire. The month of November reminds us of our end as we pray for the departed souls — what we take when we die and what we leave behind.

Like the seventh angel, I, too, have found my purpose and vowed to make known the mercies of God, His graciousness and to proclaim Him to the ends of the world. Thus, I am fulfilling the purpose of my life by serving God, attaining my goals through the mission and apostolate entrusted to my care.