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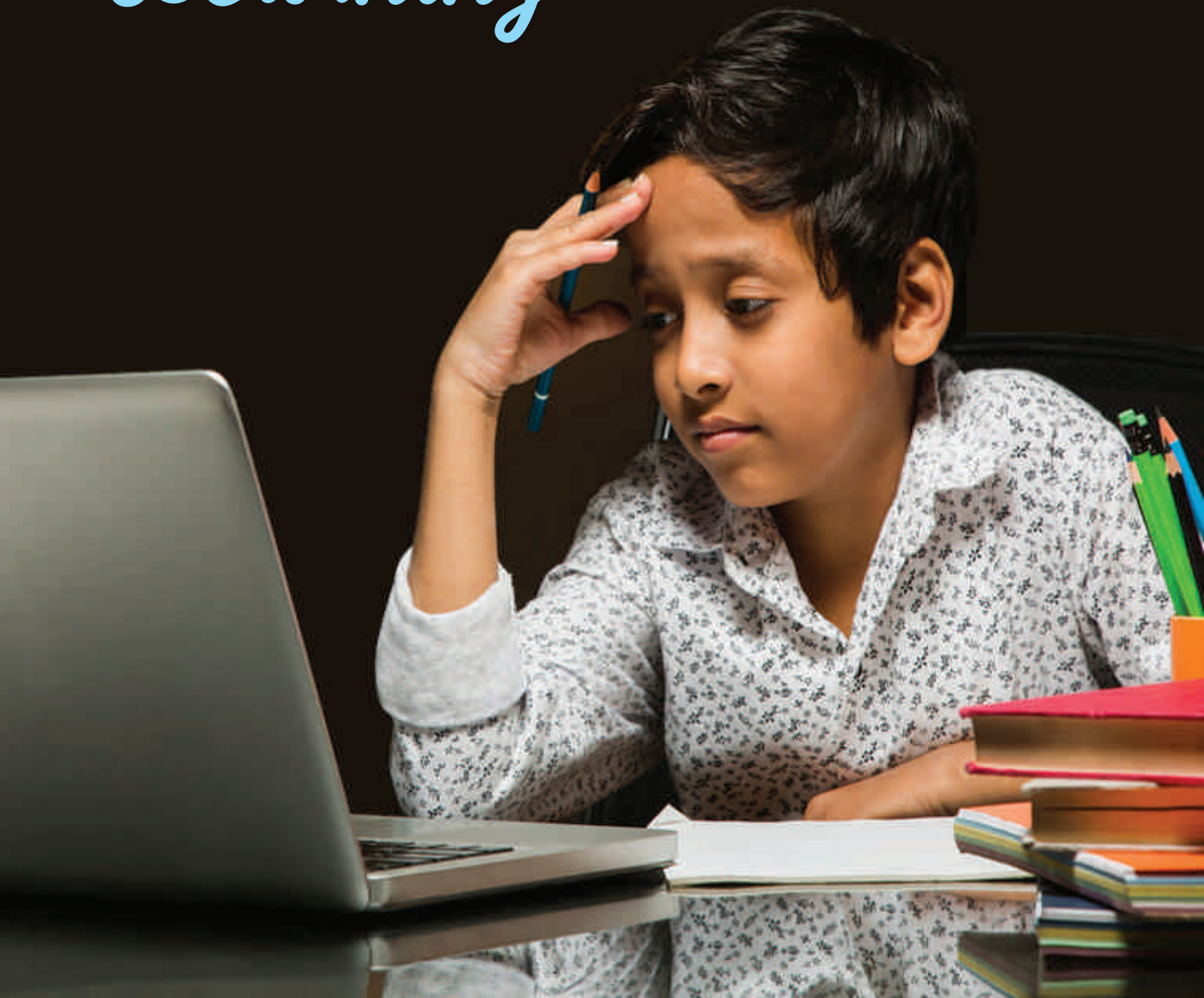
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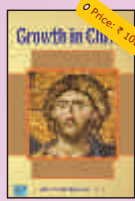
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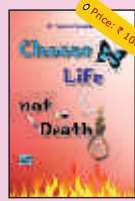
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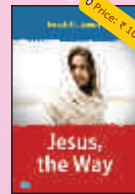
Living the Word of God - Year C



The Spring Returns Not



A Retreat with Pope Francis on Mercy



Jesus, the Way



Gospel Sketches



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Day by Day



Beyond Frontiers and Boundaries



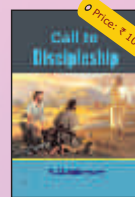
Twin Lamps unto our Feet



Touch Me, Jesus!



Footprints



Call to Discipleship



Christian Virtues



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Beyond the Horizon

The novel Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an international public health emergency. Owing to its high infectivity and consequent health danger including death, countries all over the world implemented nationwide lockdowns and other measures with the hope of flattening the epidemic curve.

The second wave of Covid-19 in India is making its dangerous spell on the people. Infection has spread its shadow on human lives even in the nook and corner of every village in some States. One more state-wide lockdown has been imposed in Tamil Nadu and few other states of the country, forcing us to remain indoors and work from home. Institutions small and big have to struggle in order to keep going. Labourers in the unorganized sectors and daily wage earners have to face tough time having no income. The poor have to struggle in order to survive during this challenging time.

I could hear these days incessant sound of ambulances rushing to hospitals; I could see many thousands of deaths due to Covid-19; I could painfully observe the suffering of patients who are unable to find beds in the health centres and hospitals, who die due to lack of oxygen facilities and absence of medicines; I could experience the griefs and sorrows of the families which have lost their dear ones. We all would have lost our dear ones due to coronavirus disease.

I do not want to go into the details regarding the number of deaths occurred due to Covid-19. However, we must do everything that is necessary to stop this pandemic and we need to get back to normal life, even finding ways to live while fighting this virus.

This pandemic has affected the children more than any other section of the society. More than a year, children are unable to have their usual school learning and the related activities. Glued to mobile phones, many children are compelled to learn something. In the villages, even this facility is denied to them. Lock-down situations force them to remain at home, the impact is beyond description.

Recently in one of the schools in Chennai, a teacher has been arrested for his inappropriate behaviour while taking online classes. Sending improper messages, taking advantage of the position as teacher, he has misbehaved with many students. Digital platform is like Pandora's box which contains evil in great measure. Unless we are vigilant and alert, online portal can

become a potential tool for danger and disaster.

Digital learning has become the new normal situation for the students. In the villages, the scenario may be different. Millions of students are denied of education. Their future is under great risk as they are not given the basics of education.

This situation may continue for some more time. But there is greater awareness among people about this pandemic. Further, we are having access to vaccine in order to protect ourselves from this deadly virus. Digital learning may be the way of learning in the coming days. How are we going to help our children to stay protected and keep learning while staying at home?

In the cover feature, "Beyond Digital Learning," Cyril, SJ, presents both positive and negative elements of digital learning (*see p. 10*). He says that "the poor have neither access to proper internet services nor computers to follow online classes. Out of 1.6 million schools across the country, not even 10 percent can afford digital learning."

"Digital learning cannot replicate the chalk and talk pedagogy that we normally follow in the teaching-learning system. The lockdown experience for children is unusual and it is common for behavioural issues to be exacerbated by the strangeness, and stresses of being confined to their homes." The writer emphasises the importance of social interaction for children even while being confined at home. We need to be innovative in educating children towards integrated growth. The impact of this lock-down situation will be seen even after things become normal.

While the current scenario has brought in fear, anxiety, worry and pain, we are also learning many things from this new situation. We witness every day the sacrifice of doctors and nurses who risk their lives in order to save the lives of many. We come across Good Samaritans who have shown great courage in reaching out to the patients who are in need. We hear of so many volunteers who go out of the way to offer help to the critical patients, and extend assistance for decent burials etc.

Education is not only about acquiring skills and abilities, it is more about learning to be human. Children, who are the future, need to be protected. We need to go beyond digital learning and grow along with children who are our real wealth. There is a rainbow in the eastern sky, seen beyond the horizon. ●

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The New Leader, June 1-15, 2021


**To See All Things
New in Christ:
Ignatian Year**

Just now the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) all over the world is celebrating the year of St Ignatius from 20 May 2021 until 31 July 2022. It is to commemorate the fifth centenary of the wound suffered by Ignatius of Loyola in the battle of Pamplona on 20 May 1521, the wound that opened for him the opportunity for a radical conversion in his life.

The Jesuits foresee this Ignatian Year with a special moment on 12 March 2022, the fourth centenary of the canonization of Ignatius of Loyola together with Francis Xavier, (also Teresa of Avila and Philip Neri) by Pope Gregory XV on 12 March 1622.

“To see all things new in Christ” is the theme for the Ignatian Year (20 May 2021 – 31 July 2022). The Ignatian Year is a New Call to draw inspiration from Ignatius, the pilgrim. In the Spiritual Exercise of St Ignatius, the saint says that there are two responses to God’s call. One response comes from the reasonable person. The second response is from the generous or magnanimous person. One might call it the response

Sad Demise



Rev. Fr. S.J. Anthonysamy, former Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore and *The New Leader* Bible Columnist for the past 32 years, passed away on 28 May 2021. Deeply mourned by the Members of NL Foundation, Managerial and Editorial Boards, Readers, Writers, and Staff of *the New Leader*. - Editor

of the genuine heart. It is therefore once again a call to love and serve the humanity for the Greater Glory of God. Here it is worth recalling that St Ignatius was declared patron of Spiritual Exercises and Retreats by Pope Pius XI in 1922 – exactly a century ago.

“The Society of Jesus worldwide seeks to accompany the process of internalization of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP), a process that will bring to personal, communal and institutional conversion all those who have found the meaning of their lives in the Mission of the Society of Jesus”- says Very. Rev. Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ, the 31st Superior General of the Society of Jesus. AMDG.

- **Richard Mascarenhas, SJ**
Bidar, Karnataka

Covid-19 Warriors

We’ve just concluded the month of May and celebrated 1st May as a day dedicated to St Joseph the patron saint of workers and labourers. Let us pray for all those front line warriors involved in the COVID 19 battle - the doctors, nurses, health care workers, ambulance drivers, lab technicians, officials, policemen, corporation volunteers who check on covid patients sanitizing their homes and collecting garbage, the migrants, jobless labourers and all the unsung heroes of this pandemic. Not to forget all those who help by providing food for the poor, abandoned and homeless. May St Joseph bless them and give them courage and strength in this heroic battle. - **Mrs Sashikala Chandran**
Chennai, T.N.



Shakespeare Pearls

**48. Nursing Old Injuries
Brings On New Ones**

‘To mourn a mischief that is past and gone / Is the next way to draw new mischief on.’

(From the tragedy of ‘Othello’)

Brabantio, the Numero Uno of Venetian aristocracy was deeply hurt at the marriage of his fair daughter Desdemona, to black gentile Othello. The Duke of Venice who heard his appeal advised him to put this embarrassment behind him and move on gracefully in life. What is over and done should be left in peace when it cannot be undone. Otherwise we will unwisely invite more problems and hurts into our lives.

We should not futilely rebel against the past. There are some things that have taken place in the past that have irrevocable. They cannot be undone however much they may be distasteful to us. If they are legal acts, we waste our energies by fighting them. It is better to accept such situations gracefully than dissipate our resources fighting against them like Don Quixote fighting the wind mills. Refusing to let go of the past compromises our prospects for the future and brings on more hurts and problems. Festering memories and unpleasant grudges only spoil our peace of mind and turn our lives sour. They add to and multiply our troubles and complicate our life. Our life becomes hostage to our unalterable past. - **Fr Matthew Adukanil, SDB**

Jesus the Liberator

This refers to the article, "Resurrection as Liberation," by Swami Vikrant, SDB (NL, April 1-15, '21). The article gives us a real idea of liberation during Easter session. Jesus Christ is risen not only on Easter day but every day. Pope Francis is bringing fresh air into our mother Church. Jesus was compassionate but he was convinced of the kingdom values and stood for the cause of the poorest of the poor. Today values are compromised, misused, misinterpreted.

Due to the pandemic we are not able to meet each other as believers, but scared of one another, relationships are broken. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman he said, 'woman we worship God neither on this mountain nor in the temple, but in spirit and truth. We are already experiencing this truth as our homes and chapels are the place of worship, our place of work and our daily path ways are places of worship, our fears and struggles of life are the temples of worship, the deaths of relatives and friends, sickness and worries have become our daily bread. In this great pain and agony Jesus is still with us as the liberator to set us free.

- **Hrudaya A. JMJ**
Bangalore, Karnataka

The First Christian Missionary of Madras

I refer to the article "The first Christian missionary of Madras," by Fr A. Thainis, OFM Cap., (NL, April 16-30, '21). The author, being a scholar and professor of Church History, has taken pains and efforts to underline the enthusiastic zealous pioneering missionary activities of Fr Ephrem, OFM Cap. We place on record our heartfelt thanks and praise and appreciation to the author. In his scientific research he has noted so well the multifarious activities of the great missionary, Fr. Ephrem, OFM Cap., It is also enlightening to know that this Capuchin missionary was the first one to open the first English Medium School in our country, India. So, he was a man who read the signs of the time and thus became a relevant and up-to-date missionary. The missionary life of Fr Ephrem is also a lesson for the present missionaries working in different parts of our country. Now it is hoped that our Fr Thainis, the author of this article will use his expertise and erudition and study in Church History to unearth and present to our country the rich contribution made by Capuchin Friars in India.

- **D.Jesudas, OFM Cap**
Coimbatore, T.N.



During World War II, thousands were injured and hospitalized in Italy. Sr. Bertilla, a Catholic nurse worked in a hospital that overflowed with injured people. Henry, an Italian soldier was shot in his knees and spent his days cursing everyone. The patients received one egg each for breakfast. One day when Sr. Bertilla brought an egg to Henry, he yelled, throwing the egg straight at Sr. Bertilla!

Not losing her composure, Sr. Bertilla went away and came back to Henry with a cup of soup. The gesture moved Henry. He wept like a child and begged pardon of Sr. Bertilla, and remained one of Sr. Bertilla's closest friends.

We too can use the magic Sr. Bertilla played on Henry and convert enemies into friends. Pope John XXII canonized Sr. Bertilla in the year 1961.

- **Percy**

Motivation - 3

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After the terrible years of World War II and the genocide of six million Jews and smaller numbers of others by the Nazi government in Germany, the systematic cruelty and mass murder they committed came to light. At the same time, heroic examples of compassion and helping were discovered too. There were good people who took extraordinary risks to help Jews. Many of them paid for it with their lives. How did some people find the courage and love to take huge risks and help others?

Did the Helpers come from more “religious” families? Studies did not find this to be the decisive factor.

Did the Helpers belong to any particular religious group? For instance, were Catholics more helpful than Protestants or vice-versa? No.

What the studies found was this: *Those who took risks and helped the Jews came from families where children had grown up seeing their parents help others.*

Our family upbringing—including, above all, the example of our parents—has the most powerful impact on our later conduct.

I am not saying that the children of a generous person will be automatically generous, or that the children of drunkards will necessarily be drunkards.

But, in most cases, we pick up the character traits and values of our families, especially of our parents.

In the touching movie, *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days*, based on the true story of a two young people—a sister and brother—who took a stand against the inhuman policies of the Nazi government, and paid a heavy price for it (they were beheaded!), one of the heart-breaking scenes is their last meeting with their parents. The father tells his children, Sophie (aged 21) and Hans (aged 23), “I am proud of both of you. You did the right thing.” Hugging them, their mother tells them, sobbing, “You will not walk in through our door again. We shall meet in heaven, with Jesus.” Good people worth more than their weight in gold!

Our Main Formators: We will do well to remember, especially if we are teachers, religious superiors or formators. *The main formators of our seminarians, young religious and students are their families, especially their parents.* If we want to understand our candidates, we need to get to know their families. Our deepest lessons were learnt at home—how to treat people; how to speak with and about others; how to spend, save and share money and other resources; how to handle hardships and stress; how to be grateful and joyful; what place God has in our life; ... You may call yourself a Franciscan or Carmelite, and I am a Salesian. But, more truly and deeply, each of us is the product of our families.

As adults, we need to look at our family training critically. We have to discern what to keep, what to change, and what to give up altogether (because they are destructive habits, such as, alcoholism, gossip, ethnic prejudice or telling lies). For this, we need help—especially the example and guidance of wise and good people. Without such help, and the desire to change, we can

20. Our Family Impacts Us Most



Text and Drawings

By Joe Mannath, SDB



stay for years in a new setting (convent, priesthood, marriage or a profession), but not really grow up. We may simply and blindly repeat the blunders our parents made.

Sr Lucia has struck those who know her as a wonderful human being. Wherever she has lived, especially as superior, the girls in the kitchen would cry when she was transferred. They found in her a humble and loving elder sister, who was the first to help them when there was extra work. When she was about to be transferred from a school, many of the parents pleaded with her not to go. “Your presence has made such a lovely difference to the students and teachers,” they said.

What Our Behaviour Shows

While community members and employees wept when Sr Lucia was transferred, there was another Sister in the same community whose rude behaviour made the workers cry. She would shout at the driver using offensive words, get the young women in the kitchen to do extra work, which she herself was supposed to do, and then be harsh with them.

“What to do!” Lucia said, “Each of us shows, by the way we behave, how we were brought up at home.”

So true. While there are things we learn after joining religious life or a seminary or our place of work (or after our marriage), our core values and behaviours—how we see people, how we use money and things, the way we respond (or do not) to others’ needs and sufferings—all this was largely learnt at home. I have seen this repeatedly in grown-ups, including priests and religious, who receive so many years of structured “formation.”

Parents: You are the main formators of your children. Neither the parish priest nor the headmistress can match your influence. May it be life-giving.

Religious and Priests: When (at jubilee celebrations or similar occasions) we thank those who have “formed” us, may we put our parents in the first place. Let us also be aware that, however long our efforts at helping or forming people, we are not Number One in their lives. We have added something to what they received at home (or, perhaps, corrected and improved it), but we do not have, in the lives of our formees or parishioners or students, the indisputable first place that parents occupy.

To quote just one person I have heard much about, Don Bosco was certainly more influenced by his semi-literate mother, whom everyone called Mamma Margaret, than by his seminary formators. Hats off to all the Mamma Margarets around us! ●

(Your feedback is most welcome: jmannath@gmail.com)

Pope institutes new ministry of catechist



Pope Francis issued an apostolic letter on 11 May formally instituting the new lay ministry of catechist. The Vatican released the papal letter, *Antiquum ministerium* (“Ancient ministry”), on 11 May in eight languages, including Italian Sign Language. The Pope said that the institution of the new lay ministry would “emphasize even more the missionary commitment proper to every baptized person, a commitment that must however be carried out in a fully ‘secular’ manner, avoiding any form of clericalization.” - CNA

Pope appeals for peace in Holy Land

The injury and death of so many innocent people, especially children, caused by escalating violence between Israel and the Gaza Strip is “terrible and unacceptable,” putting the area at risk of sinking into “a spiral of death and destruction,” Pope Francis said. The pope launched an appeal for calm and asked leaders of both sides “to put a stop to the roar of weapons and to follow the paths of peace, even with the help of the international community,” he said on 16 May after reciting the “Regina Coeli” prayer with hundreds of people in St. Peter’s Square. “Many people have been injured and many innocent people have died. Among them are even children, and this is terrible and unacceptable. Their death is a sign that one does not want to build the future, but wants to destroy it,” he said. The growing hatred and violence “is a serious wound to fraternity and to peaceful coexistence among citizens,” the Pope said. - CNS

Guidelines for diocesan WYD celebrations

The Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life held a press conference on 18 May to present some “Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches.” The guidelines, according to the Dicastery, are “intended to be a resource that presents the ideal motivations and possible practical implementations that will allow a diocesan/eparchial WYD to be an opportunity to bring out the potential for good that is in each young person, with their generosity, thirst for authentic values and great ideals.”

The event, streamed live from the Holy See Press office, featured several speakers including Fr Alexandre Awi Mello and Fr João Chagas, the Secretary and head of the Youth office of the Dicastery respectively, among others.

- www.en.radiovaticana.va

Interact with “head,” “hands” and “heart”



Pope Francis on 22 May met a delegation from Ambrosoli Institute of Codogno, in northern Italy, which became the first epicentre of Europe’s outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic last year. With schools reopening after long months of lockdown and distance learning due to the pandemic, students should avoid isolating themselves in the digital world and rebuild real relationships using the head, hands and the heart.

Pope Francis offered the exhortation to a delegation of students and staff from the Ambrosoli Institute of Codogno, a small northern Italian town of some 15,000. - www.en.radiovaticana.va

News - Vatican Capsules

Revised canon law on crimes, penalties almost ready for publication

The revised section of the Code of Canon Law dealing with crimes and penalties, including those related to clerical sexual abuse, should be ready for publication soon, said the secretary of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts. Bishop Juan Ignacio Arrieta, who spearheaded the project. - CNS

“May the Ignatian Year help us see all things new”

In his video message to the participants, the Pope said that the online prayer initiative is being celebrated as an opportunity to mark the 500th anniversary of the conversion of Saint Ignatius of Loyola who went on to found the Society of Jesus. The launch of the Ignatian year offers a time to be renewed, become pilgrims with Ignatius, and see all things new in Christ. - www.en.radiovaticana.va

Pope makes donation to women’s healthcare centre in India

Pope Francis has made a donation of approximately 20 thousand euros in support of the Shanti Ashram women’s health and social centre in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India. Through a food bank and medical assistance and training facilities for female entrepreneurs, Shanti Ashram assists 50,000 children and their families in the villages around Coimbatore. - www.en.radiovaticana.va

Keep focused on peace, unity: Pope

Celebrating a Mass for peace in Myanmar, Pope Francis urged the country’s Catholics to “keep the faith.” “To keep the faith is to keep our gaze lifted up to heaven, as here on earth, battles are fought and innocent blood is shed,” he said at the Mass on 16 May. - CNS

St. Joseph, Patron of Migrants and Refugees



By Michael Amaladoss, SJ

A migrant is a person who moves from one place to another either within the country or to another country. He may not necessarily be a poor person. But he is going elsewhere from his native place looking for better opportunities in life. He goes with his skills. He may also go with some financial means to support himself at least for a period until he can find some way of surviving in the new place. Or he may go to a particular place because there are people there known to him or related to him from whom he can expect some support till he can find a means of livelihood. People can also go to a new country because there is a promise of work. Starting in the 15-16 hundreds of the common era when Columbus 'discovered' the Americas and Vasco da Gama discovered a sea route to Asia round the cape of good hope a lot of people migrated to the Americas and Asia/Africa from Europe looking for lands to occupy and cultivate. Eventually these migrant groups took over these regions politically and made them colonies to produce goods to sell back in their native lands. They even populated countries like Australia which till then were sparsely populated. The migrants normally dominate the poor native peoples because they are technologically more advanced than the local people and they may have continued military support from the countries they come from. Indians too migrated to these new lands seeking to earn their livelihood. Today we can find Indians a little all over the world.

A refugee is a person who is forced to leave his native place because of persecution, which can be ethnic or religious, often following a war or a war-like situation. They come without financial resources and have to find means of livelihood in the place they go to. They will have to find some kind persons in the new place who will support them in some way, offering them work, for example, till they can stand on their own legs and get integrated into the local community, often as a distinct group, because they come from a different culture.

I think that we can say that Joseph was both a migrant and a refugee. When he came from Nazareth, his and Mary's native place, to Bethlehem, he came as a migrant. He was not running away from Nazareth because of any political or religious persecution. He, with Mary, had to go to Bethlehem, because of the Roman colonial government which had ordered the people who may have earlier migrated to different parts of the country from the place of their origin for whatever reason. We do not know the reasons behind the colonial

order. Certainly it was not just for counting numbers. They may have had some other plans. We need not speculate on that. But Joseph was a migrant. He was not running away from his village because of a war or other natural calamity. He had been working as a carpenter in Nazareth and may have had some savings to tide over a certain period till he can settle down in the new place. He may have had some links with some ancestors, who were not however very welcoming, probably, so that he had to find refuge in a manger meant for cattle, in which Jesus was born. The poor shepherds, who came to visit the new-born baby Jesus, must have found some place for the family in the village. Joseph must have stayed there for more than a year, since the three kings from the East must have taken some time to travel and reach Bethlehem. When they leave, without going back to visit Herod, he orders all the children below two years to be killed. By his calculation, Jesus must have been more than a year old!

We do not know how long Joseph would have had to stay in Bethlehem till the census was over. So Joseph was staying there as a migrant, hoping someday to return to Nazareth. After the three kings leave, Joseph with Mary and Jesus had to run away to Egypt, warned by an angel regarding a possible danger to the child Jesus from Herod. Now the Holy Family becomes a refugee family. The Jews were great migrants and there must have been small Jewish communities in Egypt. Joseph must have found some help from them as he reaches Egypt. Of course, he was a carpenter, that is, a skilled labourer. So he may have found it easy to get a job and slowly settle down till, once again warned by an angel, he returns to Palestine and to Nazareth, his original village, after the death of Herod.

So Joseph was both a migrant to Nazareth and a refugee to Egypt. He was aware, thanks to the angel who warned him when Mary became pregnant, that he was playing a role in God's plan. The angels guide him to Egypt and back to Palestine. He had a skill as a carpenter. So he was able to earn his livelihood and support Mary and Jesus. He was creative enough to adapt himself to new situations in Bethlehem and Egypt. He was faithful to the main goal of bringing up Jesus and protecting him from any harm. He does this with dedication and commitment, under the direction of God. He is obedient, without any selfishness. He is certainly a model for us in encountering new situations in the service of God. ●



By A. Cyril, SJ



Currently a global war is going on against Corona Virus. The pandemic has unsettled the normal rhythm of human lives all over the world. It has affected people from all walks of life and of different age-groups including children. However, it is the poor, marginalized and migrants who bear most the brunt of this ravaging disease. The pandemic has paralyzed global economy and left many jobless. As a consequence, people have started experiencing poverty and economic insecurity more than ever.

Conservative estimations maintain that the pandemic has claimed close to four million lives around the world, thereby creating fear of death, anxiety, sadness, sufferings and discomfort in the lives of many. It has challenged our modern way of life, the functioning of our socio-economic and political systems, the approach to development, the perception towards ecology and environment, our immunity system, our food habits and our education system. It has almost turned our lives upside down. Many have started reflecting and searching for new ways of living. No doubt, the crisis is an opportunity for reset, recalibration and rethink.

The raging pandemic has impacted education of several millions of children around the world. According to UNESCO, the pandemic related lockdowns have pushed about 290 million students out of school across the world. The UNICEF calls upon the governments to implement a six-point plan to secure the future of children, which include bridging the digital divide to ensure that all children are able to access school learning and guaranteed nutrition and health services. It also appeals that measures be taken to curb rise in child poverty. In India, the pandemic has affected access to nutritious food as a large number of children has been depending on the mid-day meals provided in schools.

Beyond Digital Learning

Digital Learning Pedagogy

The pandemic has forced the teaching and learning process to migrate to the digital mode, thereby impacting the education system to face an upheaval like never before. For most teachers and students, shifting to online classes was rather new and sudden. This has posed several challenges to teachers and students. Some students have taken to digital learning with ease and comfort like fish swimming in the water. But for many, it has been a long struggle, stress and strain because of many factors.

Online classes have both bright dimensions as well as dark shades. Schools that are able to provide online classes along with co-scholastic activities and regular peer-to-peer interaction have seen better mental health situation among students. For others, it has become monotonous, and this has led to a rise in anxiety and hyperactivity among children.

In traditional education, students have a limited syllabus, whereas in *online learning* students have a vast choice of the syllabus. Through online classes, students can learn more things outside of their syllabus, which become very useful for their future. Digital platforms provide unlimited paths with a wide range of choices. Students can study anything they want to learn at any level. From learning a new language to building a website, students can learn each and everything from online classes.

Online learning saves the time and money of travelling. It also offers a flexible schedule that permits students to study at their own convenience. Students can gain knowledge by watching the videos of any subjects at any time.

The other side of *online learning* is that children are inevitably spending more time in front of a screen. The exposure to blue light from the screen can put heavy strain on their eyes, causing itching, dryness and burning sensations. Medical experts recommend the 20-20-20 formula, which involves a 20 second screen break, every 20 minutes. Poor posture such as slouching at a desk for long periods puts pressure on the back muscles and ligaments triggering neck aches, back pain and headaches. Some

With the lockdown continuing, it is important for students to be engaged in meaningful and productive ways.



children may be lacking the motivation to learn, as they don't have any of the social interaction or live engagement that they usually get in a school environment. Add to this the complex interplay of reduced instruction time, lack of direct context and contact between students and teachers, and other myriad challenges with online learning. The cumulative effect of all this is a learning gap between what students would have typically learned and what they have actually learned.

One must remember online learning is possible where the internet services are robust. Online education is still a dream in villages where internet services are poor. The poor have neither access to proper internet services nor computers to follow online classes. Infrastructural facilities such as computer with internet are expensive, and even mobile phone costs Rs.10,000 to Rs.15,000. Out of 1.6 million schools across the country, not even 10 percent can afford this. So, what we must understand and accept is that it might work for only a small percentage of elite institutions and communities. If India believes that online learning is the way forward, then 90% of the

Using their imagination and creativity, the children must be helped by parents to share ideas and innovate so as to find solutions to break the monotony of lockdown.



children are not a part of it. If education is a fundamental right, then the right to device is included in that. On the one hand we can't rely only on online education at this time because most of our Indian children live in poor condition; more number of people at home, the joint family system and less living space at home affect the learning ability of children. On the other hand, we must gear up our efforts making sure that online education is accessible to all children as a matter of fundamental right. Bridging the digital divide is a serious human rights concern.

Beyond Digital Learning Pedagogy

The school education system needs a hybrid solution. Digital learning cannot replicate the chalk and talk pedagogies that we normally follow in the teaching-learning system. However, innovation in pedagogy is the key to effective learning. It has to be recalled that even before the pandemic a change of pedagogy was under discussion and this was emphasized in the National Curriculum Framework of 2005. This would bring change and make learning more for children. While online learning is the

current panacea, there should be efforts to expedite other modes of learning. Research and development must work rigorously on alternatives to conventional and online learning.

The vast majority of schoolchildren have not entered a classroom for almost 16 months and the pandemic may prolong for another 6 to 8 months. In the current situation students are confined to home and all activities are restricted. As online classes pick up steam, conventional study patterns are likely to suffer and it will need a special impetus to put students back on track. With the lockdown continuing, it is important for students to be engaged in meaningful and productive ways. The lockdown experience for children is very unusual and it is common for behavioral issues to be exacerbated by the strangeness, stagnation and stresses of being confined to their homes.

As the pandemic drags on, it's clear that not all children are going to be alright. According to a survey by Gallup, nearly 3 in 10 parents said their child is experiencing emotional or mental anxiety because of social distancing and school closures. Learning is the core element of education system. Learning can take place anywhere – maybe at home, street, school, and neighborhood. Learning is not only about book knowledge, but also the physical, emotional, social and mental wellbeing of the child.

Parent Child Interaction

The lockdown scenario is a sort of blessing in disguise because children and parents are forced to spend more time with each other. Parents can support their children by actively listening, creating new routines that produce a feeling of predictability in an uncertain world and nurturing self-esteem and self-care by playing, talking and eating with them. Collaboration between schools, families, community leaders and health officials will be even more critical to support children's needs in and out of school as the world grapples with controlling the virus.

The child's creative side is developed outside the school, from her/his interactions at home, with friends and peers, from the activities they are involved in. Children learn by touch, feelings, painting and in moments

Cover Feature

of inquisitiveness. It is also important for parents to communicate with their children. 'Speak to them openly and try to understand their needs and how they are feeling in day-to-day life.' It might involve the parents needing to be more tolerant, given that this is a reaction to a very abnormal situation. They should also accept their children's unhappiness and disappointment, but hold up hope. 'Show points of light by breaking the negative with spontaneous fun and family activities.' Using their imagination and creativity, the children must be helped by parents to share ideas and innovate so as to find solutions to break the monotony of lockdown.

Social distancing is likely to detract from the spontaneity of being a child and interacting freely with other children. Parents must use this time to build relationships at home and try to provide as many opportunities for social engagement as possible, be it an online quiz with friends or a Zoom call with the family you want with their peers which is an important part of development for children. Children are usually very resilient - they should be perfectly able to adapt and make a full recovery from any impact of lockdown without it causing any lasting psychological changes.

Looking Ahead

Building friendships is very important, especially in the lower age groups, which gives them security and self-esteem and this gives them a sense of belonging. The neighborhood children coming together to learn and play in the areas where pandemic is absent must be encouraged.

We can create a game-based digital platform that enables the teacher and the child to stay connected through a virtual classroom, even after school.

The digital platform should not be used for teaching, rather inducing interest in learning even at home. The prime aspect of learning begins with igniting the desire to learn.

The school administration must facilitate and inspire teachers to get involved in motivating children. In the regular situation, children come to teachers whereas now the teachers have to go to children. The

*The teachers
have to be connected
with their children.*

*The best way
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personal
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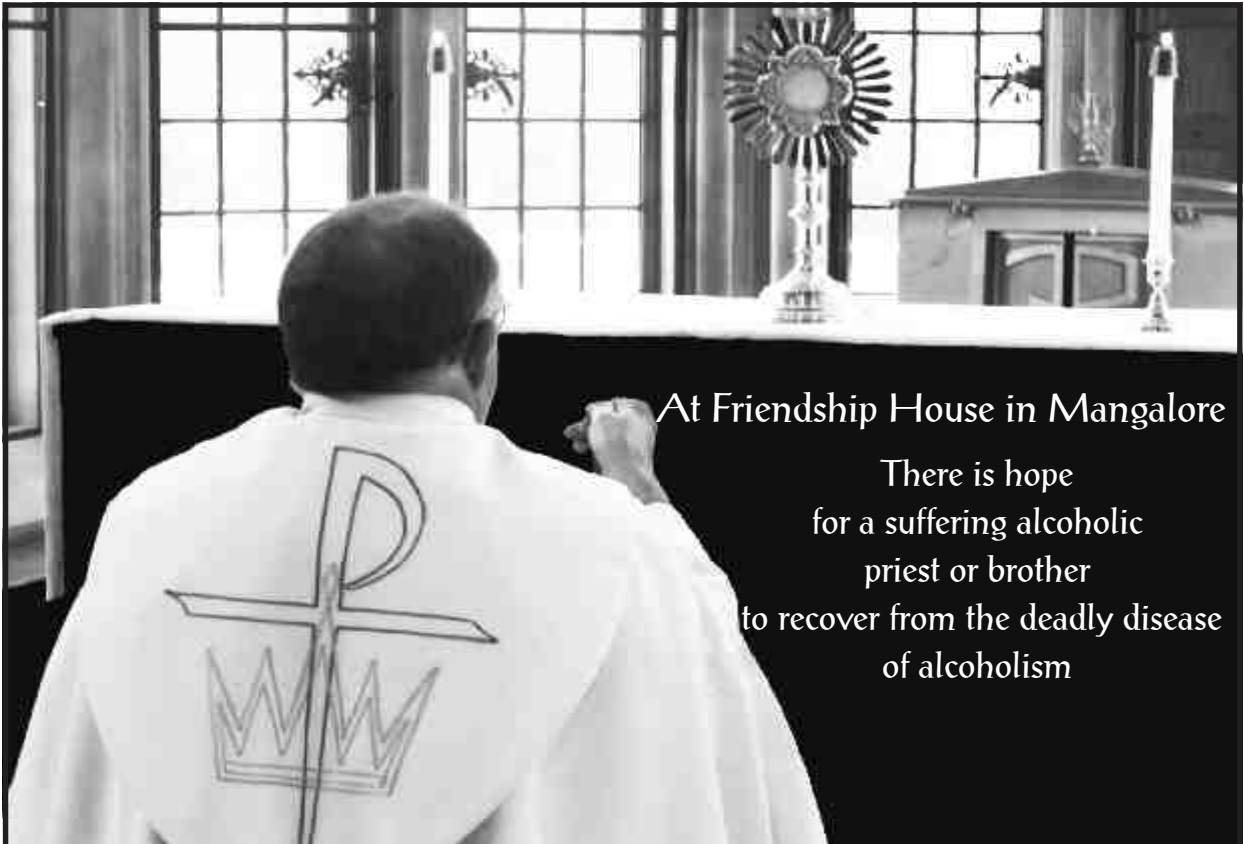
teachers have to be connected with their children. The best way is one-to-one personal contact – through sharing, talking, giving tips, and counseling– which puts children on right mood and track.

Teachers visiting children in their respective homes and making them come together in a common place will create an opportunity for interaction.

Sports authorities need to work out a formula for educational institutions on how to cope with the current pandemic crisis while giving equal importance to sports and games, including yoga and healthy food habit, as these are crucial to the health of students.

The role of teacher is going to be vital when schools open. They should learn the most effective way of teaching. Teachers should be trained on the 'how' of teaching and offered innovative and creative teaching-learning materials to make teaching easy and learning fun. Teachers must focus on the 'how' of teaching rather than just the 'what' of teaching.

Dr. A. Cyril SJ, is Director, Gandhian Society Villages Association & Human Rights Educationist.



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By Bp A. Peter Abir

Vineetha Mokkil penned an open letter on 5 May 2021 to the American Bhakts of Indian leadership, narrating who was their God. Moses warned the Israelites that when they entered the promised land they would serve the gods “made by human hands, objects of wood and stone that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell” (Deut 4:28). Isaiah spoke elaborately about the absurdity of idol worship (Is 44:9-20). We have to face facts. We have to sincerely ask who our ‘God’ is. In this global pandemic calamity, people seek various gods for their salvation. Nevertheless most people are led conveniently by their own gods and it is high time we hold on to the true God.

God: Human Fabrication?: Atheists, like Friedrich Nietzsche did not subscribe to the existence of God. The death of God theology emerged, meaning that the Christian God, who had existed at one point, ceased to exist. We cannot close our eyes to the reason for this view. From antiquity till today most people turn to God when awful tragedies happen, for example, when loved ones die of COVID-19, or are trapped in cities bombarded by hurricanes, or are diagnosed with cancer. For many, belief in God provides strength to endure such misery, provides hope that when our loved ones pass away, we can live with them again for eternity and ensures that no loss is inconsolable, no injustice unrequited, and we can finally have everlasting peace, no matter the misery gone through to get there. In such cases, for Nietzsche, for Periyar EV Ramasamy (+ 1973)

and for such thinkers, God is a psychological fabrication to soothe the distress, ease trauma, and provide companionship in the face of suffering. Is this our God?

God of Selfishness!: Karl Marx, in his historical context claimed that “Religion is the opium of the people.” He saw religion was the sign of oppression. Nietzsche, EVR Periyar and other ‘atheists’ do oppose God, not because God does not exist but because of atrocities done in the name of God by so-called religious people (Jerry Rosario, *Manitham*, 9). Most people in India believe in a God who ‘saves’ them from all evils. They are ready to accept anyone as God who appears ‘more than the normal size’ in power and money. We do not hesitate to worship ‘mammon,’ power and fame. Powerful leadership allures the general masses to one’s own ideology and to boost one’s own ego. Political and religious gatherings critically affect the health of millions of people. Spending on lower-priority initiatives continue as lakhs of people die due to lack of oxygen and vaccines. People are misled by falsehood, leading to endless suffering. Negligence

the people of Israel. However, we often forget the other side of the coin: Yahweh is revealed also as the God of justice. Prophet Amos expounds mainly God’s social justice. In our distress and draconic pandemic, we turn to God’s mercy but conveniently forget that the same God requires us to be just in our dealings with others also (cf. Mic 6:8). These OT records are not human fabrication of God but living experience of the people (Deut 6: 4-9).

Jesus my God!: The Judean experience of God, as noted above, is undoubtedly revealed in Jesus Christ who is “My Lord and my God” (Jn 20:28). Jesus told his disciples: “The Father and I are one” (Jn 10:30) and “whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). It is evident, therefore, that we come to know of God in Jesus. In his Sermon on the Mount and in many of his parables he revealed that God is loving, merciful and forgiving. So also Jesus is a merciful Saviour.

Jesus’ mercy can be summed up in his words: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you

Who is Your God?

of following Covid-protocol or lock-down regulations is common, causing havoc to society. In all this, selfishness is the God people worship.

The God of Israel!: Much is seen in the Bible about the Judeo-Christian belief/experience of God. God is holy, loving, merciful and fatherly, but will not tolerate evil. The Exodus and the post-exilic events clearly substantiate Yahweh’s protective care and mercy (Is; 49:15; Eze 36:16-33). In fact, the Psalms are the compendium of the nature of God revealed to

rest” (Mt 11:28). In his salvific sacrifice, we are told, God proves his love for us even though we despise him by our sins (Rom 5:8). While he presented the prodigal father (Lk 15) he did not evade warning against wickedness and hypocrisy (Mt 23). While he will vindicate the innocent, he will also punish the guilty. Much of his life and teaching underlined social justice. Very vividly he showed that religious commitment and social justice go hand in hand (Mt 5; Lk 10). Concern for others is the mandate of Jesus who is my God! ●

International Eucharistic Congress to open

The International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest, Hungary, will open this September with a 1,000-strong choir and a “vast” number of First Communions. The organizers of the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress made the announcement as they released new details of the packed program for the 5-12 Sept event. At a 13 May press conference in the Hungarian capital, the hosts emphasized the significance of Pope Francis’ decision to celebrate the event’s closing Mass in the city’s Heroes’ Square. The congress was originally scheduled to take place in 2020 but was postponed to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. They noted that the congress will begin at 3 p.m. local time on 5 Sept, in Heroes’ Square with an opening ceremony including a performance by a choir of 1,000 singers. - CNA

U.S. bishops pray for peace

The U.S. bishops’ conference offered prayers for peace in the Holy Land on 13 May, as conflict between Israel and Hamas flared up this week. “We are greatly saddened that simmering tensions erupted into violence in the Holy Land this week,” stated Bp David Malloy of Rockford, chair of the U.S. bishops’ international justice and peace committee. “It is a cycle we have unfortunately witnessed and spoken out against many times, but because of our great love in Christ Jesus, we remain ever present and close to the people of this land until the Peace of God reigns in its fullness forever,” Bp Malloy stated. 83 have died in Gaza this week as a result of conflict between Israel and Hamas, the Islamic militant group that rules Gaza. Hamas has fired rockets at Jerusalem and other cities in Israel, while the Israeli military has conducted airstrikes on Gaza, including on residential buildings. - CNA

Argentine parish receives relic of Bl Carlo Acutis



Blessed Carlo Acutis

On the 29th anniversary of the first Eucharistic miracle that took place in the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires’ Santa María parish, the community received a first class relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis. Three Eucharistic miracles have taken place in this parish, in May 1992, July 1994, and August 1996. The history and investigation of these events are included in the Eucharistic Miracles of the World exhibition designed and created by Bl. Carlo Acutis. The relic was received at a Mass on 8 May.

- CNA

Ignatian year



of the Jesuits.

The year will open on 20 May which commemorates the 500th anniversary of St. Ignatius’s injury during the Battle of Pamplona on 20 May 1521. While defending the citadel of Pamplona against French forces, St. Ignatius was seriously injured after being struck by a canon ball. This led to a long period of convalescence which began his conversion and subsequent transformation from soldier to saint. During this year themed “to see all things new in Christ”, the Jesuits will also mark the 400th anniversary of the canonization of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier on 12 March 2022. - www.en.radiovaticana.va

Starting from May 2021 until the end of July 2022, the Society of Jesus celebrates the Ignatian year to remember the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder

News - World Capsules

Virtual library boosts seminarians’ access to essential texts

Sharing the Word is a virtual library founded in 2013 and funded by the Pontifical Society of St Peter the Apostle (POSPA). It is a tremendous help to seminarians, clergy, and pastoral workers who are not able to afford hard copy texts essential for their ministry. It is the brainchild of Hans Arns, a former librarian at the Veech Library in Sydney, who continues to coordinate the project.

- www.en.radiovaticana.va

Course to help priests avoid financial scams

After an octogenarian priest was swindled out of more than \$450,000 over a two-year period and threatened when he stopped giving the “family” money, the Diocese of Padua, Italy, launched a continuing formation program for priests focused on financial accountability and avoiding scams. Italy’s finance police announced on 18 May that they had arrested 11 people in connection with the long-term scam of the elderly priest, who ran a charitable foundation. - CNS

Founder of the Salvatorians beatified in Rome

“The charismatic intuition of Blessed Francis has guided many women and men of different nations and languages to following the Gospel and thanks to the work of the Salvatorian family has contributed to the spread of the message of salvation in more than 50 countries.” Cardinal Vicar of Rome Angelo De Donatis underscored this point during the Mass celebrated in the Basilica of Saint John Lateran with the Rite of Beatification of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, founder of the Society of the Divine Saviour and the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour. - www.en.radiovaticana.va

Pentecost

Has Pentecost 2021 come and gone? Yes, it came 9 days ago on 23 May, but it has not gone! It is a perennial reality, a daily event, just like Easter! The fulfillment of Jesus' promise, "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever..." (Jn 14:16), is meant to be an ongoing reality in our daily lives. No person can be a



Has Pentecost Come and Gone?

fervent disciple of Jesus in today's secular world without the constant infilling of God's, and Jesus' Holy Spirit, rightly called by the Church: "The Lord and Giver of Life."

Paraclete (Greek) means, "to call to one's side." Hence the Holy Spirit's mission is "to be at our side" continuously and permanently. But why do we need such intense divine companionship? Translations like "Advocate," "Comforter," etc., are too limited. Jesus intended a far more important role for the Holy Spirit in our lives: "I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that

I go away, for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you" (Jn 16:7).

The best translation therefore of *Paraclete* is, "Encourager!" This is his all-embracing role; "called to our side in order to encourage us" is the essential 24x7 job of the Holy Spirit, to empower us to truly be disciples of Christ in our post-modern world. (The opposite role of the Evil Spirit is to discourage us from being praying-forgiving-and-serving Christians).

The great Jesuit poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, taught this in a Pentecost homily: "We usually translate *Paraclete* as *Comforter*, but a *Paraclete* does more than comfort. The word is Greek; there is no one English word for it, *Comforter* or *Advocate* is not enough. A *Paraclete* is one who comforts, but also one who cheers the human spirit, who encourages, who persuades, who exhorts, who stirs up, who urges forward, who calls us on to good, all zealous that we should do something, and full of assurance that if we will we can, crying to our ears or heart: This way to do God's will, this way to (new life), come on, come on!"

St. John Paul II taught that the Holy Spirit is not just some blessing sent from God but "God's new, salvific, self-gift to those baptized in Christ" (DeV, 11), and that now, "all the blessings of the Redemption have been handed over to the Holy Spirit, to distribute as he wills!" That is why he, and now Pope Francis too, asks all Christians to foster "a vivid devotion to the Holy Spirit,"

Let me clarify, however, that whereas for many Christians, the focus of Pentecost is the gift of power expressed in charisms and bold preaching with signs and wonders, in fact the Holy Spirit is given to us mainly to help us live Christ-centered lives! The Third Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass

By Fio Mascarenhas, SJ

puts it well: "And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him, he sent the Holy Spirit as his first gift to those who believe ..."

This is the be-all and end-all of Christian life, to live selfish lives no longer, but Christ-centered lives! That is why Pentecost is not just another feast, to be commemorated and then forgotten until it comes around again a year later, but it is the wellspring of daily Christian life.

St Paul puts it lucidly and strongly: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all... are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2Cor 3:18).

Pope Francis too keeps on exhorting us: "Who gives us joy? The Holy Spirit! He is the great forgotten in our lives! May the Lord give us this grace to always be aware of the Holy Spirit in us, the Spirit who teaches us to love, and fills us with joy" (Homily at Santa Marta, 22 May, 2014).

Truly, the Church is in perennial need of the Holy Spirit, and very especially at this urgent moment of history.

Hence, daily we must do what the Apostles and Mary did (it was the very first Novena in the history of Christianity): pray with expectant faith for "transforming power from on high." Jesus himself assures us, "...how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask" (Lk 11:13).

Dr Fio Mascarenhas, SJ, is Chairman of the Catholic Bible Institute, Mumbai, and former Chairman of the National and International Service Teams of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

The New Leader, June 1-15, 2021

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By J. Felix Raj, SJ

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Indian economy, contributing about 21% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Around 60% of India's population depends on agriculture, and about 41% of the total labour force is associated with it.

Agriculture ensures food security for the country and also provides raw materials to industries. India earns substantial foreign exchange by exporting agricultural products. Agricultural development is, therefore, a precondition for our national development. If schools and colleges are the temples of knowledge and wisdom, villages are the temples of prosperity.

Our Farmers, who are the backbone of our nation's welfare, are facing various problems in their farming activities like Low income due to the absence of organised markets, inadequate transportation and storage facilities, scattered and small landholdings and so on. These problems have forced them into frequent protests and often resorting to suicides.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, the number of suicides committed by farmers and farm labourers stood around 12,000 per annum prior to 2015. Data on farmers' suicide have not been published since 2015. Their suicide rate accounts for 10% of the total suicides committed in India.

As many as 248 Indian farmers have died during their recent protests in and around Delhi, according to the data collected by Sanyukat Kisan Morcha (SKM). The 2020-2021 farmers' protest is an ongoing protest against the three farm laws, which were passed by the Parliament of India in September 2020.

The laws are: The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act; The Essential Commodities (Amendment)

Act; and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act.

The three contentious laws that will change the way India's farmers conduct business have sparked one of India's biggest protests and a continuous standoff with the government.

How many farmers are there in India? This is an enduring question with no definite answer. There are multiple estimates, by the government and by private bodies, depending on policy implications and government schemes. In a speech in September 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi noted that 85% of India's farmers own small tracts of land.

Modi was defending the new controversial farm laws and trying to make a larger point on why collective contract farming – which, one of the three laws seek to allow – would be beneficial for India's farmers.

But, if one were to ask the government about the number of farmers or the translation of 85% into numbers, one may not get an easy answer. This is because the Indian government itself does not quite know how many farmers are there in India, or indeed, who really is a farmer.

When a pertinent question was posed in the Rajya Sabha by BJP MP Ajay Pratap Singh in November 2019, the Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister, Narendra Singh Tomar responded not by providing the number of farmers but by providing data for the number of operational landholdings in the country. The government's ambiguity has serious implications for the design and beneficiaries of the schemes meant to help them, including its flagship PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi).

Since September 2020, tens of thousands of protesting farmers have been demanding the repeal of the laws. They have been camping out on highways in the outskirts of Delhi.

Nearly a dozen rounds of talks between the 30-odd farmer unions and the government have yielded no results. Pro-reform economists have largely welcomed the move, saying the new laws will help improve farm incomes, attract investment and technology, and increase productivity. But angry and worried farmer groups see the laws as unfair and exploitative.

They are worried about the Minimum Support Price (MSP) assurance. The MSP assurance has emerged as the main sticking point in their protest. There is an apprehension among them



Farm Laws and India's new Reforms

that allowing outside-Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC), trade of farm produces would lead to lesser buying by the government agencies in the approved mandis.

While the government says the farm laws open up new avenues for the farmers to increase their income, the protesting farmers say the new laws will make them vulnerable to private traders. The protesting farmers say the new laws would thus make the MSP system irrelevant and they would not have any assured income from their farming.

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Lead Kindly Light

Twelfth Sunday in OT - Cycle B - 20 June 2021

Job 38: 1, 8-11; 2 Cor 5: 14-17; Mk 4: 35-41



By Georgie

Four men are in the hospital waiting room. They are anxious because their wives are having babies. Soon, a nurse comes out of the labor room, goes to the first man and tells him, "Congratulations, Sir! Your wife has given birth to twin babies."

The man says, "Alleluia! Praise the Lord! I work for the *Two Parrots* matchbox company, and God has given me two babies."

A while later, the nurse comes out of the labor room and tells the second guy, "Congratulations! Your wife has given birth to triplets!"

The man says, "Alleluia! Praise the Lord! I work for the *Three Roses* tea company and God has given me three babies."

A while later, the nurse comes out of the labor room and tells the third guy, "Congratulations Sir! Your wife has given birth to four babies!"

The man says, "Alleluia! Praise the Lord! I work for the *Four Seasons* hotel and God has given me four babies."

Now, the fourth man faints and falls down to the ground. They sprinkle water on his face and wake him up and ask him, "What is the matter? Why did you faint?"

He tells them, "I work for the *7 Up* company! That is the reason."

It does not matter how many children. It is a challenge to be a father. Father's Day, celebrated in America and in many other countries on the third Sunday of June, recognizes and honors fathers for the pivotal role they play in the building of a family, their paternal care for children, and their contribution to the society in general. In a culture like ours, fathers are mostly taken for granted. While there is an abundance of literature that glorifies – sometimes, even divinizes – mothers, there isn't much that speaks of fathers. Fathers are, of course,

are not known to wear their hearts on their sleeves, not very expressive when it comes to emotions. They, nevertheless, are worth our love and appreciation.

The fourth in the Ten Commandments says: "Honour your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12).

On the twelfth Sunday of the Ordinary Time, the prescribed gospel passage, Mk 4: 35-41 discusses the event of Jesus calming down a storm and saving the apostles who feared they were going to drown and die. It is both a nature and rescue miracle. The narrative clearly shows Jesus' dominance over the forces of nature. The miracle is similar to the one we read in Jonah 1: 1-16, where God Yahweh is shown handling nature at his will – both creating and quelling a storm with no effort. Psalm 107: 23-32 speaks poetically about how those who do business in sea waters rely sole on the mercy of God for their life - for he can make the waves go up or make them stand still. That is what happens here in Mk 4: 35-41 too. More than a miracle, it is a theophany – in the demonstration of his powers over nature is revealed Jesus's godliness. Like Yahweh, Jesus is also Lord over nature.

The passage presents God as a loving father who always cares for his children. It is interesting what the apostles say to Jesus after waking him up: "Teacher, we are going to perish. Do you not care for us?" (4: 38). It beats our imagination how the apostles could say a thing like that to Jesus. Jesus is our God 24/7. He may seem asleep. He may seem distant. He may seem silent. But he cares for us. He would not let us perish. That is the lesson the gospel gives us. Later, St Peter in his first epistle, beautifully would say, "Throw all your cares upon the Lord because the Lord cares for you" (5: 7).



In Mark 4: 35-41, Jesus' rebuke appears twice: first he rebukes the storm (V. 39) as though it were a real person; second time he rebukes the apostles (V.40) for their lack of faith. The faith Jesus expected from the apostles was not so much in his power to perform a miracle as in the providence of the God. This is the most important lesson of this passage – trust in God. In the midst of the storm, Jesus was the only one who remained calm, because his trust in God is strong.

In Christian vocation, we are not promised a problem-free life. We will face storms, crises and issues which may seem life threatening like the one the apostles encountered in the Sea of Galilee. But we are promised the constant accompaniment and providence of a loving father, who would eventually redeem us and give us life. In the beautiful poem "Lead Kindly Light," Cardinal Newman prays:

Lead, kindly Light, amidst the grey and gloom

The night is long and I am far from home

Here in the dark, I do not ask to see

The path ahead-one step enough for me

Lead on, lead on, kindly Light.

May the light kindly lead us from fear to faith and from doubt to trust! ●

The New Leader, June 1-15, 2021



By Dr Jose Vattakuzhy

Working from home (WFH) is a new trend, especially in Covid 19 era. The history of working from home isn't recent one due to corona and lockdown as many may believe. It has a longer past. From a view of history, working from home has always been a reality. However, unfortunately from the very beginning home-related work was defined as home based work and such jobs are not included in any labour laws and social security schemes. Due to Corona virus pandemic, social distances and the lockdowns forced the employers in various countries including India to adopt work-from-home policy. As per reports, the lockdown enforced in India has made more than 4 million IT workers to be shifted into the mode of working from home. In addition to the government, private sectors employers have also been advocating the employees to work from home, this situation will continue in second or third waves of virus period. In fact, besides IT and net based service sectors' workers, there are other options for workings from home. In those categories one would do what he/she wishes or as per skills would get income without going out of the house.

S e l f - entrepreneurship is growing at a steady speed today. From online teachers, virtual assistants to content writers, translators to Web

An Opening, than a Solution



developers, consultant of companies, accountants, travel agents, reporters, photographers ,telemedicine practitioners, psychotherapists, designers, social media managers and data entry operators etc., are finding an excess of working opportunities at online platforms.

The Upwork.com, Zirtual.com, Freelancer.com, Media Bistro, implyHired.com, Monster.com, Indeed.com, Guru.com, iFreelance.com, Imagesbazaar.com, Shutterstock.com, Gettyimages.com, Stock.adobe.com, and career sites are some which would facilitate various types of work from home online . Eduwizards.com, Tutorvista.com, Chegg.com, Myschoolpage.com, and Amazetutors.com, would help one to teach students based in the UK, the US, Canada and Australia. Udemy.com, Lynda.com, and Edx.org are available to learn the basics how to enter online work.

Simultaneously, the tasks of WFH are also high. Not enough infrastructures like 24x7 internet connectivity, undisturbed power supply, sufficient office space, clear cut government policies, definite labour law with definition on terms of workplace and workers for easy employee's rights protection, the cyber security protocols, maintain productivity and employee's morals are the major challenges of working from home.

Mainly in the absence of a national WFH policy in the country, the employees who are working from home would end up with discriminatory style of working, lack of productivity checking system, u n h e a l t h y relationship between employer and employee, regular overtime working hours, non-reimbursements of office expense, non-outlook for occupational safety and lack of labour law

protection and social security net. Remote working, virtual meetings, sharing an office, contingent workers, cost-saving measures, switched and mixed occupations are new terms in the labour market and workplace. But a big question is whether the nation including employers, employees, human resources team, trade union are prepared for it. For this it will be a big no. IT service is unprepared for work from home. It was very clear indication that IT industry leaders through Nasscom, in the month of May 2020 demanded amendments of IT Act 2000 as if WIF set to become the rule. This move promoted them due to the hesitations of employees. Recently their study showed that the 60 per cent of employees found working from home as being of social isolation, difficulties in adjusting the private and professional aspects of their lives, unskilled moods and they are too foreseeing the fears of hire-and-fire rules and the lack of chance for promotions.

Today there are only a few countries like Philippines, Australia, and England have a legal structure governing for WFH. But India is in urgent need of policy on WFH, that could have the facilities where employers would require setting up to integrate work hours, different workplaces, skill upgrading system, the rate of work tools, occupational safety and health, applicable benefits and observance of data privacy with support of labour laws and social security as decent works. So since the pandemic has been reshaping a new employment scenario, the human resources managers, employers, governments, employees and their organisations – trade unions should come together to explore a new planning, management and strategies of WFH, which is a new great opening than a solution.

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Sleeping and Waking

Thirteenth Sunday in OT - Cycle B - 27 June 2021

By Georgie

Wis 1: 13-15; 2: 23-24; 2 Cor 8: 7, 9, 13-15; Mk 5: 21-43

A wife took her husband to the doctor. He was not keeping too well lately. The doctor examined the husband and said, “I am sorry to inform you Sir, but a severe disease has struck you. There is no cure for it. By tomorrow morning, you will be dead.”

They both were very sad.

The husband had only a few hours left. He wanted to use the time to eat some good food. So, as soon as they got home, the husband said to the wife, “Would you prepare for me a mutton biriyani? I don’t know if they give biriyani up there. You know I like it very much. So I will eat it and die happily.” The wife, with much sadness, prepared spaghetti and meat balls. The husband ate all of it.

Around 8 ‘o clock in the evening, the husband again said to his wife, “Would you please make some *payasam* for me? I will drink it and die happily.” The wife could not say no. Even though she was tired, she prepared it. Like the last time, the husband finished of it.

Around 12 o clock in the midnight, he woke up his wife and said, “Would you please prepare for me that apple juice I like very much? I will drink it and die happily.”

This time around, the wife was really annoyed. She said to the husband, “Please, why don’t you let me have some sleep. Tomorrow morning, I have plenty of work to do. I have to inform all the relatives. I have to tell the parish priest. I have to order flowers. I have to arrange for the ice-box. And you.. you don’t have to get up. You will royally be sleeping.”

On the thirteenth Sunday of the Ordinary Time, the longer version of the prescribed gospel passage (Mk 5: 21-43) contains two miracles: the



healing of a woman suffering from flow of blood and the miraculous raising of Jairus’ daughter from death; the shorter version (Mk 5: 21-24; 35-43) contains only the raising story. We shall look at the latter in some detail.

In Mk 5: 39, Jesus tells the lamenting crowd: “Why this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep.”

When Jairus came to Jesus asking for help (in Verse 3), his daughter was only at the point of death. By the time Jesus arrived at the house of Jairus (in Verse 38) – delayed as he was by the long walk and the events surrounding of the healing of the woman with hemorrhage, the little girl had very much died. A crowd had collected in front of the house of Jairus. A full-blown mourning was under way. Poor families hired at least two flute players to participate in the mourning. Jairus, being a synagogue official, was not poor. There was a likely big gathering. A young girl’s death should have inflicted a lot of grief on the neighborhood.

To those who mourned the misfortune of a little girl dying while at the threshold of youth, Jesus says: “Why this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep” (Mk 5: 39).

Sleep is used here figuratively to refer to death. We see this technique employed in a few other biblical passages as well. Acts 7:60, narrating the martyrdom of Stephen, says, “Then he fell on his knees and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ Having said this, he fell asleep.” Writing to the Thessalonians about the hope of resurrection, St Paul says: “For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.” Then there is this famous line of Jesus about Lazarus: “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going so that I may awaken him from sleep.” (John 11:11).

Death is generally thought of as a never-ending sleep. Jesus does not think so. For Jesus, it is just a slumber from which he could gently wake anyone up – as proven in the case of Jairus’ daughter here in Mark 5, or in the cases of Lazarus (Jn 11: 1-44) and the Nain widow’s only son (Lk 7: 11-17) elsewhere.

Between Jairus asking Jesus for help (Verse 3) and Jesus arriving at the house (Verse 38), as many as 35 verses and a lot of time had passed. But, that did not hamper the power of Jesus in any way. In Verse 41, Mark says that Jesus took the child by the hand and raised to her life, turning mourning into laughing, grief into joy, and sleep into wakefulness.

All it took was an unwavering trust in Jesus. Fortunately for the little girl, Jairus had plenty of it.

May the Lord, by his powerful touch, wake us from our spiritual slumber and make us into “men and women who are fully alive and active.” ●

Sacred Heart of Jesus

Spirituality is a way of life. Sacred Heart of Jesus Spirituality is the way of the heart -- the path of unconditional love. To follow in the footsteps of the Master, one has to study the interior dispositions of Jesus' heart and learn to love whole heartedly and unconditionally. To make this a reality in one's life, one needs to have a tête-à-tête with Him daily, spending quality time and energy, in quiet prayer and contemplation. Observing, imitating and making one's own, the different nuances of His sensitivity and unique touch in

rendered to the *chosen ones*, who will benefit one in return? Does one have the *Bania/ Do ut des Mentality* - "I give, so that you may give"? Or does one give of oneself generously to all God's creatures, irrespective of which creature?

Actions speak louder than words and are the acid test. Is one other-centered as Christ was? Does one experience pain when injustice is meted out to one's neighbour? Or is one apathetic and not wanting to burn one's fingers, or get involved? Does one take Mother Earth for granted, unconcerned about her depleting natural resources? If, one is a disciple, bride or spouse of Christ, then authentic love must permeate and soak one's whole being. This will demand hard decisions and a heavy price as a consequence.

Unconditional love is Trinitarian - given by the Father to the Son and through the Spirit. One needs to imbibe it the hard way - by trying, experimenting, succeeding at times and failing often. One needs to live and abide in His love i.e., accepting His generous love given freely in abundance and sharing it with all around. One can only give what one has. One's love must flow out from within. Superficiality has no place in Sacred Heart Spirituality. The world and its ways are superficial and passing. Money, power, status, ego are transient. What is one's inner treasure trove filled with?

To keep one's antennae in tune with the stirrings of the Spirit, one needs to be open and alive. The Spirit speaks loudly at times, but most often softly and gently. Jesus is already present within, at every moment of one's life. But it is the Spirit who unites and conforms one to His Heart. Only when one's



heart beat matches His Heart beat, in unison will one be able to experience reality with His Heart and His Mind. Only then, will one be able to grow oneself on the model of His Love, Heart and Mind.

By contemplating reality with His Sacred Heart, one becomes a powerful force of conversion and transformation. One has to break one's body and lay down one's life for Jesus daily, so that others may have life and have it to the fullest. One has to stick one's neck out and pay the price as living saints like Fr Stan Swamy, SJ, and those languishing in jail are presently paying. Many courageous martyrs have died for a cause. Is one willing to lay down one's life joyfully, go against the grain, worldly ways and stereotypes, and be beaten up, incarcerated or even killed; as Jesus was? Or does one use one's congregation as one's shield; not wanting to get into a controversy or tarnish its good name?

To grow in one's interior life and glorify the Sacred Heart, prolonged times of prayer, meditation and contemplation are necessary. Reading/studying scripture, reflection/daily *Examen*, periodic renewals, days of recollection, annual retreat/*triduum* etc. can facilitate this spirituality. Spiritual direction, reflection with another RSCJ/friend, help from the community, time and space for prayer are aids that make the journey easier. Rosary, Marian devotions, community prayer, reconciliation are further add-ons.

However, the epitome of Sacred Heart Spirituality is the Eucharist. Receiving the Body/Blood of Christ, one is blessed with grace, capacity to lay down one's life, be broken, even killed if need be, so that new life, new humanity and a new birthing can take place. Are you ready for this painful birth? ●

Dr (Sr) Mudita Menona Sodder is a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus- (RSCJ in French). She is an Eco-Spiritualist who lives on the Sophia College Campus, Mumbai.

Sacred Heart Spirituality

By Mudita Menona Sodder, RSCJ

one's own life during the day, one must be aware that we are all made of clay. He lovingly moulds us, firing us with His love to strengthen us.

Having observed the preferences of His Heart, one needs to choose like Him, the poor and the under-privileged. This must reflect in one's life - the friends one has, the choices one makes when one visits people, the things one chooses to do and how one does them. In order to discover Jesus' Heart, one needs to contemplate His words, His attitudes, His relationships, His way of relating to all His creatures, thus understanding and grasping the art of putting flesh on to His words in scripture, living it in one's life and making it come alive in one's encounters with others.

Unconditional love is very demanding. Does one relate with equanimity and magnanimity with all, or does one have reservations and treat people differently? Does one dispense with one's time, energy, gifts and talents freely or are they at the service of the select few, partially

Jesuits kick off Ignatian Year



Jesuits in Indonesia have launched a special year of celebrations marking the 500th anniversary of the conversion of their founder St. Ignatius of Loyola with a Mass at Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta.

Under the theme “To See All Things New in Christ,” the Ignatian Year, which ends on 31 July next year, celebrates the day when Ignatius, the Spanish soldier, was struck by a French cannonball during the Battle of Pamplona on 20 May 1521, beginning his transformation into Ignatius the pilgrim. Fr Benedictus Hari Juliawan, the provincial of the Indonesian Jesuit Province, led the concelebrated Mass on 20 May. - <http://www.ucanews.com>

Teaching online catechism



Filipino catechist Alberto Saldajeno uses puppets to teach catechism and voice social concerns in Philippine society.

A catechist in the Philippines has started teaching catechism and commenting on social issues to young Catholics on social media using puppets and theater.

Alberto Saldajeno is posting five-minute video clips on YouTube called Kwentismo, or “storyism,” aimed at making the Catholic faith interesting and appealing to mostly children studying online.

- www.en.radiovaticana.va

Situation in Gaza “desperate” and “terrifying”

Caritas Jerusalem, the charity arm of the Catholic Church in the Palestinian territories, says that with extremely heavy bombing by Israel, almost round-the-clock, it is impossible to deliver aid to the people in Gaza. Despite mounting pressure from the United States to de-escalate, Israel is continuing its deadly offensive against Hamas in Gaza. Another heavy barrage of airstrikes and artillery early 20 May morning killed at least one Palestinian and wounded several others in the densely populated enclave, from where Hamas militants have fired thousands of rockets into Israel.

With the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza showing no signs of abating, people in the densely enclave are desperate and the situation is terrifying, according to Caritas Jerusalem. - www.en.radiovaticana.va

Catechists on bicycles



“Most catechists preach the Gospel without being paid for their work. Some of them receive a minimal refund. We hope that with this small gift of a bicycle, a small recognition from the Church, they will be encouraged to be catechists-missionaries”: thus, on the occasion of the publication of Pope Francis’s Motu Proprio “Antiquum ministerium”, with which Pope Francis establishes the ministry of catechists, Msgr. Sebastian Tudu, Bishop of the diocese of Dinajpur, tells Fides of his gesture of donating 45 bicycles among catechists, men and women, for pastoral work in the parish of Ruhea in Thakurgaon, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

- **Fides News**

News - Asia Capsules

Appointment of bishop of Hong Kong

The Holy Father has appointed as bishop of the diocese of Hong Kong, China, the Reverend Fr Stephen Chow Sau-yan, SJ, until now provincial of the Chinese Province of the Society of Jesus. Msgr. Stephen Chow Sau-yan, SJ, was born on 7 August 1959 in Hong Kong. - **Fides News**

Macau honors Our Lady of Fatima with postal stamps

Authorities in Macau have decided to publish postal stamps of Our Lady of Fatima to honor the long-held tradition of devotion to Mary by Catholics in the Chinese-ruled territory. The Directorate of Postal and Telecommunications Services will launch a set of two stamps and a block featuring the traditional, decades-old Procession of Our Lady of Fatima in Macau on 13 May. - <http://www.ucanews.com>

Malaysian archdiocese raises money for India

Kuching Archdiocese in Malaysia has launched a fundraising campaign to help pandemic-hit India. Archbishop Simon Poh of Kuching has urged Catholics in Sarawak state and other parts of Malaysia to donate money and pray for people in India where millions are struggling to survive as thousands die each day because of the Covid-19 catastrophe.

- <http://www.ucanews.com>

Digital app mandatory for entering churches

Singapore Archdiocese has made the use of a government-mandated digital app compulsory for entering churches to accelerate contact tracing to curb the spread of Covid-19. With effect from 17 May, only the TraceTogether token or app will be accepted for entry into churches and the SafeEntry app or Singpass will no longer be used, the communication office of Singapore Archdiocese announced on 14 May. - <http://www.ucanews.com>



11. Religious and Charitable Buildings- Exempted from Income Tax - Supreme Court

By Jessy Kurian, SAP

Considering various Appeals from Kerala, the Supreme Court concluded that the buildings of religious and charitable activities are entitled for tax exemption. For paucity of words, I state here only the crust of the matter and for further clarification you may contact to the e-mail given below.

Section 3(1)(b) of the Kerala Building Tax Act, 1975 states, "the buildings that are used principally for religious, charitable or educational purposes or as factories or workshops are exempted from building tax".

However, the Government of Kerala passed an order that, the building in Survey No.206 Thodupuzha village, Thodupuzha Taluk having plinth area of 903.24 M2 owned by the Adoration Convent, Shanti Bhavan, Thodupuzha is not eligible for exemption under Section 3 (1)(b) of the said Act.

The contention of the Government was that no exemption should be granted as residential accommodation for nuns would be for residential, as apart from religious, or educational purposes and would not therefore be covered by the exemption contained in Section 3(1)(b) of the Act.

Against the said order of the Government dated 14.3.2002, the Mother Superior filed a petition (O.P.No .11246 of 2002) in the High Court of Kerala. A Single Bench, quashed the order of the Government dated 29.5.2002 and directed the Tehsildar to refer the case to the Govt for its decision.

Thereafter the Mother Superior made a representation to the Government on 10.2.2004

In the representation the Mother Superior made clear certain matters that:

- There are 8 sisters staying in the convent and are deputed to render services in religious as well as charitable needs of the Vinjan Matha Church, East Thodupuzha and the people around the Church irrespective of caste, creed and community.

- That the building is also intended for accommodating the junior sisters who are undergoing their college education in the nearby Newman College, Thodupuzha, thus there are 8 students too in the building.

- That the building is not at all given for amount at any time, and it will not be given so in the future also. It will be used only as a religious house etc..

Though the Govt examined the matter in detail, it turned down the representation.

Thereafter the petitioner approached Kerala High Court by a Writ petition and the learned Single Judge referred the matter to the Division Bench.

After examining various factors the Division Bench concluded that the said disputed building is entitled to tax exemption. Aggrieved by the order, the Kerala Government filed an Appeal before the Supreme Court (Government of Kerala & Anr vs. Mother Superior Adoration Convent, Civil

Appeal No. 202 of 2012) .The Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Kerala High Court. Points settled are as follow:

- If the activities that are going on in the convent are predominantly religious, then, normally, buildings of the convent used for the said purpose should also qualify for exemption.

- If any particular building is used for any commercial activity, such buildings could be segregated.

- It is undisputed that a Chapel is used for religious purposes.

- Attached to the chapel there may be a room for the Chaplain for taking rest, is also for religious purpose.

- If the buildings of convents are generally used for religious purposes and one of the buildings used for residence of an inmate there, it shall also be treated as one, used for religious purposes.

- The buildings, used for the residence of the nuns in a convent, is principally used for religious and charitable purposes and therefore, should also qualify for exemption.

- If the convent is running a commercial or industrial unit, the building housing that establishment will not qualify for exemption.

- Wherever hostel is compulsory for approval of a course study or an educational institution by the regulatory body for the accommodation to student for educational purpose then the hostel building qualifies for exemption from building tax.

- Hostel facility provided to students for accommodation by other educational institutions, which are not compulsorily required under the educational regulations also will qualify for tax exemption if an educational institution has students from different parts of the State, and Non Resident Indians sending their children for studies (any state) necessarily the educational institution has to provide hostel facility to the students. In fact, without hostel facility, many educational institutions will not have required number of students to run it. In such case, accommodation is a necessary facility. So long as the purpose of stay of students in the hostel is to study in the educational institution, the purpose of such building, which is used for accommodation of students, qualifies as educational purpose.

- A lodge building constructed in the campus of the educational institution will not qualify for tax exemption. Because it cannot be considered as a hostel accommodation. It is to rent out to students studying in such educational institutions. Letting out of buildings by private agencies is a commercial activity whether tenants are students or not.

However, the underlining point in the judgement calls for rendering charity to the people around. A building, whether a convent, seminary, juniorate, novitiate etc., should render religious and charitable service. ●

Sr Jessy Kurian, SAP, is Advocate, Supreme Court. To contact: lawyering5@gmail.com

A Nation at Sixes and Sevens



By Matthew Adukanil, SDB

Hospitals frantically call for oxygen cylinders
But Central vista project is firing on all cylinders
Doctors balk at gasping oxygen deprived patients
And dazed by trauma, shut doors on new cases.

Proud Patel statue towers high in the sky
Precision-moon-landing rockets roar high
Bloated decomposing bodies float on holy Ganga
Faint Howde Modi cheers ebb from distant shores.

Dreams of a landslide win warm the leader's heart
Buoyed up by swelling crowds at Bengal polls rallies
Devotion flows unhindered at milling Kumbh baktas
As at overworked cremation yards bodies pile up high.

Can dream bullet trains complement scarce ambulances
To rush desperate Covid victims to exhausted medicos?
'No admission to patients without oxygen cylinders'
Declare exasperated, weary, oxygen undersupplied hospitals.

With ever mounting shortage of drugs and medicines
Can doctors prescribe a Gujarat style cow dung bath?
Announcement 'Vaccination for all above 18 from May 1'
Got a billion plus nation on a frantic futile jab run.

'The pharmacy of the world' generously donated
And exported vaccines far and near with much fanfare
But with acute vaccine shortage and unrelenting deaths
Soon we had to send out Mayday call all over the globe.





48. Two ways of praying amid the pandemic



By John Alexander, SDB

Devout men and women pray in good and bad times, and “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17). Most of us pray devoutly in times of need and crisis. But how do you pray in times such as this, when we are surrounded by deaths, sickness, suffering, loneliness and fear during this pandemic? Two weeks ago, a young woman who tragically lost her mother to Covid wrote this to me: “I want to tell you that I never cried when I saw my mother’s body in the mortuary, I am unable to cry. I have become numb, seeing too much deaths, and bodies, suffering, and families shouting out their pain for their loved ones, in helplessness.” We do not know how this woman and thousands of other people and families in such conditions will come to terms with the loss and uncertain future.

God’s people in the Bible were no strangers to deep crisis. They too had their Covid-19. Floods, famines, plagues, earthquakes and wars were part of the history of the people of Israel. How did they pray in these extremely difficult times? They trusted in the power and mercy of God to save them from their perils while they, at the invitation of prophets, also introspected and renewed their faithfulness to God. During the period of exile, for example, when the people of Israel complained against God, they were bitten by poisonous snakes and died. It was at their repentance that God asked Moses to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. All who looked at it were healed (Num 21:1-9). Years later, Jesus declared this as a symbol of His death on the cross: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15).

God’s promise to king Solomon during the consecration of the Temple makes this form of prayer even more explicit and praiseworthy: “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain... or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron 7:13-14). No doubt, the suffering caused by the virus is enormous. And yet what will prevail is our trust in the Lord that He will deliver us from this disaster, and our readiness to deepen our relationship with Him. We pray with the psalmist, “Be merciful to me, O God ... in

the shadow of your wings, I will take refuge until the destroying storms pass by” (Ps 57:1).

A God Who Suffers

There is, however, another tradition of prayer in the Bible, called lamentation, which goes beyond mere let up of emotions and frustrations. Lament is what happens when people ask “why” and do not have an answer or justification. If this pandemic was meant to “purify” a sinful world, as some proclaim, why are then so many good people dying and suffering from this virus, not merely the sinners and criminals? Two staff members of our college, Siva Kumar (40 years), father of three daughters and Kalaiarasi (32 years), mother of a 5-year-old daughter, succumbed to Covid, as I wrote this. How are we going to care for these and other millions of Covid-orphan and Covid-widows in the world, and possibly tell them about a God who cares and heals?



Lamentation is also weeping with those who weep in solidarity. The Book of Lamentation in the Old Testament is typically a “communal lament” – a community and nation mourning for the destroyed city in the hope that God will act on their behalf: “My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed, because children and infants faint in the streets of the city” (Lam. 2:11). This means that in face of any crisis we move beyond our egoism and self-pity, and look more broadly at the suffering world, and see in what way we can bring about healing and consolation. The “scandalous mystery” of the Bible is that God too laments. He does not just watch and control from a distance. God Yahweh was heart-broken, when his own bride, the people of Israel, turned away. Jesus wept at the tomb of his friend, Lazarus, and resorted to the prayer of lament on the cross by using Psalm 22, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Rabindranath Tagore was not a Christian, but he wanted everyone to grow in devotion to a God who is bound with the struggling world. In *Gitanjali*, he wrote: “Open thine eyes and see thy God, not before thee! He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones ...” When we lament in prayer, weep with those who weep, we too can recognize God in all who are wounded during this pandemic. ●

New ministry for catechists

Indian Catholics have welcomed the news that Pope Francis has created a lay ministry to encourage greater participation of men and women in spreading the Catholic faith.

The papal letter, *Antiquum Ministerium* (Ancient Ministry) was released on 11 May in eight languages.

“We wholeheartedly thank the Holy Father and welcome the gesture by him for recognizing our foot soldiers who are the actual personnel helping in evangelization and spreading the Good News of the Church,” Bishop Gerald John Mathias of Lucknow told UCA News.

Bishop Mathias, a member of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India’s laity commission, said that “by constituting the ministry of catechist, Pope Francis has given them full authority to go out without any hindrances and proclaim the Gospel.” - www.mattersindia.com

Church extends hand to ease pandemic crisis



Card. Oswald Gracias

Cardinal Oswald Gracias explains how the Church’s social arm and its healthcare sector are responding to the critical emergency of the nation under massive waves of Covid-19 cases and deaths. The Catholic Church of India has made available some 60,000 beds of its healthcare facilities in the country’s battle against Covid-19 pandemic. More than 50,000 nuns normally work at these facilities, a thousand of whom are qualified doctors, said Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Bombay, the president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India (CBCI). “India’s Catholic Church is doing its utmost to help all those suffering, he said. - www.en.radiovaticana.va

Father Stan rejects hospitalization, demands bail



Fr Stan Swamy

Fr Stan Swamy on 21 May rejected a proposal to admit him in a hospital but demanded interim bail to return to his residence in Ranchi, eastern India. The 84-year Jesuit tribal activist made the demand during a video conference with the Bombay High Court from the Taloja Jail near Mumbai where has been lodged since 9 Oct 2020. Justice Kathawalla of the court interacted directly with Father Swamy and asked many questions. He further told the court, “Only one thing that I would request the judiciary is to consider my interim bail.” - www.mattersindia.com

Court favors nun’s petition to ban offensive movie



Delhi High Court has directed the Central Information and Broadcasting Ministry to expeditiously consider a Catholic nun’s demand to ban a movie accused of portraying priests and nuns as “sex maniacs”. The direction from the state court of the national capital came on 17 May while it was hearing a petition from Sr Jessie Mani, a member of the indigenous Sacred Heart Congregation. The nun petitioned the court seeking to ban *Akkaram*, a movie made in the Malayalam language. Kerala High Court stayed its release on 12 May for two weeks, accepting a petition by two nuns to ban it permanently.

- <http://www.ucanews.com>

News - Nation Capsules

Fr Siby M. appointed as Bishop in Papua New Guinea

Pope Francis has appointed Fr Siby Mathew Peedikayil (50) the member of the Heralds of Good News as the bishop of Aitape, a diocese in Papua New Guinea, a country in Oceania on 13 May 2021. He is currently the vicar general of the diocese of Vanimo in Papua New Guinea. - **Dr Stephen Alathara**



Fr Siby

Fr Baptist Pais appointed as Ecumenism Commission Secretary

Fr Baptist Pais, SVD (61) from the India-Mumbai Province of the Society of Divine Word was appointed as the Executive Secretary to the CCBI Commission for Ecumenism. The appointment was made by the CCBI Executive Committee in its virtual meeting held on 14-15 May 2021. - **Dr Stephen Alathara**



Fr Baptist Pais, SVD

NE Church forms core team to respond to Covid

In the wake of rising number of Covid cases in North East India, the Catholic Church of the region has formed a core team to respond to the crisis. The primary task of the team, set up during an online meeting on 18 May, is to coordinate the Catholic Church’s various activities in the region. - www.mattersindia.com

India’s “tree hugging” environmentalist dies

Veteran environmental activist Sunderlal Bahuguna died on 21 May at All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Rishikesh. He was 94. Bahuguna was admitted to the hospital on 8 May after testing Covid-19 positive. During the death, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a tweet, “Passing away of Shri Sunderlal Bahuguna Ji is a monumental loss for our nation. - www.mattersindia.com

72. Building Resilience



By Hedwig Lewis, SJ

Times are such that more than ever before we are all facing a barrage of “stressors” in varied and unpredictable forms. Stressors are whatever causes physical, emotional, or mental stress. When we get entangled in the web of stressors in life, our inborn power of resilience begins to weaken. We become increasingly sensitive, over-reactive, and emotionally unbalanced. Even a little change of plans can leave us in a state of anxiety and panic. Effectively coping with stress contributes directly towards building resilience.

Resilience is the best antidote to stress. Resilience implies bouncing back from these trying circumstances. Resilience means having the ability to respond to change or adversity proactively and resourcefully. It involves a process of consciously drawing on the beliefs, behaviours and skills that can help you respond to challenges effectively, and move beyond them as a stronger person.

Findings from psychological surveys conducted by researchers have revealed that resilient people did not passively react to negative life circumstances, but proactively took action to achieve positive outcomes. Instead of staying stuck in feelings of anger, fear, or anxiety, they stepped back and asked themselves: “What reaction am I having, how do I want to respond, and what outcomes do I want?” Next, they brainstormed possible courses of action, determined those most likely to produce desired outcomes, prioritized their action steps, then moved into action.

One effective approach to managing stressors is to ‘reframe’ your idea of change as being a threat to being a natural part of life. Instead of resisting change, you must embrace it as a natural progression of life. Every time you find yourself holding on to what was, you must say to yourself, “I release the past, cooperate fully with today and enthusiastically embrace tomorrow.” The foundation of resilience is accepting change as an inevitable part of life. Fighting it not only produces frustration, but keeps you from taking action and moving forward.

Another approach is to develop greater awareness and self-mastery. The more awareness and self-mastery you have, the greater your resilience. Personal development has many benefits, one of which is gaining

greater clarity about your reactive patterns and how they may be negatively impacting your life. Finding good resources to change habitual, limiting patterns will not only transform your life, but it will provide you with effective life skills to draw upon in difficult times.

A third approach in your efforts to strengthen your power of resilience is to shift your perspective from yourself and your problems. For instance, you may observe those in a worse situation and determine how you would make sense of it if you were in it. Or, visualize yourself consoling the distressed persons by assuring them that some good can actually come out of this ‘tragedy’ in the long run. This is not about denial of what happened to you, nor putting an unrealistically positive spin on things but, where possible, trying to find some good from negative events can be a healthy coping strategy.

Change is part of the human condition and no one is exempt from emotional pain and adversity. Developing resilience is a critical key to not only accepting and meeting a life challenge head on, but being able to get to the other side of it with greater wisdom and strength. Following is a quote from Marianne Williamson’s, “A Return to Love” for those seeking inspiration and courage to develop the power of resilience.

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves: Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us. It’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

When you are living a resilient life, you are living a fulfilled life, where you know who you are and you know what is important to you. You have a plan as to where you are going and you know where you should be investing your time and energy. ●

Hedwig Lewis, SJ, is an author and a writer. Contact: hedwiglewis@gmail.com



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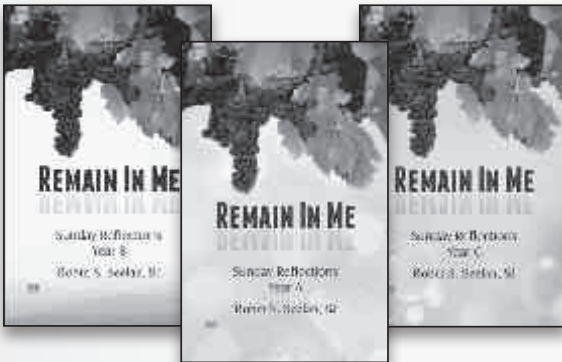
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Blessed Alberione

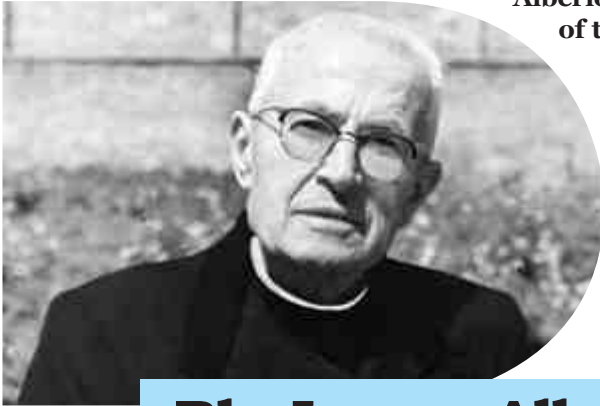
Blessed James Alberione, the Founder of the Pauline Family consisting of 5 Religious Congregations: the Society of St Paul, the Daughters of St Paul, Sister Disciples of the Divine Master, Sisters of the good Shepherd, the Sisters of the Queen of Apostles and 5 Aggregate Institutes, passed into eternity on November 26, 1971. His 50th Death Anniversary falls on November 26, 2021.

Alberione was a great lover and promoter of the Word of God. His greatest desire and dream was to see the Bible placed in the hands of everyone across the globe! While he was alive, he did everything possible to see this dream come

should be enabled to hear the Word of God, that the Gospel should enter every family, that it should be the model and inspiration of every book and that the Gospel should be held in veneration (Cf. *Ad Gentes*, 35). Alberione set forth to preach the Word of God through the powerful means of Mass Media, giving this exclusive mission to the first two Religious Congregation he founded, the **Society of St Paul** and the **Daughters of St Paul** asking also other Congregations and secular Institutes to collaborate in this mission. He had such a love for and devotion to the Word of God that “for thirty-two years he carried the Bible with him; it was for him truly an efficacious prayer”.

Alberione at the Service of the Word of God

For Fr Alberione, Bible is the truth which God wants to teach men, it is also God’s letter of invitation to heaven. It is the way to salvation. He has traced



B1. James Alberione and the Bible

true, and he ardently desired that his spiritual sons and daughters give maximum importance to the spreading of the Bible and its message in their apostolic activities. So it is with great joy and passion that the Paulines keep the year starting from 26th November 2020 to 26th November 2021 as the Pauline Bible Year to coincide with his 50th Death Anniversary.

Alberione loved the Word of God; spent several hours a day praying, reflecting and meditating on the Word of God; he venerated it and lived according to it, and wanted it to reach everyone in the shortest time and quickest way possible. He wanted that everyone

for men. The Bible brings the “words of eternal life” to men and communicates to them an interior divine force. Hence he wanted the Bible, and the Gospel in particular, to reach everyone, and the diffusion of it is the essential duty of everyone who dedicates himself to the apostolate of the Press. He insisted that the biblical apostolate is very necessary for our mission and cannot be substituted by anything however good it is. “The finality of our apostolate,” he said, “is to bring the Gospel to all the people of all times.”

The Bible and the Eucharist

Fr Alberione associated the

By Thomas Muthirakalayil, SSP

Eucharist with *the Word of God*: one integrating the other. He wrote: “The Eucharist and the Bible are very much in harmony with each other, and so it is with the apostolate of the Press and the Eucharist. In the Bible we find the Wisdom of God; hence the Eucharist and the Bible complete each other.”

For Fr Alberione, the Bible was the ‘pure bread’, and his great desire was that others, too, nourish themselves on this ‘bread’. He said, “This is my wish for you: nourish yourselves on pure bread, the best bread (the Bible). He had an intuition that the Bible must have a genuine respect paid to it, side by side with the Eucharist. This is very clear from his writings and the works.

During the night adoration between December 31, 1900 and January 1, 1901, which was very crucial to him, Alberione clearly understood the connection between the Eucharist, the Gospel, the new Century, new means of apostolate and new apostles:

Biblical Vocation of Fr Alberione

Alberione was a man of deep faith, one who accepted the Word of God wholly and acted in perfect obedience to it with total dedication, no matter whatever the risk involved or the sacrifices required. He had understood the importance of the Word of God from his Seminary days, at the “school” of St Paul who was “set apart” for the Gospel and sent to announce it to all the peoples.

He firmly believed that the Bible was the *Book* for all humanity. He knew that his vocation was to spread the Word of God. Hence he wanted the Bible to reach

The New Leader, June 1-15, 2021

Blessed Alberione

everyone, everywhere. He strongly believed that the Gospel should enter every family, combined with Catechism. The Gospel is to be interpreted according to the mind of the Church, i.e., with fully spelt-out catechetical notes under the headings: faith, morals and cult; that the Gospel should be the model and inspiration for every book and publication; that the Bible should be held in great veneration.

In 1903, among the seminarians of Alba, the work of spreading the Bible was initiated, and there was a great diffusion of the Vatican edition of the Gospel. Great fervour was also aroused among the Seminarians, and the first “Gospel Days” were held.

At around the same time Alberione wrote a brief dissertation on the Bible, considered as the Book of humanity and the Book of God. He dedicated himself to Bible study and all the more so as in 1906 Pius X had made it obligatory for seminarians to study sacred Scripture.

In those years, he received clearer light about a great treasure the Lord wished to grant to the Society of St Paul: the diffusion of the Gospel. In August 1907, he held three Bible Sundays during which the Bible was presented in catechetical form and with catechetical applications. He felt that it was necessary to explain the Gospel during the Mass, every Sunday. This is what he did on Sundays in the Cathedral. Soon the custom spread to many other parishes, as well.

He soon prepared the Gospel and Bible editions for every category of persons in order that the Word of God could reach everyone, in keeping with his motto: “The Bible in every family” and “the Bible for all categories of persons.”

It is impossible to calculate the millions of copies of Gospels and the Bible in many languages

distributed all over the world by the sons and daughters of Fr Alberione. He also promoted the Bible in pictures, illustrated editions, films, and cassettes. Fr Alberione was the first to produce the entire Bible in colour, by the *San Paolo Films* he founded.

In 1924, in the diocese of Alba, Fr Alberione started the Catholic Bible Society with the help of the Pauline Cooperators, which Bishop Re of Alba approved in the same year, and Pope John XXIII erected it as a Primary Union on October 14, 1960.

To the Pauline Cooperators he proposed the study and meditations of the biblical texts, and collaboration in the diffusion of the Bible.

Around the same time he started organizing *Bible Weeks*. Later on he promoted the *Groups of the Gospel* in collaboration with non-Catholics, the *Biblical-liturgical Vigils* and *Biblical Correspondence Courses*, prepared by the organization *UT Unum Sint* for the unity of Christians.

For Alberione, the biblical mission was a real obsession: in the twenties *the Gospel for one Lira*, in 1927 *the Congress on the Gospel* in Alba, in the fifties Bible in film, in the sixties *the ‘Bible in every family’ at 1000 Lire and successively Bible in discs*. Simultaneously, he set aside a modern printing machine in his press only to print different editions of the Bible and the New Testament.

In Italy alone, from 1931 until 1990, the Paulines have distributed at least 15 million copies of the Bible in 90 editions.

The Paulines, today, are publishing annually, in various languages, around two million copies of the Bible. Added to this are numerous biblical works published, meeting only a small portion of the ever increasing demand, across the world.

Bible in Every Family

Bible brings the “words of eternal life” to men and communicates to them an interior divine force. Hence Alberione categorically said the most important goal of all the activities of the Pauline Family should be the distribution of the Bible. In November 1923, he wrote in the bulletin of Cooperators, *Cooperatore Paolino*, an editorial entitled “The Gospel in Every Family”. Where he called the Gospel the fount of all good things for the family, and wanted it to be present in every family, library, school and business Centre, and announced that the Society of St Paul would distribute it at the nominal price of one *Lira* per copy. He also suggested ways to realize this end:

- Preaching on the Gospel and keeping a collection box at the end of the Church;
- Giving the Gospel as prize to children who excel in Catechism;
- Offering the Gospel as Christmas and New Year and Birthday gifts;
- Suggesting to the directors of companies and workshops that they offer the Gospel as gift to their employees;
- Finding generous persons who will pay for a copy of the Gospel for a poor family or someone who could not pay;

In December 1965, Alberione wrote an article entitled “The Bible in Every Family”, exhorting the Paulines to facilitate the diffusion of the Bible by keeping its price as low as possible.

He concluded the article saying: “the essential activity of the Apostolate of the Press is the distribution of the Bible, to see that the Bible reach every family.” He wanted the Gospel to enter every family, especially of which people do not go to hear it read in the church.” ●

133. Plenty of deaths, no mourning!



By M.K. George, SJ

Covid-19 virus is taking away human lives. Thousands, every day. Tragically, the dear ones cannot even mourn the bereavement. Without mourning, deaths become such heavy burden on the survivors.



Even as a child, I had come to know the value of mourning. It was in a strange kind of way, though. I used to observe relatives groaning, wailing, and weeping bitterly over the dead body of the dear ones. But, within an hour of the funeral, I would see them smiling and some of them even laughing. I wondered, why? Today I know better. It was the crying, the wailing and the drama, which healed them. They needed to do that in order to continue a normal living.

“**Grieving** human losses is important because it allows us to ‘free-up’ energy that is bound to the lost person, object, or experience—so that **we** might re-invest that energy elsewhere. ... Healthy **grieving** results in an ability to remember the importance of our loss—but with a newfound sense of peace, rather than searing pain”, observe psychologists.

Unfortunately, this is what Corona-19 virus is denying us. Our dear ones pass on. We cannot give them a hug; sometimes not even see their faces.

“Sadness and bereavement can leave us listless, withdrawn and awake all hours of the night. Sometimes, we may physically ache for our lost loved one ... a condition called “complicated grief,” in which these symptoms last much longer than expected. And then there’s broken-hearted syndrome, where stress hormones may cause the heart to beat irregularly, mimicking a heart attack”, says Katherine Ellen Foley.

Here is the challenge! Can we find ways of mourning and grieving our Covid-19 related deaths? First thing to do is to be aware of the terrible trauma that a lack of proper grieving creates in the survivors, be it family members, friends or even just acquaintances. Once we are aware we can look for innovative ways of grieving.

Who should take the initiative? The Church can. Family can. Friends can. Even arranging a zoom meeting and live streaming of the funeral ceremonies can make a difference. Ultimately, of course, the crucial step is to set up a space for sharing the pain.

Grieve we must. How to do it in these constraining times is a question for all of us.

“It takes strength to make your way through grief, to grab hold of life and let it pull you forward.”

- Patti Davis

(feedback to gmutholil@gmail.com)

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St John's guides Odisha diocese on Covid-19

St John's National Academy of Health Sciences, a prestigious Church institution in Bengaluru, has begun guiding a diocese in Odisha in Covid protocol behavior. "My diocese is grateful to St. John's Medical College helping us to deal with the present crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic," Bp Niranjana Sualsingh of Sambalpur told Matters India on 25 May. The academy on 24 May organized a two-hour webinar for priests, nuns, Brothers, and lay people on how to follow daily pandemic protocol behaviors. Around 45 people attended the first virtual conference on professional medical guidance on Covid-19 conducted by Doctor Bobby Joseph, St. John's Medical College, Bengaluru. - www.mattersindia.com



Dr Bobby Joseph

Caritas India launches multi-level treatment centers



Caritas India has begun setting up Covid treatment centers in 14 states with high prevalence as part of its continued efforts to save people from the deadly disease. The second wave of Covid-19 has wrecked the healthcare system and related infrastructure in the country. The Caritas plan is to set up First Level Treatment Centers for patients with mild symptoms who require a place for quarantine. Fr Paul Moonjely, executive director of Caritas India, says the first level centers aim to reach out to the larger population and at the same time reduce the surmounting pressure on health institutions. - www.mattersindia.com

Cyclone kills 50, damages thousands of homes in India

Cyclone Tauktae has killed more than 50 people in Gujarat and left a trail of destruction, damaging several buildings including several church institutions. High winds of up to 100kph battered 12 districts of the state on 18 May, uprooting trees, electrical and telecommunication poles and blowing roofs off several houses. Officials said at least 50 people are dead and some 40 are missing. Most people died of electrocution or when the walls of their homes collapsed. "We have suffered huge damage to our institutions, but there is no report of any casualty among Christians," said Bishop Jose Chittooparambil of Rajkot, which covers the worst-affected Amreli and Bhavnagar districts. The bishop said he was unable to connect with many priests and nuns because of disruption to communications. - <http://www.ucanews.com>

- <http://www.ucanews.com>

Goa archdiocese opens renewal center for people's self-quarantine

The archdiocese of Goa-Daman plans to open one of its spiritual renewal centers for people who require self-quarantine during this coronavirus pandemic time.

Fr Savio Fernandes, assistant director Caritas-Goa, says they have sent five nurses to undergo training in Heathway Hospital to take charge of the service in St Joseph Vaz Spiritual Renewal Centre in Old Goa. "We are beginning with 40 beds, including 10 with oxygen facility," the priest told Matters India. According to him, many religious responded to Abp Filipe Neri Ferrao's request.

"We require nurses who have completed two doses of vaccination. We need many nurses to work in shifts. Our service may go on for a month or more as per the need," he said. - www.mattersindia.com

- www.mattersindia.com

News - Nation Capsules

Percival Holt appointed to Commission on Methodology for Synod 2023

Percival Holt from the Archdiocese of Delhi was appointed by His Eminence Mario Cardinal Grech, the General Secretary to the Synod of Bishops to the "Commission on Methodology" for the planning and implementation of the next Synod of Bishops in 2023.



Percival Holt

- **Rev. Dr. Stephen Alathara**

NE Church marks World Communication Day

The Catholic Church's North East Social Communication (NESCOM) on 16 May organized a webinar on Pope Francis' message for the World Communication Day 2021. Addressing 27 delegates representing various media department of the Church in the region, Salesian Fr George Plathottam, discussed the theme for the day: Come and See.

- www.mattersindia.com

Church launches home care program for Covid patients

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India's (CBCI) Office for Health has launched a parish-based home care program for Covid-19 patients in seven states. The project launched on 13 May at regional offices in Andhra, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu cares for victims of the pandemic. - <http://www.ucanews.com>

Church mourns death of Vincentian missionary

The Church in northern India has mourned the death of a Vincentian priest who opened new mission areas in Agra archdiocese and Meerut diocese in Uttar Pradesh state. Fr Thomas Emprayil died of Covid-19 on 8 May in St Joseph's Hospital in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. He was 79. - www.mattersindia.com

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“Worst crisis in living memory”



By M.A. Joe Antony, SJ

The WHO (World Health Organization) looked like a pathetic, helpless bystander when COVID 19 spread and ravaged country after country. Some reports made you even suspect if it was a neutral, effective body, capable of protecting the world from such grave threats to global health.

But its one good, commendable initiative was the establishment of a panel of experts called the Independent Panel. Its full name is the ‘Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response.’ The Panel was asked to provide “an evidence-based path for the future, grounded in lessons of the past and present, with the aim of ensuring countries and global institutions, including WHO, effectively address health threats.” Based on insights and lessons learned from the health response to COVID-19, the Panel was expected to provide a fresh assessment of the challenges ahead with regard to global health.

The Independent Panel was co-chaired by two brilliant women - Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former President of Liberia. The Co-Chairs selected 11 Panel members, from a long-list of more than 120 experts, suggested by Member States. They made their selection on the basis of expertise on infectious disease, outbreak response, management of national health systems, and socio-economic analytical capabilities.

The Panel began its review, supposed to be “impartial, independent and comprehensive” in September 2020. It invited submissions from all over the world on all aspects of the deadly pandemic. A few days ago it submitted its report.

How grave is this crisis? “In less than a year and a half, COVID-19 has infected at least 150 million people and killed more than three million. It is the worst combined health and socio-economic crisis in living memory, and a catastrophe at every level... At least 17, 000 health workers died from COVID-19 during the pandemic’s first year.”

What about the economic impact? “115–125 million people have been pushed into extreme poverty. US \$ 10 trillion of output is expected to be lost by the end of 2021.” The panel calls this ‘the deepest shock to the global economy since the Second World War and the largest simultaneous contraction of national economies since the Great Depression of 1930–32.”

Even those who clearly understand the pandemic’s impact on lives and livelihood do not see how it has affected several other aspects of our lives. “At its highest point in 2020, 90% of school children were unable to attend school.. Perhaps 11 million of the poorest girls in the world may never go back to the classroom.” Many would not be aware that “10 million more girls are at risk of early marriage because of the pandemic.” There has been fivefold increase in demands for protection and support from women who have been the victims of violence.

“It has shown so clearly the gravity of the threat to our health and well-being... This pandemic has shaken some of the standard assumptions that a country’s wealth will secure its health. Leadership and competence have counted more than cash in pandemic responses.”

SARS, which broke out and shook the world in 2003, travelled rapidly to 29 countries, territories and areas, and debilitated health systems, with many health workers being infected. But the epidemic only lasted some six months and was responsible for 8096 cases and 774 deaths. The SARS epidemic was followed by the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, Zika and other disease outbreaks, including another new coronavirus, called Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). Since then experts have kept warning us about another more deadly pandemic, if we don’t change our ways. But our leaders ignored the warnings. Our world was not prepared. This is why COVID 19 has become such a devastating pandemic.

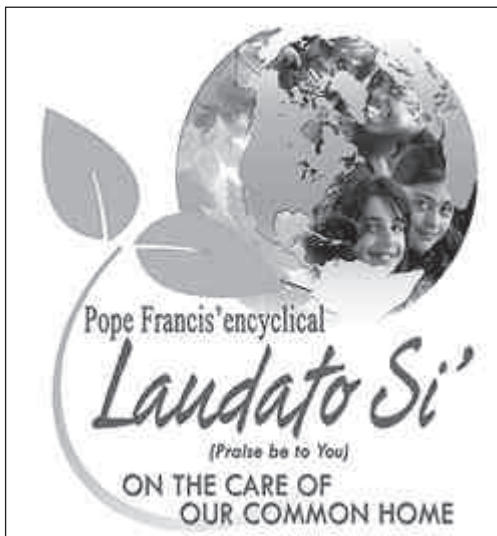
“It has caused a crisis so deep and wide that presidents, prime ministers and heads of international and regional bodies must now urgently accept their responsibility to transform the way in which the world prepares for and responds to global health threats.” The Panel calls on political decision-makers at every level to champion major change and to make available the resources to make it effective.

One of its major recommendations urges wealthy countries to help other countries. “High income countries with a vaccine pipeline for adequate coverage should commit to provide to the 92 low and middle income countries at least one billion vaccine doses no later than 1 September 2021 and more than two billion doses by mid-2022.” ●

M.A. Joe Antony, SJ, former editor of The New Leader and Jivan, now resides at St Joseph’s College, Trichy, teaching, writing and directing retreats and seminars. He can be contacted at: majoeantony@gmail.com

The Role of 'The New Leader'

The 'New Leader' leading our Faith
to the evolving life and culture



There was a time when newsmen/women searched, collected, selected, processed, produced, ... and circulated news through different Media. Now anyone can gather or 'produce' news and circulate it widely. There is no guarantee that the printed or electronically circulated news that reaches us is true or false. The burden of ascertaining the veracity of the news falls on the 'consumer' of the news. It is a very difficult task, considering the volume, diversity and the logistics of verifying every news.

Giving news has become a highly profitable business today. The timing of the news ('Breaking News'), bad news, shocking news, violent news, 'paid' news, etc.... determine the profitability of the news. Newsgathering and its objective presentation and dissemination was considered a noble profession once. Total objectivity in any news reported is next to impossible; the subjectivity of the news gatherer, reporter, editor, etc. of the news could, however, be minimized. Over a period of time, the relative objectivity of different sources of

news and articles could be gauged.

"The New Leader" (NL) is a National Catholic Fortnightly in India. It brings us news about the Pope, Vatican, of Catholicism and Christian Churches in various parts of India, Asia and the world.

It carries regular columns by well-known writers, and articles by specialists in Sacred Scripture, Liturgical readings and on various aspects of Christian life today, within the Church and in the country. It strives to share such news and views with Christians to form and transform them into a more mature and balanced body of believers.

Our Pope Francis of Assisi through his Encyclical letter, "Laudato Si," has incorporated some epochal innovations to our Faith. Prior to the Second Vatican council Catechism taught us that Christian Faith is founded on 'Love of God and love of neighbour'. "Laudato Si" has added another Foundational Pillar to our Faith – love of Nature. **"..human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.."** (LS 66).

The overuse, misuse, abuse, and destruction of Mother Earth, with far-reaching consequences to all creation, goes against God's creation entrusted to our care. Even five years after "Laudato Si", a mature 'loving relationship with Mother Earth' has not quite been integrated into the living Faith by most Christians. Not only Christians, Pope Francis actually invites all people of 'goodwill' to integrate such a loving relationship with Mother Earth.-

The NL has started a series of articles, entitled "Eco Spirituality" highlighting how 'people of goodwill' across India are trying to love, care and nurture Mother Earth, with originality and creativity. A loving relationship with Mother Earth could then become an integral part of all human relationship with the divine. Such a symphony of the Creator, human beings and all Creation could result in a harmonious evolution of the whole Creation.

Rappai Poothokaren, SJ

The New Leader, June 1-15, 2021

By Bp A. Peter Abir

Archbishop Antony Anandarayar (75), Emeritus Archbishop of Pondicherry-Cuddalore passed away on Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 9.30pm at St. Thomas Hospital, Chennai. He was admitted in the hospital for Covid treatment on 24 April and his health condition deteriorated day by day as the oxygen saturation level was very low. When he died his was tested negative of Covid. The sisters in St. Thomas hospital ensured that he got the best care in consultation with the experts from Apollo Hospital, Chennai. Requiem Mass and funeral service were held on Wednesday 5 May 2021 at 4 pm at Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Pondicherry. Even in the context of Covid protocol thousands of people, individually, paid loving homage to the Archbishop in the Cathedral.

Man of the Church!

Archbishop Antony Anandarayar, born in 1945, was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cuddalore in 1971; after some initial ministries in the Archdiocese, was sent to Rome for higher studies. He did his double doctorate in Canon Law and Missiology and returned to be the Professor of St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary, Bangalore, in 1981. Before his appointment as the bishop of Outacamund, Tamilnadu in 1997, he held various positions in St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary: Professor of Canon Law and Missiology, Vice-Rector, President of Pontifical Institute and Rector. He was appointed the Archbishop of Pondicherry-Cuddalore in 2004. He is a priest for 50 years and a bishop for 24 years. A great son of the Church he cherished and guarded the holy traditions and teachings of the Church.

Man of God!

Archbishop Anandarayar was a pious and prayerful person, very committed to his breviary and daily Rosary, lived as a suffering servant of the God. His personal and pastoral life was rooted in his deep faith in the

providence and mercy of God. His strong faith, as he often expressed, 'even if we forget God, He will not forget us' (Is 49:15). He was a simple, holy and loving Shepherd to his

Tearful Homage to Our beloved Archbishop Anandarayar

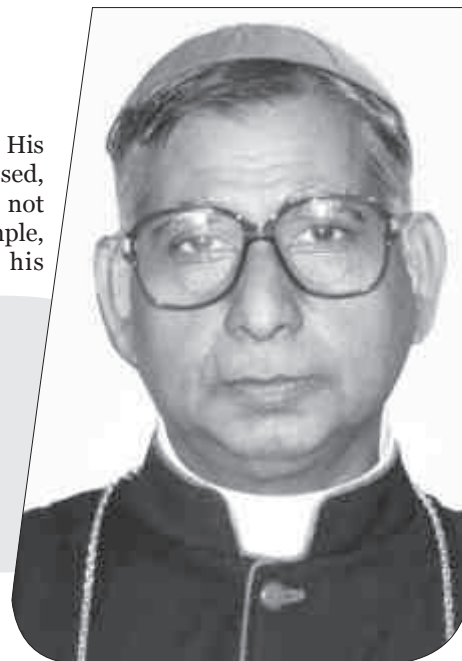
people and priests, putting up with a lot of suffering. He did not cherish anyone praising him and he never even took credit for his achievements; his strong belief was that 'everything is the hand of God.' His simplicity was manifested in his words, behavior, lifestyle and his dealings with people.

Man of the Poor!

A poor Archbishop, but, rich in his concern for the deprived, he could enrich many downtrodden. He was a great lover of the poor. We all know that he helped hundreds of poor youngsters in the diocese of Ooty and in the Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cuddalore. He has no personal monetary savings, but saved the life of thousands of poor students. It was not just a marginal one-time help, but sponsorships that lasted for years, till the youngsters, boys and girls, completed a course that enabled them to find a job and settle down in life.

A loving Pastor!

A sincere and a committed pastor, as Archbishop in our soil, he was a loving and attentive Shepherd to his priests, the religious, the faithful and to all around. Faith-building was close to his heart. His earnest desire was that 'Christ needs to be made visible in the area where Christ is absent, but needed.' He promoted many vocations to priesthood and religious life particularly from among the poorer sections of the society. In the Archdioceses he developed numerous infra-structures, intuitions and parishes in order to strengthen



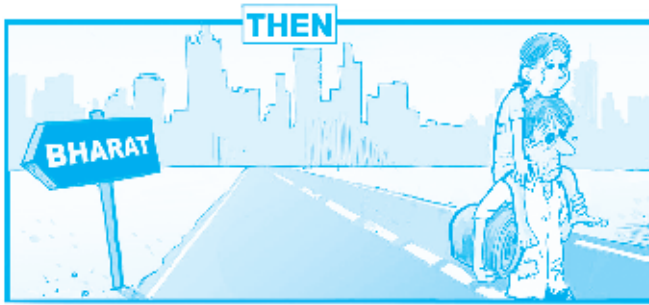
our witness to Faith. He believed that priests are the backbone of the mission of the Church and so, in his tenure as Archbishop, he ordained 100 priests to the Archdiocese and sent many for higher studies, both ecclesiastical and secular, for the growth of the Christian witness.

A Fitting Tribute!

Within three months of handing over his office as the Archbishop God has called him to his eternal reward. Indeed, it is a great shock to every one of us and to all those who knew him. Nevertheless, he has left to us a life of piety, simplicity, hard work, sincerity and love for suffering humanity. If we try to take up these virtues seriously and live them, then, this would be a fitting tribute to our beloved Archbishop.

I would like to end up this grateful remembrance of our Archbishop Antony Anandarayar with the words of St. Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim 4:7-8). If we observe the life and mission of our saintly Archbishop, the above words are truly fitting to him. May his soul rest in peace!

Most Rev Antonysamy Peter Abir, is Bishop of Sultanpet & Apostolic Administrator, Archdiocese of Pondicherry-Cuddalore.



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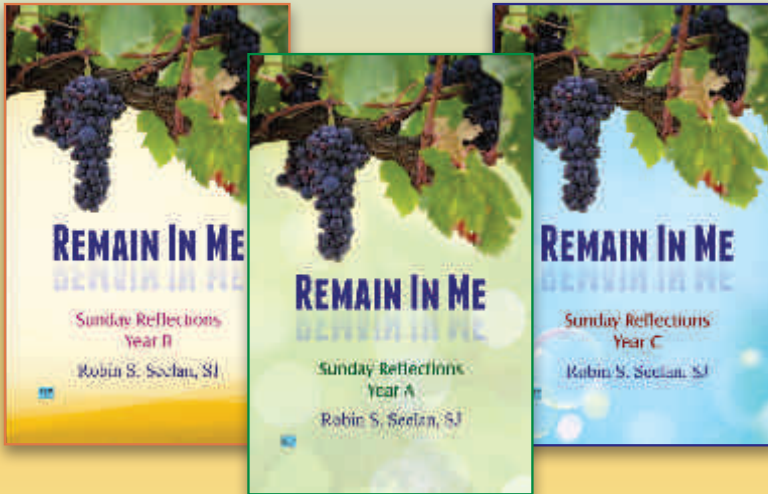
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