



# DNC TIMES

2020



Voll-II

JULY



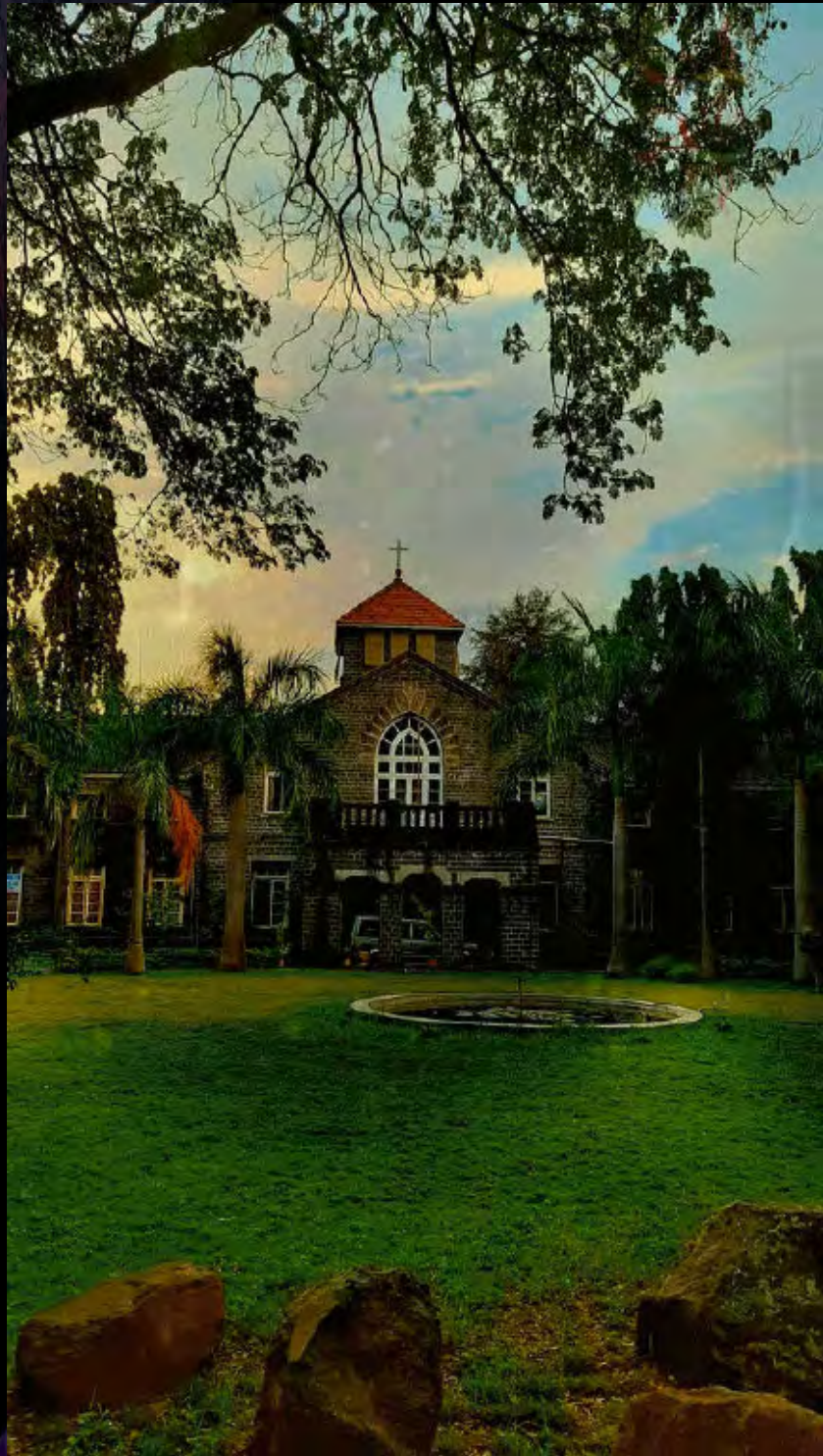
Consumerism : The Celebration Of Wants !





**HAPPY FEAST** of

**SAIN'T IGNATIUS LOYOLA**



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**Next Issue on**

“ **The Future** of ... ”

World, Food, Intelligence, Life and Everything else...

Father Jerome Stanislaus D'Souza Sj



**our new posa**

Jesuit Superior General Father Arturo Sosa on April 30 appointed Father Jerome Stanislaus D'Souza as the head of South Asia region.

Father D'Souza, popularly called Father Stany, is the current provincial of Karnataka. He replaces Father George Pattery, who held the post for more than six years.

DNCTimes wishes him all the very best for his new mission.

Father Francis Gonsalves Sj

**our new president**

Congratulations Francis Gonsalves SJ for having been appointed as the new President of Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth.

He belongs to Gujarat Jesuit Province. He has been the dean of theology in Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune. He is fondly called 'Francis Bhai' (Francis the elder brother). He has taught at Vidyajyoti College, Delhi, for 18 years, being Principal for 4 years.



Father George Pattery Sj

We sincerely thank you for your service to the Society dear fathers George Pattery, the outgoing POSA and Selva Ratinam, the outgoing President of JDV.



Father Selva Ratinam Sj



Send your feedbacks to [dnctimes@gmail.com](mailto:dnctimes@gmail.com)



# Letters to the Editor

Some editors are failed writers, but so are most writers.

## A Walk down the Memory Lane

**T**hanks for DNCTimes and 4.Theology. I post 4.Theology to our Manresa Jesuit Retreat House Facebook page. I am sure that some of our retreatants will be happy to view it. I want to once again congratulate you all for such an attractive and informative issue of DNCTimes. I enjoyed all the articles. I like the short note on who the authors are and what year their are in. I especially liked the photos of the entrance of DeNobili and the memories. My first entrance for theology was 1963. I moved up to St. Mary's in Kurseong the next year but that year of summer of 1963 to April of 1964 was one of my happiest. I returned for Sadhana in 1977-78. Entering DeNobili brought back wonderful memories and let me experience new events and people who are still part of my memory.

**Leo Cachat SJ**

## Inspiring

**T**hanks and con-grats...

For all the pages are indeed good

The life of Cyril was inspiring,

**Jerry Rosario SJ**

## Theology of Listening

**T**hank You very much for sharing DNC Times. Sincere compliments to You and the entire Editorial Team for the excellent layout and thought-provoking articles. The Interview with Cyril is simply fantastic - just like the person himself! Personally, I enjoyed reading thoughts/reflections of our young budding philosophers and theologians, especially New Theology of Listening.

Keep it up!!

**Prem Xalxo SJ**

## Sweet n Short

**T**he latest issue of the DNC Times with its cover theme on Youth Synergy looks brilliant with inspiring and thought-provoking articles and writings. The interview with Cyril is specially interesting and inspiring. Special congratulations for making all the items short in one page.

**Vincent Pereppadan SJ**

## Congratulations

**T**hanks for the latest issue of DNC Times

**CONGRATULATIONS to ONE and ALL for yet another great issue! Keep up the good work...**

**Cedric Prakash SJ**



# Editorial

DNC Times | July 2020

**Consumerism is yet another chapter in the ongoing story of original sin and the promise of redemption.**

A blessing in disguise perhaps- the sudden lock down of the country, the unavoidable month long quarantine and the 'new normal' of Pandemic era have catapulted most of us into an experience that we would never fathom, *The Life of Minimalism*.

When JDV was shut down abruptly most scholastics in DNC started going off to their regions in a hurry with just a backpack on their shoulders. They didn't realise that they were going to live for the coming months- and most are still living- with the minimum stuff that they had packed for the journey. Though the idea of bare minimum possession and frugal life style is not alien to our lifestyle, we were hugely affected by the consumerist tendencies of our current society. So when we now look back after four months of lockdown the idea of 'being content with the minimum' should shake us up.

The culture of consumerism is a materialistic response to the meaning of our existence. 'I am because I consume', is perhaps the dictum of consumerist philosophy. Although it is an economic theory on the face value, the underlying philosophy and life style is all pervasive. As Fr. M K George points out, "Religious vow of Poverty seemed to have taken a beating. Consumerism has contaminated even religious life!"

The Catholic church is vocally critical about the consumeristic understanding of human person. As we read in *Gaudium et Spes*, "It is what a man is, rather than what he has that counts." The Council Fathers hit the nail on the head by pointing out the fact that the inherent worth of human person is reduced to mere material possession which is equivalent to treating humans as objects. The dichotomy between 'having' and 'being' is the foundation of our critique of consumerism.

The Indian society has now become nothing but a dumping ground of consumerist ideas. See what happened when the migrant exodus began in India. The affluent society, including the judges and the politicians showed no sympathy to the plight of migrants because they were mere numbers and charts for our GDP growth. In certain quarters of our country this apathy had turned into antagonism as the migrants were termed 'disease-carriers'. When insecurity strikes, some of our deeply buried demons break out. I must say, the demons of our country are ferociously abominable.

What is the oldest sin according to the Bible? It is the *Original Sin*- the distortion of interconnectedness between man and the material world; when Adam and Eve decided their 'having' to outweigh their 'being', thus forfeit their freedom and happiness. As Pope Saint John Paul II recounts in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* that consumerism is yet another chapter in the ongoing story of original sin and the promise of redemption.

**Nota Bene: 90/90 Rule-** Look at your possessions. Pick up something; in fact anything. Have you used that item in the last 90 days? If you haven't, will you use it in the next 90? If not, then is it okay to let go?



*Rosan SJ*

**DNCTIMES**

# **FEATURE**

**M K GEORGE SJ**

**JERRY SJ**

**SUNIL RANJAR SJ**

**EDWARD MADUVASSERBY SJ**



**LEADING JESUIT  
THINKERS ANSWER  
THESE QUESTIONS:**

**How are you  
made a victim of  
Consumerism?**

**What is really  
wrong with  
Consumerism?**

**Do we have  
the spiritual  
strength to fight  
it?**

*[dnctimes@gmail.com](mailto:dnctimes@gmail.com)*



Reflections during the Corona Pandemic

# Countering Obsessive Consumerism



Consumerism is indeed like the Corona virus. You don't see it until it strikes you down. One cannot survive and grow without consuming - food, clothes, shelter, knowledge and a whole lot of other stuff. When does necessary consumption cross the limits and become consumerist and dangerous to the survival not only of the individual and community but also of the universe?



DR. M K GEORGE SJ

The economic theory that sustains consumerism is simple. An increasing consumption of goods is economically desirable. In this reflection I am referring to the phenomenon of an unsustainable consumerism which is becoming increasingly destructive, and in the context of corona virus, possibly leading to the annihilation of the human



**YOU ARE NOT WHAT YOU OWN.**

species.

### **WE ARE VICTIMS OF CONSUMERISM**

How are you made a victim of consumerism? The advertisement industry is the biggest culprit. Every individual is flooded daily, on an average, with hundreds of advertisements. Beginning with your morning newspaper, through your travel to work and return and at home watching television there is a flooding of your conscious and unconscious minds, inviting you to be a consumer. It is like if you don't consume more you are less as a person. The whole celebrity culture, the leisure time activities, our peers, and even our own family members trap you into a 'cycle of wanting more things'. We want to be more like them and have more like them. The worst being, where your world view is completely overturned by the consumerist tendencies. A simple example, how do you understand a young teenager who demands his daily-wage earner father for a Nike shoe, without which the teenager says, he will not go to school? How do you make sense of the interior villages of India where people used to drink tea, 'lime-soda', butter milk and so on have moved on to Cocoa cola and the like which kills you softly?

What is really wrong with Consumerism? It is just not sustainable. The world cannot satisfy the greed of everybody. The high levels of consumption by one

part of the population deny the basic necessities of food and shelter to large sections of population on the other part. The increasing gap in consumption among people is a reflection of increasing injustices in the world. While one part of the world fights with obesity due to overeating, in another part almost ' 795 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy active life. That's about one in nine people on earth. The vast majority of the world's hungry people live in developing countries, where 12.9 percent of the population is undernourished. '

One of the saddest and surprising dimensions of consumerist tendencies is how it conquers the lives of even the religious men and women, who have vowed themselves to poverty. I remember one of the Religious Major Superiors' meetings. As I had reached a bit early for the meeting and waited for others to arrive, I observed the number of higher end vehicles in which the religious superiors were coming. It was just a handful of us who had used public transport. Religious vow of Poverty seemed to have taken a beating. Consumerism has contaminated even religious life.

### **CRITIQUING CONSUMERISM**

**Consumerism is a virus that attacks  
the faith at the roots!  
For some of us even if the Lord  
comes, you just follow the appetites  
that come to you.**





Pope Francis has been a vocal critic of consumerism among Christians. He described consumerism as “a virus that attacks the faith at the roots, because it makes us believe that life depends only on what we have, so we forget about God. Even if the Lord comes, you just follow the appetites that come to you”.

Building huge and monstrous Churches when many of the church goers do not have a roof over their heads, is consumerism at its worse. Celebrating massive festivals showing off economic and political clout is succumbing to consumerist temptations.

### COVID 19 CHALLENGES US:

Incidentally, the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences have become a golden opportunity for Jesuits and their collaborators to build an alternative to consumerist tendencies. All the four of them particularly the three, to walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice, to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future and to collaborate in the care of our Common Home, if lived concretely will be a direct challenge to the evils of consumerism.

In the context of the corona virus attack critical observers remind us of Gandhiji. “His ecological intelligence had warned us of making

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Father **M K George**, fondly called ‘MK’, is the Jesuits’ Regional Assistant for South Asia. The “Regional Assistants” have responsibility to give advice to the Superior General of the SJ for a particular geographical territory called an Assistency.

Father MK holds a doctorate in Education- Interdisciplinary – Sociology from the University of Pune. He was a faculty member of the Sociology department of Loyola College of Social Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram, from 1989 to 2008, the last four years as its principal.

**Building huge and monstrous churches when many of the church goers do not have a roof over their heads, is consumerism at its worse.**

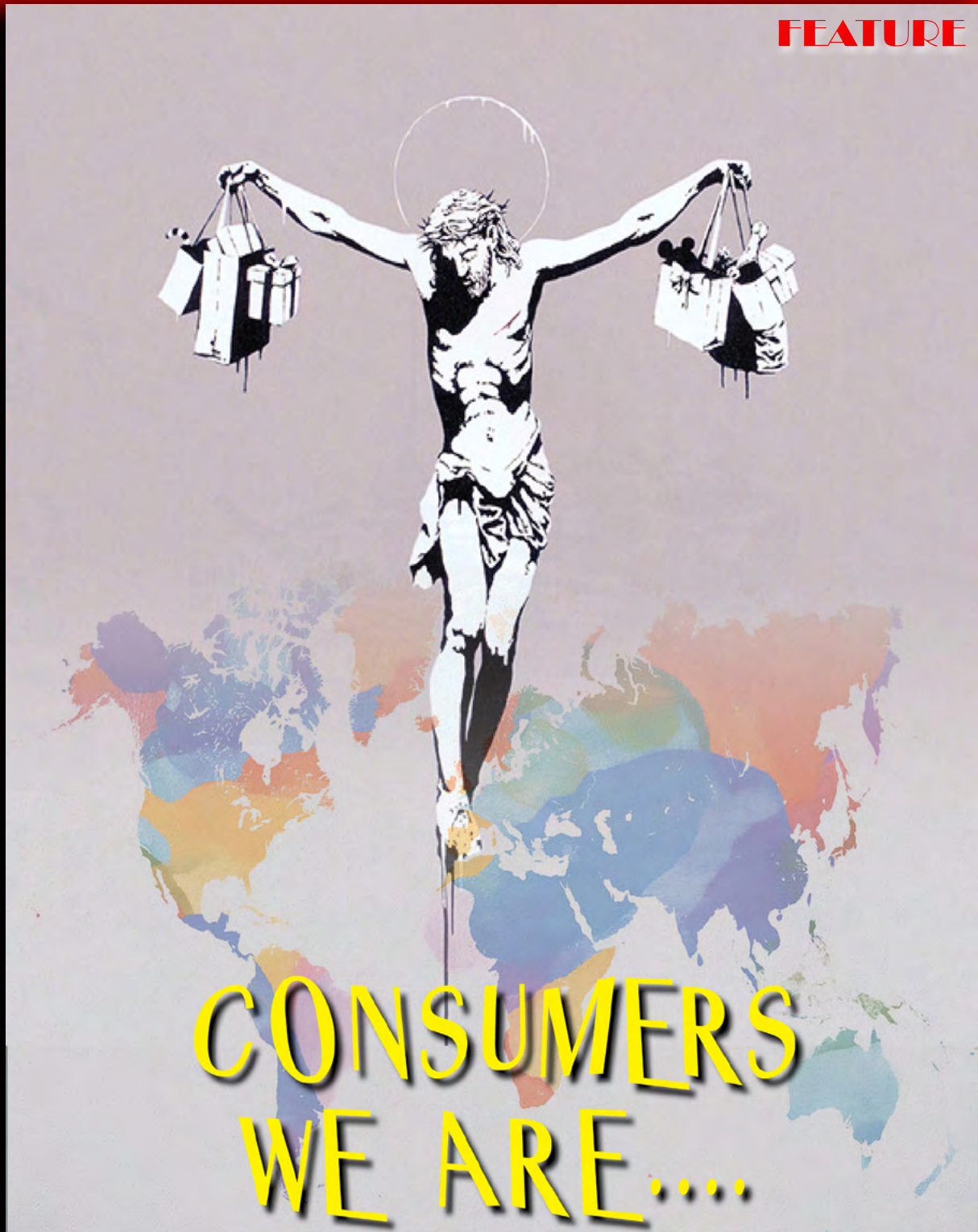
*a cult of materialism (which is really the whole of consumerism) that will recoil on itself and make what we consume, consume us. That is staring at us in the face today. Greed (market- created, market-driven, market-manipulated) cares little for hygiene, for the callous zoonotic origins of sickness that experts such as Srinath Reddy have been warning us about for years. That greed has got us by the throat now.” ( Suyars Rai and Rahul Varma, 2020)*

In conclusion, let me quote Kapil Sibal .“... Consumerism is now a self-destructive virus. We, the real predators, are a threat to nature’s ways. Coronavirus is a yet another warning for us to mend our ways. If not, the road to our extinction is inevitable.”

Modern forms of consumerism are taking our lives, hopes and happiness. **Do we have the spiritual strength to fight it?**

'Only when the last tree has died, only when the last river has got poisoned, only when the last fish is caught, will we realise we cannot eat money!'

FEATURE



© Banksy - Jesus Christ with Shopping Bags, 2005

Jerry

**C**onsumers we are..! That too, utter consumers we are. We have to acknowledge ourselves so, since our human family through the evolutionary process has emerged as one that consumes and that too, over consumes. Other species have come to be producers too. This fact of life highlights that the consumerist-way of proceeding is in a way built into human life. Still, no justification please..!



We have to be aware of and accuse ourselves of the tragedy of 'existential imbalance' towards which we are moving fast due to a vulgarly consumerist-pattern of our daily life. Globalisation with its offshoots such as liberalisation and privatisation has accelerated the consumeristic and individualistic trend. We have practically lost the sense of discernment over our wants and needs.

In the process, we have begun to accumulate things for its own sake, having no idea of any use of our possessions in the long run. We have steadily become the exploiters and destroyers of God's creation, due to our unguarded and unlimited greediness. The present COVID-19 crisis is a crying manifestation of the same. We have sold ourselves to consumerism. We have allowed consumerism to consume us.

## CULTURE OF CONSUMERISM

Way back in 1989, Pope St. John Paul spoke about the pervading structures of sin, particularly

characterised by the all-consuming desire for profit and the thirst for power in all our cultures. The 34<sup>th</sup> Jesuit General Congregation had reflected on this concern in its decree 2 titled, 'Servants of Christ's Mission'. Accordingly, it gave thus a clarion call: '... the instinct to live fully in God's love and thereby to promote a shared, lasting human good, is what we address by our vocation to serve faith and promote the justice of

God's Reign'. Jesus invites us, and through us the people we serve, to move, in conversion of heart, *from solidarity with sin to solidarity with him for humanity* and to promote the Reign of God in all its aspects.'

The above challenging call is yet to get into us. We have developed in the meantime, 'a throw away-culture'. As Pope Francis repeatedly indicates, we began with throwing plastic spoons and tin-containers. Then, we started throwing basic human manners and etiquettes. Next, some cultural values and moral ethics of life got dismissed. Unfortunately, we have eventually ventured to throw away even persons and

communities. All these occur due to *subjectivism* as per the analysis of Pope Benedict XVI. Subjectivism treats all others as mere objects. Net result then is a-materialistic way of life. In simple words, that means, *one lives for oneself*. We are ready to consume everything and everybody for one's own self-preservation and self-promotion. Others do not matter at all. In that way, consumerism results not only in terms of misuse and abuse of commodities but much more, of fellow-humans. In a particular way, the vulnerable sections of our society such as women-at-risk, unemployed migrants, abandoned orphans and uneducated trans-sexuals are pooh-poohed since they become soft-targets of the phenomenon of subjectivism and consumerism.

## POSSIBLE WAY – OUT

We should convert the above analytical details into some liberational deeds. We have to find a way-out. We can think of it at three levels. What I propose here are just to kick start the process. That means, depending up on our given context, we have to come up with concrete steps and strategies.

**Personal Level:** We take a pledge to say henceforth 'no' to anything that you and I do not actually need. It may sound simple. But, it becomes difficult when we determine to say 'no' even when we are given a gift by our friends or family. Again, we say 'no' even when surplus is offered by one's own institution or by one's own congregation. This goes in line with the life-style of the first Christian communities: *'each one gave to common life according to one's capacity and took only according to one's necessity'* (Acts.2.43-47; 4.32-35).

**Societal Level:** Here I wish to let Pope Francis speak: 'we can no longer trust in the unforeseen forces and the invisible hand of the market. Growth in justice requires more than economic growth, while presupposing such growth: it requires decisions, mechanisms and processes specifically geared to a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor(The Joy of the Gospel,204). No doubt, this is a big demand. No choice, our societies have to move in this direction of an equitable distribution of our resources. Collectively we have to engineer a start at the earliest so that in the process, consumerism is progressively done away with. Communitarianism should be taking over.

**Cosmic Level:** Look at this aboriginal saying: 'Only when the last tree has died, only when



the last river has got poisoned, only when the last fish is caught, will we realise ***we cannot eat money!***' Due to consumerism, we have consistently raped our mother the earth and nature, at large. We need to green our consumerism. A pragmatic resolve here could be that we henceforth never ever waste food, water, wood and energy.

Gandhi's invitation sums up all that is said above: Nature has everything for everybody's need but not for everybody's greed(consumerism).

Hence, **BE THE CHANGE THAT YOU PROPOSE!**



**Jerry Rosario**, or fondly known as '**Barefoot Jerry**', is an Indian Jesuit priest, a theologian, a pastor, spiritual counselor, a writer, a social activist, a motivator, a civil lawyer, a retreat-facilitator. And also, founder - director of 4 - movements ( **DHANAM** for human donations, **JEPASA** for socio - pastoral animation, **IGFA** for Ignatian spirituality, and **MANITHAM** for political analysis and action ).

He has completed Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Rural Development Science, MA in Political Science, Bachelor of Laws (LLB) in Bangalore, PhD in Political Philosophy with Theology. Now he is serving as Director in Dhyana Ashram, Mylapore.

# FROM HAVING TO BEING



Dr. Clifard Sunil Ranjar SJ

**C**onsumerism is an ever-increasing and a never-ending desire to possess material goods, and through this, to achieve personal success. The emphasis on consumerism is on having rather than on being. One's worth and values are measured by what one has not by what one is. The pressure of maintaining this 'worth' or 'value' results in more and more consumption of goods even though they may not be really needed. This mode of consumption turns into a particular lifestyle wherein one's dignity, value and worth are seen only through the goods.

In the Bible, especially in the Hebrew Bible, wealth and prosperity are considered part of God's blessings. Abraham, for example, was a wealthy man because of God's blessings (Gen 13,2). Even though Job lost everything he has, God restored to him more than what he ever had. "And the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, and he had 14,000 sheep, and 6,000 camels, and 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys" (Job 42,12).

The early Israelite society was based on egalitarian principles, theologically justified by the covenantal relationship. This is reflected during the time of Joshua and Judges. However, with the emergence of monarchy, the consumeristic tendency set in and began to divide the society on economic and social lines. The kings of Israel fell for the riches and their inordinate desire for accumulating wealth made them deviate from the purpose for which they were anointed. David's sin of killing Uriah and

taking the latter's wife as his own is a classic example of how a king had subjugated his people to torture and death only to satisfy his own desires (2 Sam 11). King Solomon's craving for luxury made him introduce bonded labour in order to fill his coffers. Ahaz coveted the vineyard of Naboth (1 Kgs 21,1-16). These are only a few examples to demonstrate how the poor Israelites were exploited in order to satisfy the extravagant lifestyles of their monarchs.

It is against this consumeristic culture that the Prophetic Literature raises its voice. The prophets criticize the method of accumulating wealth that involved forced labour (Amos 5,7-12), slavery of

**The parable of the Rich Fool is another illustration that demonstrates one's unwillingness "to be rich towards God" and ends up in "losing his soul".**



poor citizens (Jer 34,8-11) and the deprivation of the rights of the widows, the orphans and the poor (Isa 5,8-24). The Wisdom Literature, while maintaining that the riches in themselves are harmless, warns against the excessive love for money and pleasure: “He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.” (Prov 21,17).

The New Testament literature clearly distinguishes between the riches and the attachment to the riches. While it is not against the rich themselves, it sends a harsh warning to those who show greed and love for wealth. The most illustrative example of the consequences of excessive attachment to wealth is found in the story of Ananiah and Sapphira (Acts 5,1-11). The story of the rich young man (Matt 19,16-22// Mark 10,17-22// Luke 18,18-23) is another example that demonstrates how a person entangled in the riches is unable to break its shackles and come out.

Jesus in his teaching constantly warns against inordinate attachment to the riches. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is an illustration of how inordinate love for luxury makes a person insensitive to the basic needs of his neighbour, and as a result, leads the rich man into eternal suffering (Luke 17,16-31). The parable of the Rich Fool is another illustration that demonstrates one’s unwillingness “to be rich towards God” and ends up in “losing his soul”. (Luke 12,16-21). As Jesus lauds those who are poor, hungry and face persecution for the sake of the Kingdom (Luke 6,20-23), he also admonishes the disciples who are attracted to the riches, power, glory and fame (Luke 6,24-26). He urges his disciples “to

sell all they have and give alms” (Luke 12,33; see also Luke 18,22). Renunciation of the possessions is also an important pre-condition of discipleship (Luke 14,33).

The New Testament also provides examples of those persons who practiced self-denial and gave up consumeristic tendencies. When Jesus calls Peter and his companions to follow him, they “leave everything” and follow Jesus (Luke 5,11). Similarly Levi also “leaves everything” and follows Jesus (Luke 5,28). Zachaeus, having been touched deeply by Jesus’ offer of being his guest, declares, “Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold.” (Luke 19,1-10). The poor widow is another example of giving up whatever little one has (Mark 12,41-44 // Luke 21,1-4).

Thus, teaching in the Bible is clear: Wealth is the gift of God and it has to be used only for the purpose for which God has given it to us. Any inordinate use of wealth destroys the relationship with God and with one another.

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**Dr. Clifard Sunil Ranjar is a professor at Pontificium Istitutum Biblicum. He secured doctorate in Biblical Theology from Pontifical Gregorian University in 2015. He is a Jesuit belonging to Karnataka Jesuit Province. Contact him on [cliffysj@gmail.com](mailto:cliffysj@gmail.com).**

# Ignatian Rules for Consumerist Society



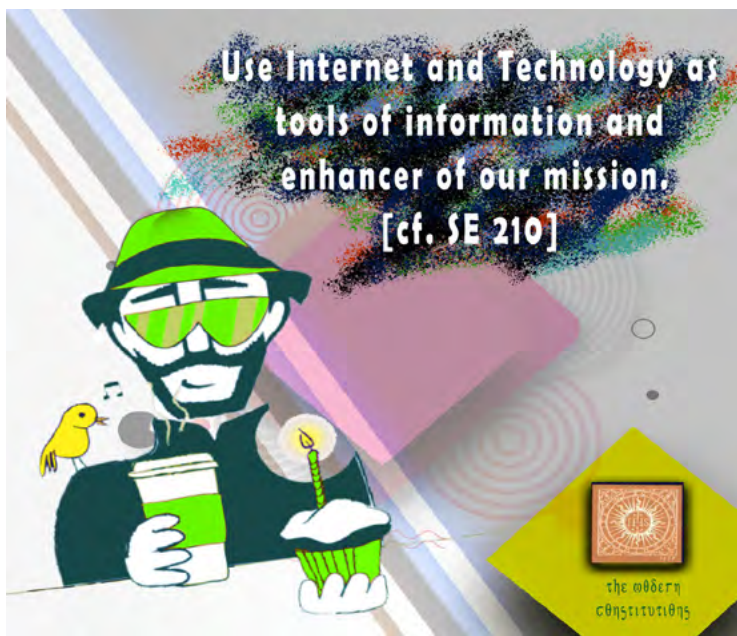
## Edward Maduvasserry SJ



ur appetite for food is perhaps the first stage of DESIRE. As most of the spiritual masters would agree, 'DESIRE' is the root of misery. For Iggy everything, particularly material things were only a means to realize God, not an end in itself. "All the things in this world are gifts of God, created for us, to be the means by which we can come to know him better, love him more surely, and serve him more faithfully."

Iggy then focused his attention on the first stage of human desire, the FOOD. We know now how food culture conditions our lives both psychologically and spiritually. From food, our carnal appetite grows larger and larger becoming a broader desire to consume other things, from alcohol to branded items, from unsavvy use of the Internet to incessant addiction to porn. "Rules to put oneself in order on Eating" of St Ignatius Loyola is a remarkable work that puts the axe at the root of the issue.

If Iggy were to be alive in our modern consumeristic age, what would have been the 'Rules to Order Oneself'? The following slides are inspired by "Ignatian Rules for Internet Usage" by Dani Villanueva SJ ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FubixANL\\_02GmxGsb2DxZHKD3OdTPMe5/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FubixANL_02GmxGsb2DxZHKD3OdTPMe5/view?usp=sharing)).



**Create your  
own offline  
spaces.  
[ cf SE 215 ]**



**Be authentic!  
[cf SE 214]**

**You will never  
CHANGE YOUR LIFE**



**Until you  
CHANGE SOMETHING  
YOU DO DAILY**



the modern  
constitutions



[cf SE 212]

**St Ignatius**

**Criteria for need and use:**  
Awareness of real need and usage levels helps to curb consumerist pressures that surround these technologies.

**Less is  
better**

[cf SE 216]

the modern  
constitutions



Fr. Edward Maduvasserry SJ is the Rector of De Nobili College, Pune-the Jesuit higher Formation Centre. He was the Provincial of Hazaribagh Jesuit Province and the South Asian Jesuit Conference. He has tremendous experience in spiritual animation and guidance. Contact him on: [dncrector@gmail.com](mailto:dncrector@gmail.com).



# Interview

(excerpts from a chat over a coffee)

“

Today the youth are challenged by tremendous successes and many failures. They are afraid of accepting defeat.

”

*Cyril*

*Desbrulais SJ*



# Interview

with

# Cyril



(Continued from the previous issue of *DNCTimes*)

## E. The Youth of Today

The problem with young people is often related to drugs or drinks. My work consists of going to the troubled young people. They are challenged today by tremendous successes and many failures. They are afraid of accepting defeat. Sometimes, other SSU's or the fathers befriend these young people, both boys and girls. Most of the time this leads to successful interpersonal relationships as they come to rehearse for the plays, taking part in them or making costumes, etc. for the plays. This paves the way for them to succeed in life and relationships.

## F. Accompanying the Youth: The Jesuit Preference in India

The relevance of the Society of Jesus's Universal Apostolic Preference in accompanying the youth in the Indian context is very acute because India is growing fast and the people want to get to the top of the ladder first. The youth too are tempted to cheat and deceive in order to climb to the top. There seems to be a deficit of hope. The UAP's are meant to bring hope especially to the young people. My suggestion to Jesuits would be not to limit themselves to the

It is interesting to see how the women and the youth have become aware of the atrocities and crimes that are happening in our society; and the are forming alliances in solidarity to root them out.

Catholic youth only, but to reach out to the non-Christian youth as well.

## G. Future in Solid Hands

I think it is sign of a good future as the youngsters oppose the CAA, rubbing shoulders irrespective of religions and cultures. It shows the unity of our country. It is a good point for India. Seventy percent of the Indian population is young and the young have a fresh vision for our country. They must tap that vision and nurture it, finding out new ways and means for a bright future for our country. It is interesting to see how the women and the youth have become aware of the atrocities and crimes that are happening in our society; and the are forming alliances in solidarity to root them out.



## H. The Vision of SSU

When I was doing my theology in 1972 I wanted to start a youth group. I founded a group with young people of different religions, cultures and backgrounds. The SSU stands for **Searching and Service in Unity**. SSU provides activities which can help young people find out what they are SEARCHING for: God, friends, values, methods of study, goal in life, whatever; it also affords them opportunities for SERVICE to the less fortunate and UNITY, because we stem from different religions and cultures. Furthermore, we want to CELEBRATE this vision through inter-religious prayer services and shared cultural events.

We have been doing this for 48 years now. We have every year a camp (with emphasis on training for leadership), a play (usually written by me, staged to offer financial help to some NGO), a monthly inter-religious prayer (celebrating the various feasts that come during this time), an outreach (a half-day's service to the poor and the unfortunate) and a weekly meeting.

From this SSU youth group, some have gone out to various places in India, as well as U.S.A and Canada. They have started similar youth groups there. At present no Jesuit has come forward to follow up this movement. However, the young people are keeping the group alive.

## I. Message to the Young Scholastics

Do not confine yourself to the Catholics alone! Reach out to the non-Christians as well, they have worse problems than us, they have no guidance, no Mass and no hope. If you befriend young people, they will open up. Befriending does not mean telling young people, "I am a very busy person, come to me only when you have a problem." Be available, talk, laugh and play with them, these things help them to open up. Every evening I spend time with the youth despite my speech problem. As Jesuits, we must give hope to the young people. Moreover Jesuits need to be better involved in their ministries with the youth. For me a Jesuit without a ministry is a self-contradiction!

“

I remember a young Jesuit Father, **Cyril Desbruslais**, who actually took us through an epistemological argument for the existence of God, which certainly impressed my fourteen-year-old imagination no end because I was just beginning to flirt with the idea of atheism. When you discover rationality, your religion doesn't seem so impressive anymore, and when you discover the limitations of rationality it all comes back, but in between I had this very rational, structured philosophical argument from a Jesuit priest. And that was very striking.



*-Dr. Shashi Tharoor, MP*

(for details: [http://shashitharoor.in/interviews\\_details/12](http://shashitharoor.in/interviews_details/12))

”

Sujin Wilson  
Thonson  
Praveen I  
Praswal Apose  
Sibu Athumayhi  
Lojappa

Articles



# WE CONSUME

# THEREFORE WE EXIST!



- Prajwal Marvin Apose

**“Our personality is based on the things we use, our relationship depends on the materials we acquire and our success is based on the things we utilize.”**

Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, in his book, ‘Lift Up Your Heart: A Guide to Spiritual Peace’, says, “Advertising tries to stimulate our sensuous desires, converting luxuries into necessities, but it only intensifies man's inner misery. The business world is bent on creating hungers which its wares never satisfy, and thus it adds to the frustrations and broken minds of our times.” The gigantic advertisement industries have made massive efforts over the years to convince us that we are not good enough as we are. It has made us believe that our personality is based on the things we use, our relationship depends on the materials we acquire and our success is based on the things we utilize. Thus we end up acquiring things which are actually not needed. Our greed has overtaken our wants and our wants have turned into our needs. Once we accumulate the material things that we craved for, we find happiness in them, and after sometime, we crave for some more things to satisfy our momentary hunger of possessing

material things. Thus we go on to accumulate things for our selfish gratification, not realising that our happiness is not about getting all we want, rather it is about enjoying what little we may have. Eventually



everything lets us down; we try to invent and create new products to satisfy our greed, believing that our existence is determined by what we consume. Consumerism pushes us into the whirlwind of needless buying and selling.


Globalization has made our world smaller. The communication and transportation facilities have made this possible for us. It has opened up the markets for the consumers. The consumers can acquire anything from any corner of the world.

As a greater proportion of consumers buy goods and services in excess of their needs, the rate of consumption has increased rapidly and they spend more and create a cycle of demand resulting in greater production and greater employment, which results in even more consumption. Globalization has become a driving factor in making goods and services previously out of reach in the developing countries, now much more available. Goods, which were considered luxuries at one point in time - televisions, cell phones, computers, and air conditioners -, are now essential commodities of our lives. E-commerce has made our life easier. We can have access to any goods and services from any corner of the world, sitting within

the four walls of our houses. Online shopping portals attract us through various offers and colourful advertisements, and they stimulate our desires to acquire the latest products from the markets. Approximately 3.6 billion people worldwide now belong to the "consumer class". Today nearly half of global consumers reside in developing countries. China with 1.43 billion consumers and India with 1.36 billion, have the potential for market expansion. However, the increase in prosperity is not making humans happier or healthier.

Moreover, globalization and e-commerce have done severe damage to our environment. Greed has affected adversely our physical and mental health. People are incurring debt and working longer hours to pay for the high consumer lifestyle, and consequently, they find no time to be with the family and friends. Pope Francis says, "Consumerism has brought us anxiety. Set aside time to play with your children, and turn off the TV when they sit down to eat." Also, one of the studies warns us that one-third of all animal and plant species on the planet could face extinction by 2070 due to climate change. The industries exploit nature and its resources to satisfy the wants of consumers, forgetting that the earth does not belong to us, rather, we belong to it. If we take care of the earth, then it will take care of us in return, or else, it will destroy us in the same way as we do it. Could this be one of the most painful lessons the covid-pandemic and the lockdown teaching us? Albert Einstein warns us, "The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything." It is the need of the hour to rise up above our selfish desires, own up humbly the blunders of our past and rebuild a new and just world for us and for the future generations.

**"Consumerism has led us to become used to an excess and daily waste of food, to which, at times, we are no longer able to give a just value, which goes well beyond mere economic parameters. We should all remember, however, that throwing food away is like stealing from the tables of the the poor, the hungry!"**



*~ Prajwal Marvin Apose is a Jesuit belonging to Karnataka Province. He is a third year philosophy student at JDV, Pune.*

# CHRIST VS CONSUMERISM



- Jibu Athumayhi

~ Jibu Varhese Athumayhi is a Dicesan Theology student belonging to the Arch-diocese of Verapoly. He is a second year theology student at JDV, Pune.



Consumerism came along with globalization, which started to spread like a wild fire all over the world a few years back. Globalization brought billion dreams into the minds of people. Today one's identity depended on the brands they wear rather than on their clan or culture. Do brands really reveal who they are? Certainly not! This happens because people are putting more emphasis on their wants rather than their needs. When people do not get what they want, their resilience take a

or not. Here comes the challenge of Spirituality. The plague of consumerism hides the fact that it gives only temporary happiness and then they are left high and dry. But true happiness only comes from one's genuine relationship with God.

Christianity does not put a ban on buying and selling of goods and services. The beautiful prayer Jesus taught us also tells us that we need both material and spiritual goods. But the problem with consumerism is that it goes to the extremes of material gratification as its final goal. This leads to addictions of all sorts and makes the human mind sick. The unnecessary desire to buy things makes us crave only for money. In a consumerist culture, we tend to believe that money can solve all the problems. It seems those who have money and power are the King Makers and the others, mere slaves or servants. But the Scriptures contradict this view. For example, Timothy 6:10 says, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils." During the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:24, Jesus teaches his disciples, "no one can serve two masters, for either they will hate the one and love the other, or they will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." These Scripture passages clearly condemn the love of (the attachment to) money. Here Jesus is speaking about the kind of consumerism that squanders money selfishly or frivolously. However, we cannot



beating, their confidence graph declines rapidly, they may even go into pathological depression, and they might even take the extreme step of suicide. For many people today material consumption decides whether they are happy

forget that we need money to live. Rather than clinging to money, we must spend it for good purposes serving the poor and the needy.

Paradoxically, the Catholic Church invites us to consume the body, and blood of Jesus every day. This is unlike the consumerist way of eating

and drinking because here Jesus teaches us to give rather than to hoard. He breaks himself for the others, to give them life in abundance. Once we taste this genuine happiness, we will not look back to the passing and the temporary satisfactions. We will find our complete happiness and fulfillment in Him. That is

why the Church teaches us, that the Eucharist that we are invited to consume everyday is the road that leads us to the source and summit of our Christian Life. A true Christian consumer believes in giving rather than receiving following the supreme example of their master!

# CONSUMERISM THE CELEBRATION OF OUR WANTS



*~ Jojappa is a religious belonging to Holy Family congregation. He is a second year theology student at JDV, Pune.*

**- Jojappa**

Decades back having a thatched house was a matter of status in the society. As soon as a tiled houses came up all those who had thatched houses felt inferior and unhappy. They tried in many ways to upgrade thier houses to keep up their social status. This could not last for a long time as the cemented buildings started coming up and then they were back to square one once again and the same struggle continued.

“Needs are Imposed  
by Nature,  
Wants are Sold  
by Society.”  
- Mokokoma Mokhonoana

from the consumer market.

However, there is a superficial happiness as a result of consumerism by possessing things that have little or no value. He falsely believes that the things he possesses, add to his status over his peers. We rejoice when we have an upper hand on our neighbours by buying and owning things, that are unnecessary. Consumerism can never satisfy us.

On the contrary, the more we possess the emptier we feel. We keep  
r u n n i n g  
a r o u n d

i n c i r c l e s  
a f t e r  
short-lived  
materialistic  
pleasures that leave  
us empty and craving  
for more. Consumerism is  
a bottomless bucket that can  
never be filled! We keep amassing  
possessions hoping to get acceptance  
and respect. It is like chasing one's  
shadow, one will never discover one's  
true self, neither will we be able to  
distinguish between what we really  
need to bring quality to our lives.

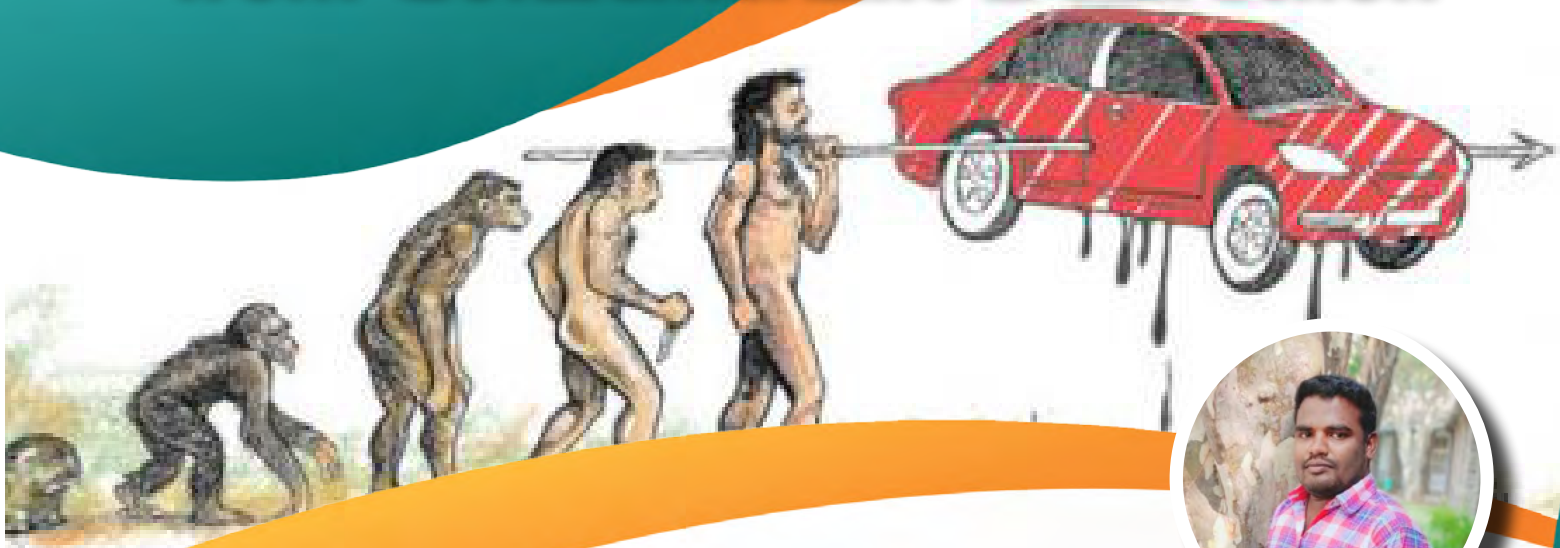
We are all part and parcel  
of the metabolism of  
nature which  
combines

anabolism  
and catabolism,  
less technically, it means  
building up and breaking  
down of energy in a continuous  
process. Every living being on  
this planet earth is a consumer for  
its sustenance. Man being a social  
animal unlike the other animals.  
He feels happy only by comparing  
with what others consume or  
when he possess the latest product





# Need of Constructive Protection from Consumeristic Destruction



*~ Johnson R is a Jesuit belonging to Andhra Province. He is a third year philosophy student at JDV, Pune.*

**- Johnson R**

We the human beings are created with good many talents and qualities to make our existence more useful and comfortable. We have the in-born nature to consume from the days of our ancestors. Therefore, it is an inherited quality that we all have today. This quality makes us consume many things and hoard things for the future. As the time changes, we aspire to have a more and more comforts for us and for our own offspring. We would like to pave a path of pleasure for them. In order to pave comfortable paths, one decides to hoard as much as possible during his lifespan. Therefore, consumerism has become very important in everyone's life.

Consumerism is more widely heard in the market circles because of the rapid growth of population and its requirements consumer goods. Therefore, market is a place where every

one finds one's own wants and their greedy is fulfilled. As the requirements of people grow the inventions of new products grow also to meet the challenges, and in proportion to that the economic position of the country also goes up. Hence, the competition among the nations have been incredible. As a consequence, the technology needs to get updated with new techniques to face the competition. In the process of increasing the quantity of production for our selfish needs, we exploit the ecosystem to the point of destroying the nature; and we are never concerned about global warming that harms the ecosystem.

Mahatma Gandhi rightly said, "The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed." Indeed it is true we have sufficient amount natural resources that can satisfy one's needs and not the wants.

Despite these reminders, we all seek to accumulate things that could cause large scale harm to the nature. For instance, we use more chemical pesticides to improve the quantity of the crop and shorten the yielding capacity of the soil and give birth to new diseases. We tend to become insensitive to the harm that we do to the mother earth which provides us everything that we need. Global warming, natural disasters and climate change are warning signs for us to change our lifestyle and reconcile ourselves with nature. We need to live a life in harmony with God, each other and with nature. We are inter-connected, any harm done to the one affects the other two aspects of our life. Let us acknowledge the harm done by over consuming and renounce consumerism and opt for a simple life of peace and harmony.





**SUJIN WILSON**

“The World has  
Enough for  
Everyone’s Needs,  
but Not  
Everyone’s Greed.”

- Mahatma Gandhi.

# NEED AND WANT

~ Sujin Wilson is a Jesuit be-  
longing to Madhurai Province.  
He is a third year philosophy  
student at JDV, Pune.

The word ‘Consumerism’ was rarely used in common parlance a few decades ago. But today the word has become one of the key words which indicate a shameful attribute to human beings. The gap between need and want no longer exists in our society today. Philosophers like Descartes upheld the idea “I think therefore I am”. Educationists like Andrew Wilkinson preached that ‘I am what I communicate’, but the contemporary media and popular culture promulgates a dangerous idea “I buy therefore I live”. Once upon a time we human beings used things and loved people; nowadays we love things and use people. The Consumeristic culture and the constructed realities of the society made people believe that the buying capacity decides the dignity of human beings which is not true. People seem to forget that no object can substitute what is proper to hu-

man being. Our social system treats the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ differently that creates a lot of psychological and moral issues. Young people who cannot afford buy what they want face deep inferiority problems. The consumerist attitude reduces the humanness from us and makes us merely buying machines. We must agree that we cannot buy joy and bliss. They are hidden in the small little experiences of our lives. But we fail to reach them. Somehow we are kept busy by the commercial media which know nothing about the joy of being human. We can only feel an instant gratification from the things

we buy which do not last long. As human beings we should use our reason to differentiate between our needs and our wants. Happy are the men who know to lead a life with the needed things. Let us not be the promoters of Consumerism. If we fail to fight against the use and throw culture we would be misleading our future generations.



Praveen Kumar

# WHO ARE YOU

*~ Praveen Kumar is a Jesuit belonging to Chennai Province. He is a third year philosophy student at JDV, Pune.*

The king of the forest wanted to enjoy his life sitting in his house itself. Hence, he planned to execute an idea. He called all the animals and birds in the forest and announced, "I would like to see who is the most prestigious among you. Therefore, I would like to conduct a competition. The one who brings me the best gift would get the reward." Believing his words all brought the best they ever got. But this clever king never approved any of them, rather he pointed someone else and said his gift was better. Hence trying to prove themselves the most prestigious all the animals brought something or the other to the king every day

This story can be the symbol of today's consumerism. The general public are sucked in the name of attraction and prestige by the corporates. The ads we watch every day attract us and unconsciously makes us believe that we are someone only if we possess certain things. They force us to believe our self-worth depends on what we possess and what we use. It is not at all important who we are, what is our virtue of life. This psychological war on the common man forces him to accumulate things even though does not have enough income for his daily livelihood. With this false ideology most of the people fall prey to corporates. By increasing the urge of the people to buy things, the corporates achieve high sales in the market and become richer. Whereas the poor become poorer. It illustrates as if in the market everything is available openly for everyone, but its true nature is to trap the ordinary.

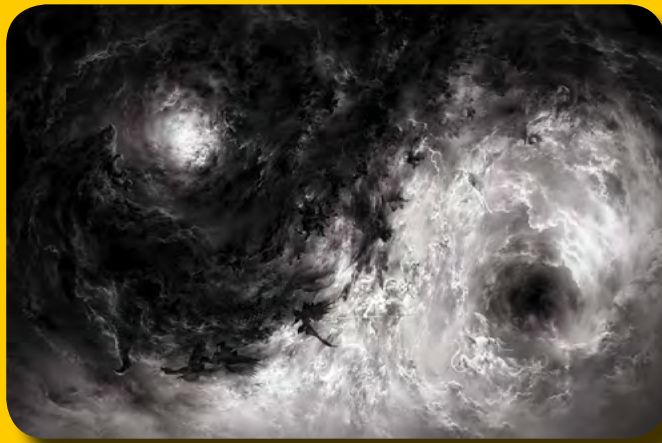
An individual can escape himself from this trap only when he/she recognizes, that a human person is not what he/she possesses but what he/she is. Never the value of a person is increased or declined by one's possession but by one's virtue. Only by getting rooted in a virtuous life, we the human race can be cured of the curse of consumerism

# Artisty



## *The Dark Tunnel*

- Story by Royal Saldahna SJ



## *Having w/s Being*

- Reflection by Amal Roy



## *Consuming Consumerism*

-Poem by Paulus Marandi SJ



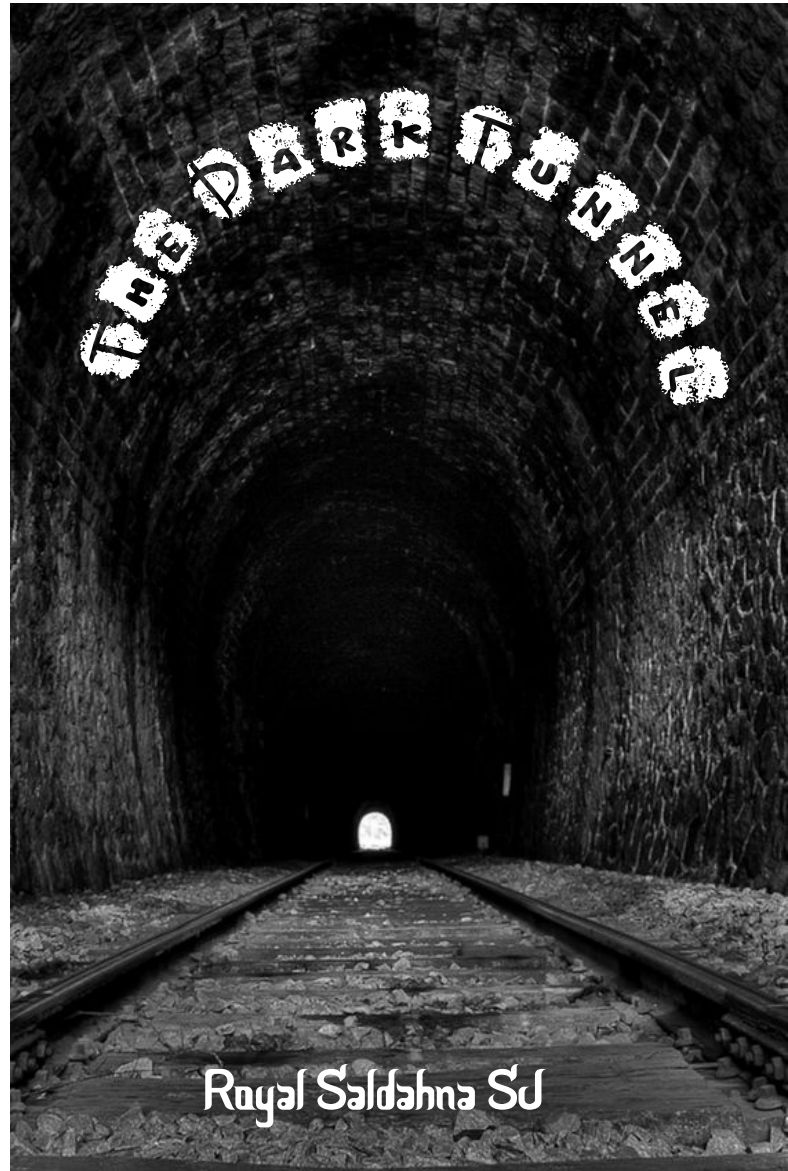
**A**gain I woke up this morning with that all too familiar sense of anxiety and disbelief about the future. I just looked at my Mother and said “Is it the price we have to pay just because we are poor?” We were in a tunnel the whole night. She didn’t respond. She took my head and laid it on her lap. In the warmth of her love, I heard her sobbing.

I got up to see her crying. Big drops of tears were falling incessantly from her beautiful green eyes. Her face was tanned and blotchy, eyes bloodshot. I didn’t know what to do. Just behind her, dad sat with his heavy head in his hands. And my little sister was wandering around looking for something to eat. Being four years old, she was unaware of what was happening to the world around her.

Ha! I took a deep breath and one teardrop happened to break free and more followed in an unbroken, unnoticed stream. I just felt that we were caught up in an intractable state of limbo as we grappled to get back home by any means possible.

“We have toiled to build mighty buildings, our sweat soaked into each brick of the rich people’s houses and offices”, my dad bragged to the restaurant worker as he choked to find words. His complaint was that no one bothered to reach-out to the needy, to console the grieving parent of a lost child, to help the pregnant woman in her suffering or the aged man in his pain.

We were compelled to undertake this perilous journey to Bhusawal from Jalna on foot. Drained of the last ounce of energy left in our bodies, my legs turned numb and they stubbornly refused to take another step. My dad’s words “let us rest for a while” sounded like a blessing of a soothing rain. While most chose to rest on the railway track we were forced to sleep on the platform. Tired by the journey we slept almost immediately. As I got up the sounds of wails and grief, I saw a huge crowd gathered. Police and Ambulances startled me. I just managed to see the Chapattis, clothes and money lying on the tracks. Yes my naked eyes couldn’t believe my 16 friends were shattered and crushed into pieces by the train. It was Friday; the goods train mercilessly ran over them. I didn’t have tears to roll down from my eyes. I fell unconscious.



The next thing I knew was my little sister trying to collect valuables fallen on the track. We were hungry and our throats were parched. While our legs were hurting externally, our hearts were bleeding internally. I asked myself, “Don’t we have the right to live?”

In our effort to escape the misery of joblessness and hunger we were sprayed with disinfectant and brutalized. The pain was too much to bear. The authorities have been successful in scapegoating, discriminating and repressing people like us. While we struggled to survive, we experienced bigotry and prejudices against us for the spread of the virus. Shouldn’t humanity come first? Shouldn’t all kinds of prejudices and discriminations be kept aside in moments like these? I kept thinking.

The pandemic has exposed the complex realities of migrants like us who barely survive in a country of uncontrolled and heartless capitalism. We were waiting for a miracle to take place.

When we resumed our walk again there was no one around. It was bewildering. Now with cameras all



around, we became a spectacle for everyone. My cousin was seething with rage. He said angrily, “Can they not even arrange buses for us? Is it because we are poor that we are going to walk hundreds of kilometers to Uttar Pradesh? Only the poor will die.” We are living in penury, struggling for food. We were talking about survival and the existential crisis of the kind that was worse than what this pandemic could do to us.

“Is there a medicine which can quench my hunger and thirst?” my cousin asked the doctor when she sprinkled a few drops of sanitizer into his palms. Wow! I said no one cares about our bleeding feet which have made footprints on the road. I asked my little princes “Alisha” to sit under the tree. She complained of head ache, stomach pain and nausea. I just left her in my cousin’s hands and stood in the queue for COVID check-up. Suddenly my cousin cried aloud, my Mother ran to hold her... But...she was gone!!

I looked back and screamed thinking that at least heaven will hear. “Get up Alisha” She went into deep sleep, which took her away from the earth. During that last gasp she uttered the words, “I want to eat, I am hungry.” As I gazed at her I remembered her hunger, collecting the pieces of chapattis on the railway tracks at Jalna. Her little eyes shining like lanterns popping out from the moon shaped face were now covered by the clouds!

I sat on the stone leaving my parents at the station. A journalist consoled my Mother and asked her about our journey.

We were quite busy with the daily time table in our workplace. But the sudden change caught us unexpectedly, when the Prime Minister declared the first phase of the lockdown. We did not understand what it was all about and what was going to happen. As the days passed by I started getting scared because there was no work and no earning. The question that arose constantly within me was, “how are we going to get food?” My husband, the bread winner was totally down in a pensive mood. Needless to say, there was no hope beyond. I tried to cheer him up with all my funny talks but it was of no avail. Alas! the time came when our employer came to knock at our door one fine morning saying, “ there’s no more work and you have to leave as soon as possible.” Having heard what he said, I was trembling with fear, for I knew that our days were numbered and our end was near. My husband gave me a stern look. I knew what that look meant - let’s all die together. Somehow we picked up courage and packed our things quickly. We decided to walk as there was no other means of transport. With all the things on our shoulders and the child on my hip, my husband and I started our long trek. The journey was tiresome because of the scorching heat. We sweated; we were dead tired, what we needed most at that moment was water. We looked around for any source to quench our thirst, but there was none. Not a soul around to offer us some help. By then our food stuff had run out. I looked pitifully at our children while my husband pretended to ignore the situation. “We are almost done, just a few miles to go”, I said. With that hope, our energy got boosted. The spirit was willing but the flesh was weak. My feet were resisting to move forward. I suddenly dropped down the things I was carrying and slowly put down my child on the ground. I searched through the shabby bags for something to munch, but all that I found was the little biscuit I had spared for our children.

To our good luck, a truck passed by. On enquiring they told us that they were going just a few kilometers ahead. We requested them to take us and they agreed provided we pay them. What a relief it was! We felt as if heavens had come down to save us. We slept all through that short journey and did not realize that we had to get down until the driver woke us up. As we slowly opened our eyes we saw to our great surprise a number of shops and many migrant workers who shared the same fate like us. We tried to make friends and tried to fit ourselves into their company seeking companionship. All of us were in the same boat. Sad to say, we did not have sufficient



money to fend for our needs during the journey. We had just Rs.3000, out of which Rs.700 was spent for purchasing food items.

My constant prayer to God was to keep us in good health till we reach our sweet home. Many of the fellow travellers shared whatever they had with us. We helped each other in whatever way we could. Yet, this camaraderie could not diminish the pain in our feet. We had no more energy left. Our feet bled and our bodies were drenched. We walked and rested now and again. It was scary and hellish experience to spend the nights with uncertainties.

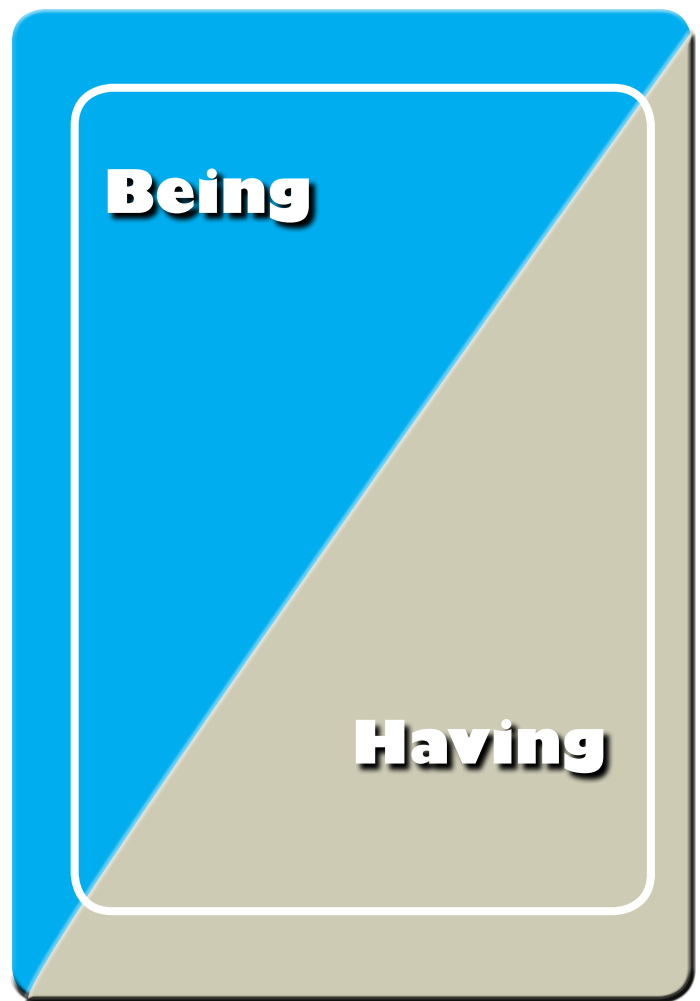
The next morning we decided to reach our hometown by all means. With much determination we refreshed ourselves with the water we got from a small stream. It gave us a new life. I just ignored the pain and went ahead. I might die but my child must live was the source of my energy. It was just 34 kilometers to reach home. We wanted to call but our mobile phones had no charge left.

As my mother continued her conversation with the journalist, I saw my dad begging a truck driver, with folded hands to take us in. I pulled the hands of my mother and ran to the truck knowing that no matter what our story might be. The media will spin their own stories to please their own bosses. As we stumbled along the road, the courts declared, “There were no migrants on the road.” What an irony! To walk the talk would be costly for the court.

As we got in to the truck, we were stunned by the sight of bodies piled up next to us. It was a miasma. Now finally the truck dropped us off and we had to walk just four kilometers. With such excitement we proceeded through short cuts as the place was familiar to us. We forgot about everything and it was as if Angels picking us up and delivering us straight at our door steps. We collapsed into a deep slumber. When we opened our eyes we saw food and water in front of us. Our feet were bound with country medicines and our struggle for life came to an end. Our long and arduous journey through that dark tunnel had come to an end. We hope to see the light at the end of the tunnel one day!

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*Royal Saldanha is a second year theology student at JDV, Pune. He belongs to Kohima Jesuit Region.*



*Amal Roy*



ur existence in the world is not merely a physical presence. It necessitates a state of being, where we add meaning to our existence by adding a purpose to it. An individual's state of being or existing totally depends upon their taste and it is facilitated by what they have. The binary of state of being and state of having is a subject of long philosophical debate that has run down several centuries.

State of being presumably is associated with living a life according to our purpose. It is subjective, depending upon the individual's societal, financial and political factors and is associated with living happily. Achieving happiness is a very powerful driving force for humans and they will strive hard to stay happy. This is closely related to Epicurean philosophy where pleasure is the chief good in life. Don't confuse, here pleasure means pleasure of mind and not of the body. Everybody aspires to remain happy and we are familiar that life isn't just about



happiness. Indeed, remaining happy throughout our life is a utopian privilege which we are not entitled with. Religions across the globe preach that afterlife in heaven is full of joy and hell is full of sorrow and pain. This is advocated in order to make people live righteously according to the scriptures. Everybody wishes to be happy and avoid sufferings at all cost. This is not wrong as this is the way the modern world chooses to live. Jeremy Bentham's theory of utilitarianism also preaches the same.

State of Having is related to materialism. The post-renaissance world paved way for a way of life closely oriented with having material benefits. Today money matters. People are driven by it, both in a positive and negative way. Having it guarantees certain privileges in the society and it is undoubtedly, a necessary item for human survival. A materialist life is goal oriented, it concentrates on achieving more. Material possessions lead to a better life and make people happy to a great extent, giving purpose to their state of being. It might sound disagreeable on philosophical grounds, but the reality of today's world necessitates acquiring wealth. It has been said over the ages that money can't buy happiness, which I believe is not true. The money driven mentality has resulted in surge of criminal activities too. Everyone dreams to earn wealth. Some are entitled with it while some have to earn it, while others are never privileged to enjoy it.

State of being happy and state of having wealth is a privilege that the mainstream section monopolizes. Evaluating the socio-cultural-political walks of our country we will understand the depth of the gulf between the haves and have not's. In a world where material values thrive and moral values loose grip, the zeitgeist of the age will reciprocate the dominant force of that time, which is today materialism. Earning wealth and remaining happy is not morally wrong, but harming or oppressing others to achieve it is not the right way to do it. Sadly, our times, thrive on such treatments. It is a harsh reality that to be happy or achieve happiness is a privilege which is accessible to certain sections of society alone.

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## CONSUMING CONSUMERISM

O My soul, where lies thy delight,  
In the world of consumerism plight.  
Thou amidst the race of attention,  
End up in the pit of deception.  
Blinded by allure of advertisement,  
Ye believe in miraculous achievement.  
Envenomed by arrow of longingness,  
Thou assume wealth equates happiness.  
In order to establish trivial identity,  
You lose and bruise your serenity.

Consumerism's advent so sublime,  
Developed branches of heinous crime.  
To afford every brand so new,  
Corruption, murder and robbery grew.  
To meet consumer's infinite yearning,  
Industries caused global warming.  
Passion of fashion like a vulture,  
Devours and diminishes our culture.  
Unbridled constant gluttonous forces,  
Deprive generations natural resources.

O my soul, care and be aware,  
Thou immature when compare.  
Every time new i-phone new car,  
Thou art driven by mirage of desire.  
Turn from thy wants to needs,  
Gain again and live in peace.  
No harm embrace western air,  
But remember Gandhi's prayer.  
Welcome core needs rest adieu,  
Lest false product consumes you.

~ Paulus Marandi

*The poet is a Jesuit belonging to Dumka- Raiganj Province.*



# Pandemia



A Pandemic that shuts down the world is perhaps once in a century affair. Pandemics are personal. The emergence of a new disease that spreads easily between people and jumps from region to region has an objective narrative, but each of us experiences our own private outbreak. For many of us, it takes weeks, or even months to realize the gravity of the experience that we are undergoing. Moreover, communicating in the face of much uncertainty requires different strategies.

Here in this section we listen to the multitude of experiences that some of our scholastics have undergone during these months. See how beautifully they have integrated the apparent catastrophe to their spiritual acme.

*Sch. Vivekraj Amulraj, the section editor is a Jesuit belonging to Chennai Jesuit Province. He is a third year philosophy student at JDV, Pune.*





COVID-19 pandemic poses an extraordinary challenge to the world.

The Measures taken to prevent this outbreak like quarantine, lockdown, social distancing and such is slowly making me an isolated and introvert person. All the joys of summer scholastic program have withered away for this year. The Mass media as well constantly reports the cases, fatality and forthcoming disasters of this outbreak. All these have made me anxious about my family, friends, and all near and dear ones. Fortunately I could come out of this negative impact and it was all thanks to the Annual Retreat. I was able to sufficiently calm my senses, and regain

## The Silverline

my composure. The meditation, contemplation and other spiritual exercises had a positive impact on my mental health. My mind is now strong and less anxious about the effects of COVID-19. I am now able to see the good results brought forth by this pandemic and appreciate it. I can see the positivity around even in the mundane media reports. There are definitely increasing cases of COVID-19 in India but focused gazing at the increasing recovery rate changes everything. It gives hope that this pandemic is not as monstrous as I had thought. It gives me courage to face difficulties amidst this outbreak. And often, most of us used to say, "I only wish I had enough and more time" or "I wish I had just a little more time" and some more variations like this. I realize

that I actually have more time now than I could have ever asked for. So what do I do now with all this time? This is a bigger question that needs reflective answers to the things I can do and motivation to do it.

This pandemic in a way has helped me to look at the brighter side of life. I am convinced that giving shape to time is especially important now, when the future seems to be so shapeless. I do not know whether the virus will continue to rage for weeks or months but focusing on the time given to me will help me grow and have a positive outlook towards life. Historically, we see that pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. Therefore it is time now to bring newness.



Let me start with the journey from Pune to Patna on 7th June 2020.

I had a lot of difficulties in booking the train tickets and travelled with uncertainty. The Government had made it mandatory to install the *Arogya Setu* app before travelling. Despite that we did not have a safe journey. The railway staff just scanned the passengers and checked the tickets without keeping the seats sanitized. The train was filled a lot of passengers that there was no social distancing. Having reached Danapur, all passengers were allowed to go to their respective places without any checkup. I felt angry that the government of Bihar did not provide

## Social Anxiety

the facilities as other states did. The migrant workers of Bihar and UP were left alone to suffer without food and basic things. They had to go back to Bihar by cycling or on trucks paying their way. Was it because the government of Bihar was poorer than the migrants?

I feel sad and sorry for the COVID-19 patients and those who succumbed to it. I am anxious about the people of Bihar who do not have means to live their life properly and safely. Many people are struggling to get adequate food for their family, though the Prime Minister announced publicly 5 Kg of grains to 80 crore families each month till November 2020. But how much of it is going to help the poor family is a very big question. So far very few have got benefits from the social schemes.

Everyday people are dying but

there is no report as such whether they died of COVID-19 or of something else. The situation at present is very pathetic and dangerous in Bihar. There is lack of medical facilities and the medical fee is very high that poor cannot afford it. I myself have encountered the suffering of my relatives.

Since I am a Jesuit Scholastic, I got a chance to quarantine myself for 14 days with enough facilities. What about the beggars, farmers, rural workers and migrants? It is the utter failure and foolishness of the governments who did not plan well! It is indeed an injustice that political leaders and officials did not fulfil their responsibilities. I feel happy that Patna Province has offered Schools as quarantine Centres and distributed food and basic materials to the needy. Let us have hope that we shall overcome this pandemic with our responsible acts and moral duties.

A hot wind was blowing outside as I arrived at Vijayawada Railway Station from Pune. The dry summer heat was unbearable for me as I started my journey from Maharashtra in the previous evening. It was a sudden shock for me as I was reaching Vijayawada when I heard from the ALC Rector that I won't be allowed to be home quaran-

## Season for Retrospection

ned. However, gradually I gained trust in God's Providence thinking that I won't be allowed to be abandoned just like that since many were travelling with me to the same destination to be quarantined...!

It was a tiring task for me to go through the procedures and protocol of the stage government's medical faculties before we were taken to the government quarantine centers. There was a thorough initial



checkup I had to go through standing in a long queue. The travelers were separated by area wise and were sent for further test to check whether anybody got COVID-19 positive. Seeing the high risk of spreading in the government centers, some of the senior citizens and children were allowed to go home for home quarantine. After a couple of hours we were allowed to get into the buses which were allotted for our respective govt. quarantine centers.

Once we were in the centre, our movements were restricted... One important consequence of quarantine is a change in lifestyle that reduced our physical activity and unhealthy diet, etc. However, there was always a tensed situation as the new batches used to arrive on daily basis. Social distancing restricted my caring activities for the needy in the center. At times, God used me as a translator to convey the important messages and instructions when other state people were admitted in the center.

It was rather a season for retrospection, a time to resonate with the 'Aam Admi' the 'common man', reflecting on the evil impacts on our eco-system caused by us, the human beings, by misusing the resources; not being the stewards of the universe, especially exploiting our mother earth. There is another aspect of destruction and exploitation that is, by the rich becoming richer, exploiting nature and the natural resources. And the main sufferers remain always the poor as usual. It is the time to reflect and act realizing that the poor are not subject to charity; they are equal sharers of the natural resources and the human rights as well. Let us broaden our hearts and minds to embrace them to the group of humanity...!

In other words, it is a checkmate by this pandemic disease, COVID-19, to balance the eco-system due to the over usage or latifundization caused by the greedy deeds of some people that lead to effect and affect the entire ecology and human race badly. Let us learn to respect our "Creator" by preserving the "Creation", in serving one another with our little acts of love and concern by getting out of our greediness and laziness...! Amen.



## CORONAVIRUS

When you broke out  
There was no hope  
Because of your arrival  
There is no departure

Who will control you?  
We hope in a few  
You are happily out  
We are sadly in

When will this war end?  
Is there anyone to tend?  
Not only to the rich and mighty  
But also, to the poor and needy.

All the writers are Jesuits belonging to various Indian provinces. They are all the students of JDV, Pune as well. Sch. Augustine Thottathil is a third year theology student. Schs. Infant Leonard, Vicky Lal, Joyson Rayappan, Innocent Tudu are third year philosophy students. Schs. Emmanuel Akilan and Kiran Joseph are second year philosophy students. Their provinces are indicated in brackets after their names.



The pandemic Covid-19 has caused a great havoc in the past few months all around the world. No one was left unaffected by the pandemic directly or indirectly. It brought us face to face with new revelations about our world, our behaviours and our priorities. The most striking of them all was the encounter with fear and insecurity. We were rushing to safe plac-

## Fear of Death

es leaving behind places of study and work. We could not trust the places and people we lived with to be safe anymore. There was also the urge to hoard food and other supplies with the fear of running short of them without even thinking about the many who had no access to such safety. The pandemic also revealed my own fear of death as I stepped out for any work or when I travelled. It made me realize once again that no matter how efficiently we make our plans, there is a greater power (God) who has different plans altogether. Numer-

ous reports from around the world proved that nature does heal itself when left without human interventions. It was also saddening to see the plight of the underprivileged during the pandemic and how little the authorities cared for them. I found myself too in a fix unable to reach out to the most in need and inspired at the same time by the many unknown good Samaritans who perhaps taught us what we should have been doing. This year will perhaps be the most etched in the memories of this generation and I wish it will be for the good that we could bring out of the worst.



COVID-19 pandemic has brought the humans on their knees. They have become helpless. Even the powerful countries have also become powerless. We, human beings, boast of cutting edge technologies, harnessing the space and many other things, but the barely visible virus has taught us how weak we are. It has shown us that how helpless we are.

## Time to Rethink

Almost half a million lost their lives because of the deadly virus. It has destroyed not only the human lives but the whole system of living. People have learnt a new way of living their life. Human touch has become deadly. Human movements have almost been considered a criminal offence. Everything has become hotchpotch. Lots of people have fallen into depression as the lockdown has ceaselessly continued. Many reports of domestic violence and increase in suicides surface the daily newspapers. The

poor are the most affected by the pandemic. We don't know how long this pandemic would last. Most of the time we were busy accumulating wealth and health in our little span of life. This is the time to think about how useful our earned wealth and health have been. Everyone is extremely afraid of the virus and cautious about it. The smallest of the creatures has become a giant threat to humanity. Corona virus has certainly reminded us of our limitations and shown us that we are not all that powerful.



COVID-19 has shaken the whole world. In Indian, we have been facing a lot of crisis like continuous lockdown resulting in an economic depression, inflation, hunger, starvation, and unemployment. Migrants walk thousands of miles without any food, transportation and even most of them die

## The Divine Providence

on the way back to their villages. During my annual retreat I started reflecting over these adversities and I had an insight which enabled me to be in solidarity with the victims of Covid-19. I was staying at South Indian Common Jesuit Juniorate, Trivandrum where all my daily needs were fulfilled but I paused a while reflecting the physical and emotional sufferings of the common people. So I decided to forgo a day meal but I continued

my daily spiritual exercises and manual works. At the end of the day of fast I felt myself spiritually stronger with the guidance of our Lord Jesus Christ. This experience enormously strengthened my spirituality of being fully in solidarity with the people those who are afflicted and tormented. A day of fast had taught me a lesson of being one with the victims of Covid-19. I am fully having faith in the providence of God and the unceasing intercession of Our Lady of the way.



# The FUTURE of ...

Is the future of our world encouraging? What is the future of religious life? Science? Food Habit? Globalization? Will we survive this pandemic? What kind of world do we need to build up? Are we at the crossroads of human history? How much will the AI enter into our lives?

Finally and most importantly, where is God in all these?

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