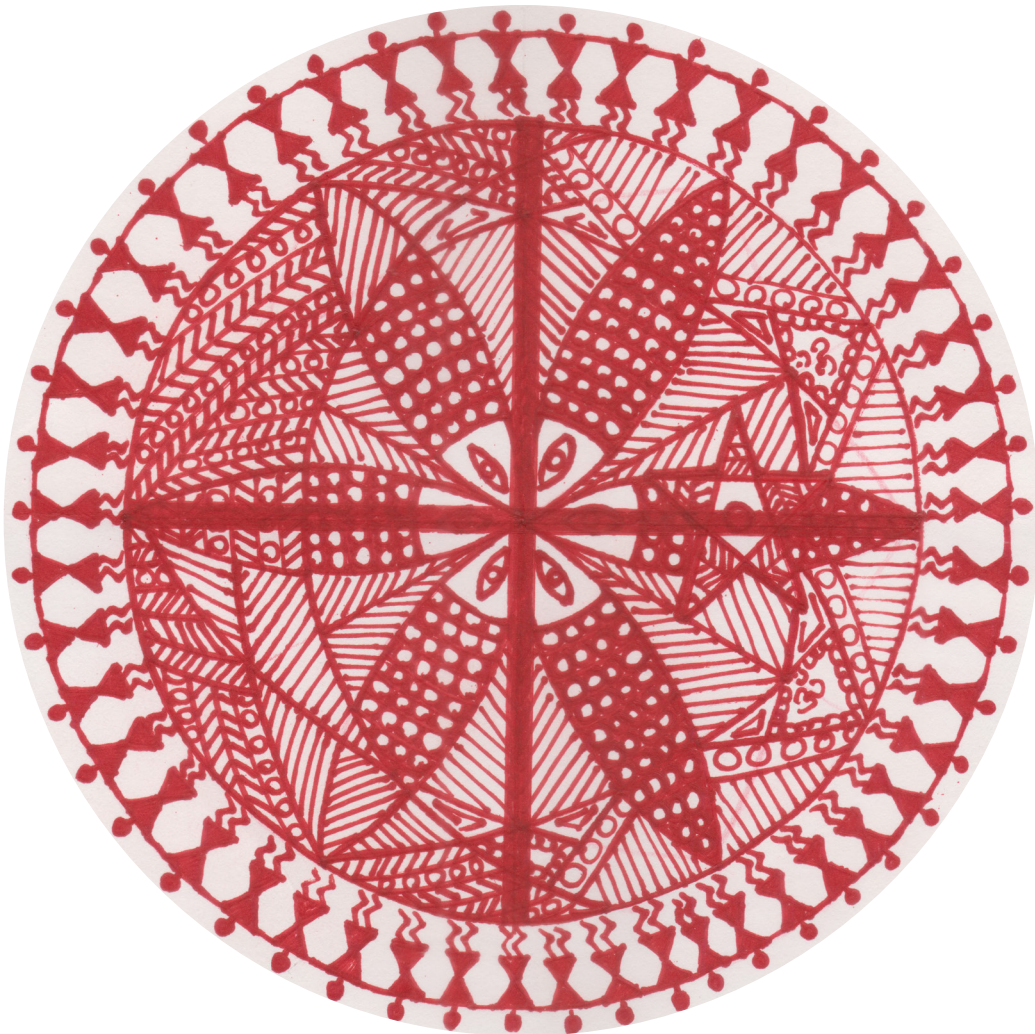


Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

# DNC TIMES

December | 2020 | Vol. IV



# Cultural Dialogue

**Faith Culture**

**Classical Culture**

**Indigenous Culture**

**Modern Culture**





COVER DESIGN & PAINTING BY ABSEN ANISH, FOURTH YEAR FINE ARTS STUDENT AT SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY, KALADY.







# Letters to the Editor

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

I am extremely happy to receive the online copy of DNCTimes. It is contextually relevant with timely contents. Congratulations to the Editorial board as well as the contributors. These types of reflective writings, articles do make one reflect, time and again, the very meaning and purpose of life and the choice one makes in life. Reflections on the future of Mission, at a time when Corona Virus has already claimed so many lives all over the world are most welcome. It's now during this Covid-19 that we suddenly realize that we are so much connected and united-united to destroy and build a new world vision.

Covid-19 seems to have reformed what was so called structured way of life. The students are no more physically present in the formation centers or class rooms but duty in progress via virtual platforms. True indeed are the words of Late Prof. Dr Samuel Rayan SJ, *"When God's spirit brooded over the waters, chaos changed into cosmos. The Spirit can likewise effect this change in human hearts. The confusion and the chaos, the lack of beauty, can be transformed into a world of order, beauty and peace"* - *Breath of Fire*.

I quote *"We need to foster a habit of silence and prayer, reading and reflection in our communities and at the centres of learning, so that all, Jesuits, collaborators and all the beneficiaries will be equipped to discern and face the vicissitudes and vagaries of life"* - Fr Stany D'Souza SJ, POSA -DNCTimes | October | 2020.

Keep up to your Good work for the greater glory of God! A small little virus...!

SR SUREKHA BS, SILCHAR

The issue arrived as I was reading 'The Black Swan' by Nassim Nicholas Taleb. The current situation makes me agree to Nassim's Philosophical ideas on unpredictability and how human try to master the art of prediction despite of having failed all the way. The utter chaos that the world is facing is a reminder that we are just pilgrims.

The second law of thermodynamics from the perspective of economics is that entropy(disorder) goes on rising in a system as we transfer energy in different forms. I believe that what we have done to our ecology haunts us today in one way or the other. The present pandemic is surely the effect of the rise in entropy.

JANGSINREI TITUS GONMEI SJ,  
KOHIMA

I am happy that DNC times has given a chance to all the prolific Jesuit scholastic writers. Writing entails a lot of hard work . Really , people must be patient to read and write. Each page gives us some message so let us become a messenger of this world.

Thank you,

P KIRAN JOSEPH SJ, CHENNAI

# Editorial

When we were kids, we all used the hand stencil trick by spreading the fingers of one hand on a paper, and then tracing the five fingers on to the paper. The kids experience a great thrill from this remarkable piece of art. Similar etchings are found on the walls and caves of yesteryears leaving a semi-permanent memory of itself in the world. It is the tendency of the human being to strive to transcend the limitations of time and space. The corpus of all such efforts gives birth to human culture.

Self-conscious thinking does not have the first word in the development of culture. First comes life, celebration of life, and work- then comes reflection and doctrine. Life precedes culture.

Tony Joseph begins his celebrated book “*Early Indians*” with a picturesque narration of a cave near Bhopal. The cave documents are first traces of the beginnings of culture in India. Culture has been the very essence of our civilization.

*If you want to get as close as possible to the lives of the first modern humans in India, one of the best places to go to is Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh's Raisen district, about forty-five kilometres from the state capital, Bhopal. A place so well liked that millennia after millennia, one or the other Homo species, including our own ancestors, the Homo sapiens, lived and hunted and painted and partied there. Yes, the rock shelters are full of paintings, including some that depict people dancing to drumbeats.*

DNCTimes | December 2020



*Perichoresis*

India has grown out to be a giant elephant of complexity and cultural diversity. When the Jesuits first arrived in this land, they came with their own cultural background, worldview and some prejudices. Consequently, the encounter had mixed results. We had our forefathers reaching out to the courts of Akbar, innovating indigenous rites and rituals, and laying the foundations for the study of many local languages and some of them even wrote great epics. Acquaviva, Arnos Padiri, Beschi, De Nobili, Thomas Stephen are the few stalwarts of Jesuit cultural encounters. They also made some mistakes as well.

Are we following the footsteps of our early pioneers of cultural dialogue? The current issue of DNCTimes is an enquiry into our cultural initiatives. We are proud to share the report of a study on “*Jesuit Cultural Involvements in India*”. Cultural involvement gives depth to our ministries. It helps us to get rooted in the lives of the people with whom we are collaborating. While our global outlook helps us to transcend the barriers of our own culture, our rootedness helps us to embrace all that is good in other traditions- thus enriching both our lives and the lives of the people with whom we associate.

Finally, what should we strive for? We need *Cultural Perichoresis*. The church fathers, especially the Cappadocians, used Perichoresis to explain the nature of the Trinity. It stands for mutual indwelling, where each divine person permeates the other and allows themselves to be permeated by the other persons. Literally it means ‘dance around with music’. If all that the three persons in the Trinity do is to dance around with music, how much more we ought to do it in our world. Fr. George Pattery, former POSA, rightly observed, “Interculturality” ought to be an integral part of Jesuit Character.

**Nota Bene:** *All natural phenomena are ultimately interconnected, and in order to explain any one of them we need to understand all the others... In that sense, one might say that every part ‘contains’ all the others, and indeed, a vision of mutual embodiment seems to be characteristic of the mystical experience of nature.* (Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*)



*Rosan SJ*



# FAITH CULTURE & DIALOGUE

A Malankara Catholic  
Approach

+ Baselios Cardinal  
Cleemis

## Introduction

Following the mandate given by Jesus Christ, the Catholic Church has been transmitting the faith to the whole world. This article is an attempt to see how faith could positively influence the people in and through culture—the context and attitude of their life. Here we have a synopsis of the story of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, an apostolic Church living in the cultural context of India, celebrating christian life with ancient apostolic style of worship in full communion with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church led by Holy Father Pope Francis, the successor of St. Peter, the head of the Apostolic College.

Christian in faith  
Syriac in patrimony  
Indian in culture  
Catholic in witnessing

This is the story of a *sui iuris* Church, of her faith journey and the struggle to live out the tradition. With her ancient liturgical and theological patrimony, she adorns the Universal Church and is a witness to the diversity of the latter. She has a history of a century and a story of two millenia. The story of cultural encounters...

We are happy to have this story shared by the head of the Malankara Church, Major Archbishop and the Catholicos Cardinal Baselios Cleemis, an alumnus of JDV, Pune.

- Editor



## Dialogue with Culture: Ivanian Perspective

The Apostolic Malankara Church established by St. Thomas in India, plunged into a century-long crisis resulting from its contact with Anglican missionaries and intense conflicts on the question of jurisdiction with the Patriarch of Antioch. As a young cleric, Fr. P.T. Geevarghese (Mar Ivanios) had been a witness to this historical crisis, eventually becoming grim involving violence, bloodshed and series of litigation. Far from the true christian spirit the then Church in India drifted off from evangelizing the people, Mar Ivanios understood this. Speaking about the call to evangelize, he brings a fundamental issue sharply into focus: the principle reason why christians have only very limited success in evangelizing this country is that this religion remains 'foreign'. He averred: "it is possible to give Christianity a local character without compromising the apostolic and universal principles of this ancient Church". Mar Ivanios' loyalty to Indian culture was evidently visible in his life when he and his collaborators espoused a way of life that in all its manifestation resembled the life of Indian Sanyasins rooted in Indian culture. Besides, On 25 May 1925, when Mar Ivanios was consecrated as the Bishop of Bethany Ashram, he accepted the crozier, the pectoral cross and the hand-held cross - the principal insignia of episcopate - all made of wood! Special affinity of Mar Ivanios for dialogue with culture is significantly displayed in the founding of Bethany Ashram in 1919.



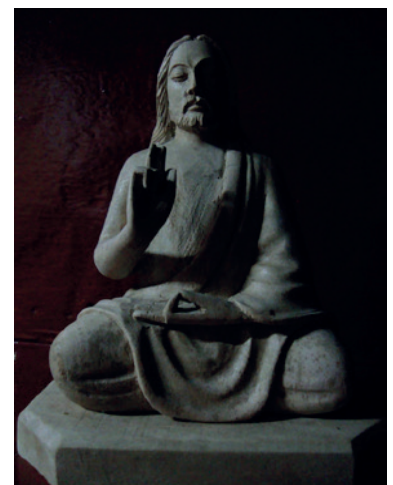
Archbishop  
Geevarghese Mar Ivanios

## Bethany Ashram: Faith Interacts with Culture

The founding of the Bethany Ashram by Servant of God Archbishop Mar Ivanios in 1919 was a new milestone in the history of the Indian Churches. Looking towards a solution for the century-long crisis in the Malankara Orthodox Church, this great Acharya realized the best solution rested on the founding of an Ashram, a spiritual fraternity of people who seek the truth and desire for attaining God. In addition to this, he took special care on the choice of a monastic life, one which suits to the land, its culture and faith. Thus, integrating the Basilian monasticism by blending it with the principles of Shantiniketan of Rabindranath Tagore and Sabarmati of Mahatma Gandhi the Bethany Ashram was established. Confluence of Oriental monastic tradition and Indian sannyasa in Bethany sought to evangelize India upholding the great Indian culture and ethos. Assimilation of cultural values of the land – in its social texture, in the formation of aspirants, in prayer life, in its dress code, food habits, in the personal dimension of penitential practices, in ecological commitments - were the signature of Bethanians. Mar Ivanios was fully convinced that Christian life in India is possible through genuine Indian style which, indeed, was the Bethanian style of evangelization.

## In Dialogue with Liturgy

The Malankara liturgy, which is Antiochian in its ancestry, assimilated into the culture of the land. In this way it neither threat-



The statue of meditating  
Jesus at Kurishumala  
Ashram, as an autonomous  
monastery of eparchial  
rank of the Syro-Malankara  
Church





Bathany Ashram at Ramwadi, Pune

ened the fabric of Indian culture nor was threatened in its existence. Within the Church, Mar Ivanios was among the pioneers of vernacularisation of liturgy. A circle of his collaborators not only translated the liturgical texts faithfully into Malayalam, but also expanded the Para-liturgical literature through creative dialogue between Indian heritage and the Syriac tradition. It helped the faithful to actively participate in the liturgy. The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church continues strongly the legacy by introducing the richness of its liturgical heritage into all the local cultures. Not only that we have the liturgy translated into English, German, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Punjabi Oriya and Assamese but also we have strong localized versions of it in practice. The Malankara liturgy also incorporated many socio-cultural customs of the land into its liturgical services. The rites of tying the Thali and offering Mantrakodi (Customs of the Hindus of Kerala) in the marriage celebration are indeed the remarkable examples of the Church's dialogue with the culture. The architecture of church, places of worship etc. are some of the successful attempts of faith dialoguing with culture.

### Dialogue with People in their Needs

Transmission of faith is incomplete without enriching and empowering the people we encounter with. Acknowledgement of this realization fostered the Church to be a 'Good Samaritan': to be at the service of mankind. At a time when education was only the birth right of the high caste, the Malankara Church extended its arms to impart knowledge and independence to people who had neither education nor basic rights. The Malankara Church was keen to identify the facet of health care in its dialogue as a response to and continuation of the healing and compassionate ministry of Jesus Christ. The Church provided health care facilities to the people in their medical needs, irrespective of financial and social status. The fruit of these services enabled the Church to provide people the basic standards to safeguard human life with dignity. The Syro-Malankara Church had unique contributions in other spheres of human life as well. Propagation of scientific farming, inculcation of a sense of work culture and popularization of co-operative models were the few economic initiatives undertaken by the Church for the economic empowerment of the people. An egalitarian outlook of the Syro-Malankara Church on society made it to fight against the social evil-untouchability. Constructive programmes and Dalit and backward people-centred activities started by Mar Ivanios led to a change in the social consciousness of larger groups of people. Emancipation of women too was the objective of the Church in its dialogue. The Church untiringly worked hard to equalize the status of women to that of men. On a world stage where the status of women was second only to men, it was a historic break when Mar Ivanios opened up possibilities for a few young women from Malankara to enrol in the Diocesan College, Calcutta for higher education which was only a distant dream for them at that time. Other reforms on this matter comprised of availing health and sanitation facilities, giving women skill formation, and providing employment opportunities.

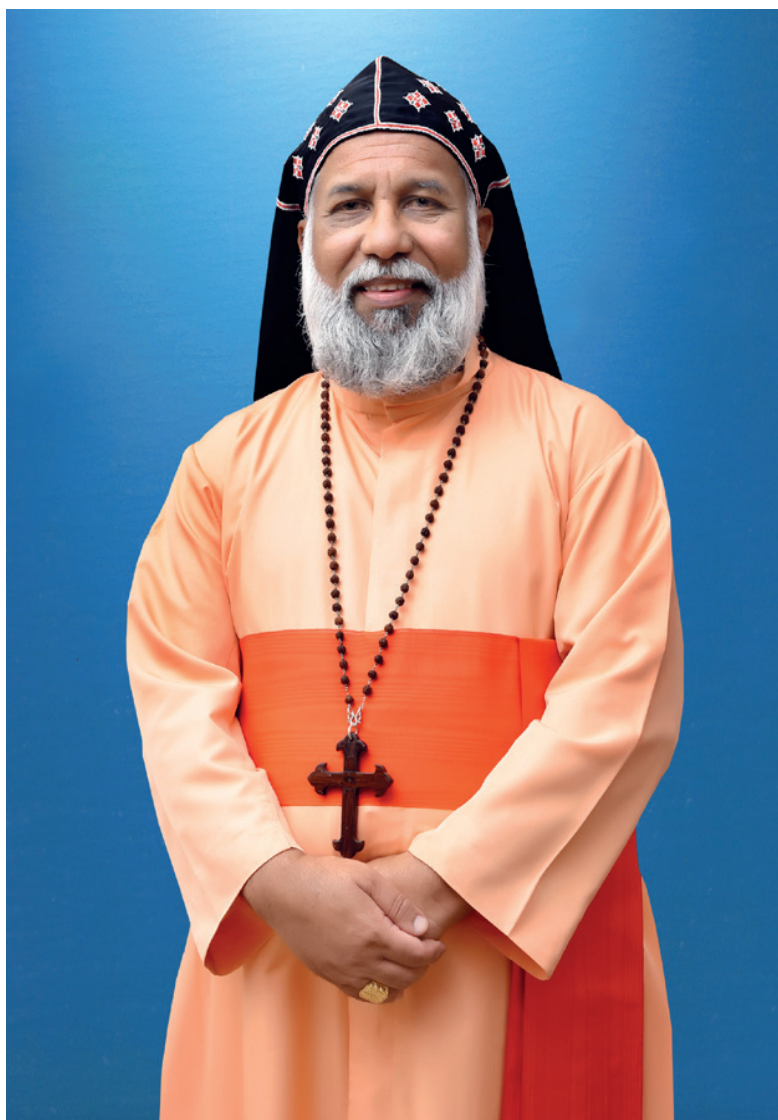


Latest band of OIC theology students receiving various orders



## Dialogue with People of Other Faith

The profound respect of Mar Ivanios to people of other faith was imbibed by the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in its life. A genuine respect for what is good and God-given in other religions is reflected in the Church in its relationship with people of other faith. Central idea behind Mar Ivanios' fraternal co-operation with the people of other faith premised upon the universality of God's will to save mankind. In fact, this matured thought had enabled the Church to be a peacemaker in times of inter-religious conflicts. The popular leadership of the late Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios in this field and the significant contribution of the late Major Archbishop - Catholicos Cyril Baselios in dialoguing with the R.S.S Leader Mr. Sudarshan and others are worth mentioning in this context. The much appreciated Indian Delegation consisting of Hindu, Muslim and Christian leaders of Kerala participating in the Consistory of Cardinal Baselios Cleemis Catholicos in Vatican in 2012 speaks volumes for the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in dialogue of life today.



## Conclusion

Though the context has considerably changed for the Church, in every way the content of the Gospel remains the same - God the Father sent his only Son Jesus Christ to redeem the world. Walking the path of its founder holding onto the principles of this great Aboon, the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church continues its mission of dialogue with culture in bringing joy to the whole world being:

Christian in faith  
Syriac in patrimony  
Indian in culture  
Catholic in witnessing.

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## A brief bio-sketch

*Cardinal Baselios Cleemis, the Major Archbishop - Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and the Major Archbishop of Trivandrum was born on 15 June 1959 in Mukkoor, Pathanamthitta (Dt.) Kerala. Studied Philosophy at St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Alwaye and did Theology at Jnana Deepa Vidya Peeth, Poona. He earned a Licentiate in Comparative Religion from Dharmaram Vidya Kshetra, Bangalore and secured his Ph.D. from St. Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University, Rome in Ecumenism.*

*Cardinal Cleemis served the Church in India as the President of CBCI (2014-2018) and stood firm for the cause of weaker sections in the Church and for the harmony of religions. Pope Benedict XVI made him a Cardinal in 2012. Being a member of the Pontifical Council for Inter religious Dialogue and a member of the National Integration Council (NIC), Cardinal Cleemis stands firm as spokesman of Religious Harmony and Indian Secularism.*

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# JESUIT CULTURAL INVOLVEMENT IN INDIA

by DNCTimes Editorial Team

Reflecting on our experience during GC34, we discerned that the service of

*faith* in Jesus Christ and the promotion of the *justice* of the Kingdom preached by him can best be achieved in the contemporary world

if *inculturation* and *dialogue*

become essential elements of our way of proceeding in *mission*. We experience this mission as being part of the Church's overall mission of evangelization, "a single but complex reality" containing all these essential elements. We want to reaffirm this mission which gives meaning to our religious apostolic life in the Church:

“

Thus the aim of our mission (the service of faith) and its integrating principle (faith directed toward the justice of the Kingdom) are dynamically related to the inculturated proclamation of the Gospel and dialogue with other religious traditions as integral dimensions of evangelization.

GC 35, D3, *Challenges to Our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers.*

”

The Jesuits have been exceptionally influential in several areas of human society and culture. Why is it so? There exists a typical Jesuit style of doing things in a remarkable way. The constitutive elements of their style have been identified and indicated as the traits of personality their 'General' shall possess. The traits for an 'ideal general' hand-picked by Ignatius himself reflects the nature of "Our Way of Proceeding". These are the traits of an ideal Jesuit: courage, compassion, large-heartedness, ability for sound judgement, adequate energy to take up and complete the mission entrusted, and, above all, he is "closely united with Lord our God and has a familiarity with him in prayer and in all his operations". Incidentally, these are the attributes expected from a person engaging in cultural dialogue as well.

For the Jesuits cultural involvement is an inherent part of their mission. The inseparability of mission and culture springs forth from 'the Contemplation of the Incarnation' in the Spiritual Exercises. This contemplation paves the way for both the spiritual and theological foundation of cultural dialogue. Although most of the contemplations in the Spiritual Exercises are based on the gospel events, this particular one is an original contribution of Ignatius. Having experienced the love and mercy of God in the 1<sup>st</sup> week of the exercises, the retreatant is asked to look at the world from God's viewpoint. The Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity into the human ethos is by itself an act of salvation, an instance of joy, and of course, the perfection of humanity (as Rahner indicates).

*The leap of divine joy: God knows that the time has come when the mystery of salvation, hidden from the beginning of the world, will shine into human darkness and confusion. It is as if I can hear the Divine Persons saying, "Let us work the redemption of the whole human race; let us respond to the groaning of all creation."*<sup>1</sup>

In order to identify the specific Jesuit cultural interventions, one must read the celebrated book of O' Malley, *The Jesuits (II): Cultures, Sciences and the Arts*. It comprehensively portrays the cultural history of the Society of Jesus since its inception till the suppression. A Jesuit scholastic reading through the book would definitely experience a fall into a rabbit's hole, into a world of magic and wonder – in which the worlds above and below never intersect. This experience raises a disturbing question - *What on earth are we doing in India?*

Well, in this issue we are trying to seek an answer. The Editorial board of *DNCTimes* had set out on a laborious task- to identify and classify the Jesuit cultural centres in India, to access their contributions in this field. We collected the initial data through a questionnaire and later verified the data through the socii (assistants to the provincials) of each province. Many Directors of Works were kind enough to really cooperate with us. We thank Dr. E. J. Thomas SJ, the former principal of Loyola college of Social Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram for his valuable suggestion and guidance.

## Definition, Scope and Limits

For the purpose of the study, we have focused on the following variables for classification.

1. **Cultural Activities:** For the purpose of this study our focus is on the efforts to promote/ preserve mainly non-material cultural expressions via art, poetry, music, visual arts, folklore, film, dance, languages etc. We have divided them into four categories: Indigenous cultural dialogue, Classical Cultural Dialogue, Faith- Culture Dialogue, Modern Cultural Dialogue.
2. **Indigenous Culture:** For the purpose of this study, indigenous cultural dialogue implies the efforts to preserve and/or promote the cultural elements of ethnic minority groups who reside in their original habitats, follow their traditional practices, and speak their native languages.

1 David L. Fleming, SJ, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises*, St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996

**The Jesuit scholastics and young priests have suddenly discovered their skills in modern media and communication during these days of the pandemic. This indeed is a promising scenario.**

**Cultural research seems to be a low priority in most of the provinces. Perhaps they are associated with some of our regular institutions. We wish and recommend that all our institutions promote some autonomous cultural centres.**



**There seem to be very few Jesuits formally trained in Arts and Culture, viz. those who hold a research degree. Most of them get assimilated into academic institutions or into routine administrative works.**

Some indigenous groups may have lost their traditional language but are otherwise considered an indigenous ethnic group. Other ethnic groups may have been displaced from their original homeland but have retained most of their indigenous culture. We also include centres working for the promotion of Dalit or any other subaltern groups in this category.

3. **Classical Culture:** For the purpose of this study, we define classical cultural dialogue which means, the efforts to preserve/ promote classical art, literature, music (Carnatic or Hindustani or Western classical music), classical dance forms (eg: ballein, Bharatanatya, Kuchupudi, Kathak, Kathakali, Manipuri) or any other art form that has direct connection to classical Hindu or Christian traditions.
4. **Faith- Culture:** It mainly focuses on centres for faith-culture dialogue like inter-religious dialogue centres, ashrams that promote classical or indigenous cultures, centres for inculturation etc.
5. **Modern Culture:** It mainly involves initiatives in modern art forms like films, music production, modern art, centres for modern cultural analysis etc. Any other cultural involvement that cannot be placed in the above three categories will come under this category.

Very often cultural involvement is part of other mainstream ministries like education, social action, spirituality etc. If a centre is focussing on any other ministry other than cultural dialogue, it will not come under this study. We also exclude dependent centres for cultural studies as part of our educational institutions under this study. Any indigenous ministry that only works for the economic and social welfare of the beneficiaries do not come under this study.

## Insights and Revelations

Most of the cultural centres were begun only after the seventies. We strongly believe that Vatican II and GC 32 had great influence in the development of these centers. For us Jesuits the period after GC 32 was a period of experimentation and courage. Many individuals set out to translate their personal charisms into a mainstream ministry in the Society. It's worth noting that most of the cultural centres in India are the result of an individual Jesuit's initiative. The Society as a corporate body provided and nourished their dreams, broadened their vision and provided financial and human support. Pioneering spirit seldom goes unappreciated in the Society!

From a financial point of view, the survey reveals that most of the cultural centres have a fund crunch and inadequate infrastructures. Most of the time, the works taken up in a cultural centre are not financially viable. However financial viability is not the only criteria to judge the effectiveness of a centre. A few exceptions to this general pattern are the centres associated with larger Jesuit institutions.

Of the 32 Jesuit cultural centres in India, 12 are for Indigenous cultural dialogue, 9 for Faith-culture dialogue, 7 for Classical cultural dialogue and just 2 for modern cultural dialogue. We have no centre in India that is working for the East- West cultural fusion. The Jesuits could be a bridge towards a cultural dialogue between South Asia and the rest of the world because of their global outreach. This can be mutually enriching. Our interventions in modern culture of our times like films, music, contemporary art, social media etc. are very marginal.

Some of our Faith-Culture dialogue centres are quite reputed and are situated in the heartlands of Hindu culture. The centre of Patna province in the heart-land of Hinduism is a remarkable one. We also have such centres in Kolkata and in Kalady.

The provinces of Madurai, Kohima, Nepal, Goa and Delhi seemed to have no centres as such for cultural dialogue. Perhaps their cultural dialogue is carried out

**The Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity into the human ethos is by itself an act of salvation, an instance of joy, and of course, the perfection of humanity.**

through their regular academic institutions.

There seem to be very few Jesuits formally trained in Arts and Culture, viz. those who hold a research degree. Though there are several such trained Jesuits, most of them get assimilated into academic institutions or into routine administrative works.

## Recommendations

Based on our study we would like to come up with some recommendation:

1. Cultural research seems to be a low priority in most of the provinces. Perhaps they are associated with some of our regular institutions. We wish and recommend that all our institutions promote some autonomous cultural centres. They already have outreach centres for social interventions. Perhaps 'Kaladarsini' of Andhra province can provide us a model for collaboration between the centres for culture and academic institutions.
2. We do have many famous Faith dialogue centres, like Sameeksha, Kalady, IDCR, Chennai, Masihi Satsang Ashram, Patna and so on. Most of these centres focus mostly on dialogue with Hinduism. It may be the need of the hour that we establish some centres in the heartlands of Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism as well.
3. More Jesuits could get trained in classical dance, painting, folk arts and music like Frs Saju (CCU) in classical dance and Roy Thottam (KER) in modern art. Each zone could establish a Common Centre through Zonal Apostolic collaboration. Opportunities for Doctoral level training must be given to many more Jesuits.
4. Jesuits working in Cultural ministries need to transcend province boundaries and work collaboratively. For instance, is it possible to imagine Fr. Saju working with Kaladarsini or Fr. Arul Raja working with Ashirvad, Bangalore? They must also net-work with others who are engaged in similar activities.
5. The North-East states, known as the "Seven Sisters", need our special attention to promote and to mainstream their cultural riches and diversity.
6. We think we need more centres for indigenous languages especially in the tribal belt of Chotanagpur and in the North-East. It is also applicable to the indigenous groups of South India.
7. The JCSA could include in their Zonal Apostolic Planning Centres for painting, sculptures and similar art forms.
8. The Western Zone is highly influenced by the western culture. As a result, the local traditions might disappear. The Jesuits of this zone could take some initiatives towards the preservation of the endangered cultures of these local people.

## Approaches to Revamping Formation:

The Jesuit scholastics and young priests have suddenly discovered their skills in modern media and communication during these days of the pandemic. This indeed is a promising scenario. We have seen earlier that pioneering spirit is ingrained in our order. However, we seriously doubt how much of it is now appreciated in the corporate body of the South Asian Jesuits. We seem to have a tendency to keep to the status quo. The scholastics too mostly seek secure jobs in our institutions. Our formation structures too seem inclined to encourage such attitudes. We wish our formators instil daring and originality in the scholastics and inspire them to pursue some less popular streams of academic pursuits such as fine arts, classical music, dance and drama.

**These are the traits of an ideal Jesuit: courage, compassion, large-heartedness, ability for sound judgement, adequate energy to take up and complete the mission entrusted, and, above all, he is "closely united with Lord our God and has a familiarity with him in prayer and in all his operations". Incidentally, these are the attributes expected from a person engaging in cultural dialogue as well.**



**The North-East states, known as the “Seven Sisters”, need our special attention to promote and to mainstream their cultural riches and diversity.**

A concrete recommendation to this end is perhaps to re-imagine the second year of regency with a specific focus on pioneering-spirit. It doesn't have to be within the province itself. It could be more for developing the interests of the scholastics in non-conventional environments (mission environments). It could be even to work under some of our stalwarts in different provinces altogether. So instead of making formation a routine business, the second year of regency could be an experience for trail-blazing, an opportunity to experience the indomitable Jesuit-spirit of creativity and innovation.

The common houses can work as a cradle for start-ups. Start-ups as we know, is the outcome of originality and team-work. The environment of common house will surely provide cross-cultural context and adequate supervision. We have some examples of start-ups in the common house, like DNCTimes, Digital Jesuits etc. Such initiatives are to be actively encouraged and adequately funded. In the Assistancy level too such platforms could be built up.

## Conclusion

Now let's move onto a personal question. Am I adequately equipped to appreciate and value the cultural richness of our land? The culture like any other human enterprise is constantly changing. The mission of the Second Person of the Trinity was to change the world into a salvific reality. Bread, wine, water jar, donkey and at times a whip are all that was required to achieve the desired liberation. Christ did not carry out his mission standing outside the grips of his culture, rather he became Incarnate into it. The letter to the Galatians says this fact quite clearly, “When the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law(culture) to redeem those under the law(culture) that we might receive adoption of son/daughter-ship...” Gal 4, 4-5. This mission(sending) is an invitation for us too.

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**Jesuits working in Cultural ministries need to transcend province boundaries and work collaboratively. For instance, is it possible to imagine Fr. Saju working with Kaladarsini or Fr. Arul Raja working with Ashirvad, Bangalore?**

- -Indigenous Cultural Dialogue
- -Modern Cultural Dialogue
- -Classical Cultural Dialogue
- -Faith-Culture Dialogue





# INTERCULTURALITY

## *a Jesuit Character*



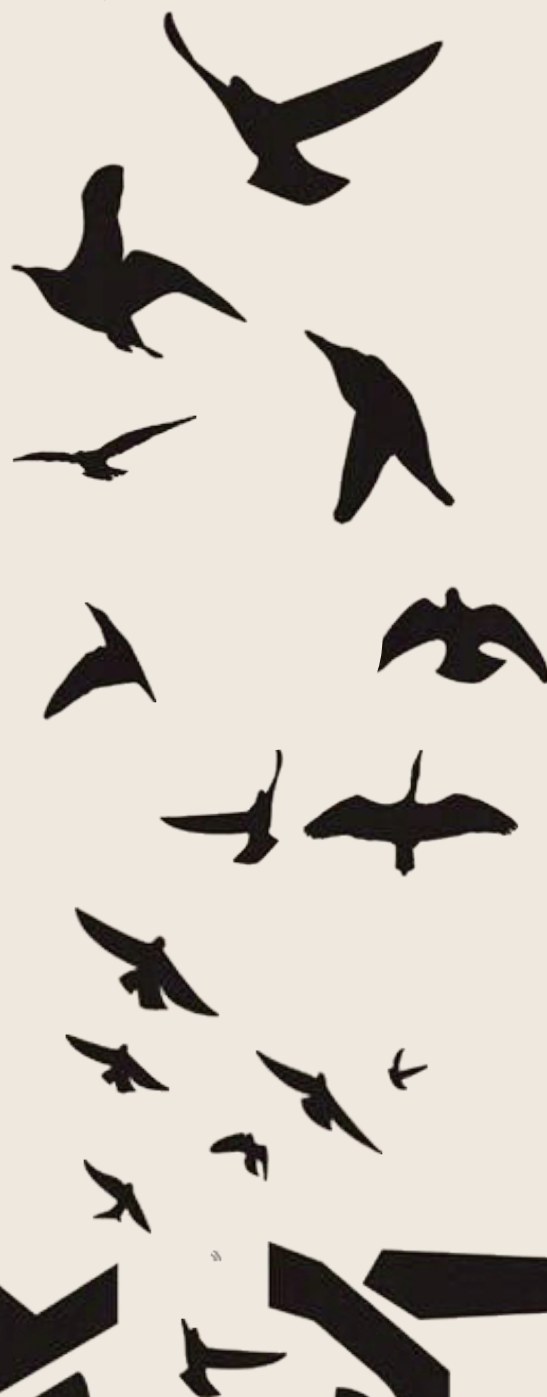
GEORGE PATTERY SJ

The last two GCs (35 & 36) dwelt on the characteristics of Jesuit companionship, qualifying it a triptych of Jesuit identity (companionship), mission and community. This triptych has not been sufficiently understood and accepted in the Society, especially in South Asia. While it is true that our companionship and community are to be oriented for mission, we have not sufficiently explored the goal of mission as formation of communities of ‘table-fellowship’, at local, regional, international, universal levels, forming an oceanic circle. It originates from the Ignatian trinitarian vision and relationship, seeing the whole humanity as one, and working towards its redemption. Jesuit communities are invited to bear witness to this gospel imperative. To pitch community versus mission is to misrepresent both. In that spirit, interculturality ought to be a Jesuit Character.

### 1. GC 35: Jesuit Identity is Relational

D.2.19 says: “Jesuit identity and Jesuit mission are linked by community; indeed, identity, community, and mission are a kind of tryptich shedding light on how our companionship is best understood. This companionship shows how people different in background and diverse in talent can live together as true **“friends in the Lord”**. Jesuit identity is relational; it grows in and through our diversities of culture, nationalities, and languages, enriching and challenging us. This is a process that we enter upon as we join the Society, and we grow in it every day. As we do so, our community life can become attractive to people, inviting them – above all the young – to ‘come and see’, to join us in our vocation and to serve with us in Christ’s mission”.

No:27 adds: To live this mission in our broken world, we need fraternal and joyful communities in which we nourish and express with great intensity the sole passion that can unify our differences and bring to life our creativity.



GC 36 develops this further, referring to the type of companionship of the early Fathers. GC 36: D.1. 7, says: *“During their time in Venice, the companions were not always together; they were dispersed in order to fulfill many tasks. Nevertheless, it was at that time that they shared the experience of constituting a single group.... If, however, we forget that we are one body, bound together in and with Christ, we lose our identity as Jesuits and our ability to bear witness to the Gospel. No: 9 adds: The Jesuit community is a concrete space in which we live as friends in the Lord. This life together is always at the service of mission, but because these fraternal bonds proclaim the Gospel, it is itself a mission”*. No:10 continues: In our Jesuit community life, we should leave room for encounter and sharing. 11. Communal discernment requires that each of us develop some basic characteristics and attitudes: availability, mobility, humility, freedom, the ability to accompany others, patience, and a willingness to listen respectfully so that we may speak the truth to each other. Nos: 12-13 propose concrete ways: An essential tool that can animate apostolic communal discernment is spiritual conversation. In our world that knows too much division, we ask God to help our communities become “homes” for the Reign of God.

## 2. Implications for the Conference South Asia

South Asia is blessed with rich cultures, languages, ethnicities, religions. Perhaps no other part of the world has this variety and richness, preserved from the time immemorial. This is our heritage and patrimony. Each of our regional languages has maintained its identity, creativity and uniqueness. Our vocations come from these rich traditions. How do we bring this richness to enrich the body of the Society? How do we employ this richness in and for our life-mission?

We have great examples of Jesuits joining ‘different and differing cultural provinces’ and contributing to the richness of those traditions and enhancing the mission, especially in the North Zone. I am not entering into such narratives here. Rather, I believe that our focus be: How do we bring these ‘rich traditions’ to our community life, making it truly an intercultural community, beyond divisive, narrow identities? What is the role of the Common Houses in nurturing interculturality?

The concept note of the Conference interculturality seminar (April 2019, JDV, Pune) had this orientation: “The fabric of life in South Asia is woven by diversity of cultures and religions. It is also the minefield of numerous and constant conflicts – cultural, ethnic, caste, linguistic and national/global in nature. Are we not victims of cultural, ethnic, linguistic and national biases and prejudices? ... A cultural auditing – at different levels of communities and nations- might reveal our strength and weakness.”

The real challenge for South Asia is to transcend provincialism in order to perceive our inter-cultural richness and live it out in our communities and for our mission.

**I believe that our focus be: How do we bring these ‘rich traditions’ to our community life, making it truly an intercultural community, beyond divisive, narrow identities? What is the role of the Common Houses in nurturing interculturality?**





KOHIMA



# Jesuits on God's Own Footstool



Once heard a fascinating story from Fr Vijay D'Souza SJ, who has been working on the almost extinct Aka language of the Aka tribe in Arunachal. As a theology student, Fr Vijay had an opportunity to go back to his adopted tribe, Aka. He took along with him five students from Nagaland for a house visit. As they were being served tea, there happened to be only five good cups. In most cases, Fr Vijay would have been given the best cup meant for guests; however, he was given the only available broken cup. Without meaning any disrespect, the acquainted family told him, "*You are one of us*". This meant he was not a guest anymore but a family member. The anecdote speaks of his life with the Akas and how he has immersed himself with the natives. His story is just one among hundreds accumulated over the past 50 years.

Jesuits in this Region know the stories of the first pioneers; and as proud legatees, have faithfully followed them and expanded the work of God. Research

GOLDENSTAR SJ IS A SECOND YEAR PHILOSOPHY STUDENT  
AT DNC PUNE. HE BELONGS TO KOHIMA REGION.





Centre, Language Institute (just established), Social endeavors, are hopeful ventures of the Region. Priests and Scholastics venture into the unknown, plunge into alien culture and language for the sake of the mission. To many curious explorers, the Northeast is a baffling fortune. But, Kohima Region is blessed to have untapped gems and precious cultural heritage and customs, rich cultural philosophy waiting to be unveiled, diverse ecological theology lying dormant waiting to be reconnoitered. What a fertile land for inculturation!

The Northeast is close to the heart of the Scripture. There is an innate sense of relationality between the humans and creation. People feel duty-bound towards the earth and all around it. Sacred groves, myths, festivals, preservation of forests are intimately linked to the lives of the people. Richly blessed, however, there are threats lurking in many secret corners. The most noticeable one is the infiltration of modern ethos, which poses, to some languages and cultures, a danger of being subsumed under alien influence and eventually be nonexistent.

Out of this grown awareness, on 30th Sept, 2020, the Regional Superior of Kohima Region promulgated the RAPs (Region Apostolic Plan); and the first RAP of the Region- *“To promote the culture, identity, language and heritage of peoples of Northeast India.”* It is a hopeful vision, an enormous endeavor to more fully incarnate ourselves into the indigenous cultures and languages. Through this undertaking, the unexplored indigenous wisdom could enrich the world with new thoughts of sustainable relationships with the creation and with one another. Indigenous creation-human relationality, their distinct earth-centered view of God and spirituality, cosmology, and its immense resources of justice and peace tradition, could offer a new outlook towards creation-human relationship. With diverse wisdom and unruly weltanschauung, Kohima Jesuits are on God’s own footstool. Quaint and fascinating folk tales, customs and traditions of the unruly hills and the perusal of them cannot fail to amuse and cheer many. To those who wish to come, *“Take off your shoes, for the place you are on is God’s footstool.”*



**Quaint and fascinating folk tales, customs and traditions of the unruly hills and the perusal of them cannot fail to amuse and cheer many.**





# The Dancing Jesuit &

**Kalahrudaya  
in Dialogue with  
Art and Culture**

“

**As a vibrant visionary religious body and as individuals we, the Jesuits have immense potential and wealth and it is not to be wasted, it should be used to the maximum for the welfare of the less privileged.**

”

This was one of the catchy anecdotes of Fr. Saju George SJ, director of Kalahrudaya, the Art and Culture Institute of Calcutta Province, which summarizes the interview with him, conducted on October 4, 2020 at 4.30 pm.

To begin with, Fr. Saju George recalled how it had been a felt need of the Province to initiate a platform for cultural dialogue through fine arts, to which he had responded generously. He narrated how right from his Novitiate days, inspired and initiated by his formators, he fanned this desire to be actualized as a possible future mission. As a matter of fact, with the advancement in his formative years as a Jesuit, ever focusing on the principle of the Ignatian Magis, he gave his maximum to learn the rich cultural heritage of our country expressed through dance, theatre and music. For this, the Society of Jesus too provided him with ample exposure to understand the rich diversity of the art forms, cultural expressions and the spiritual wealth of India.

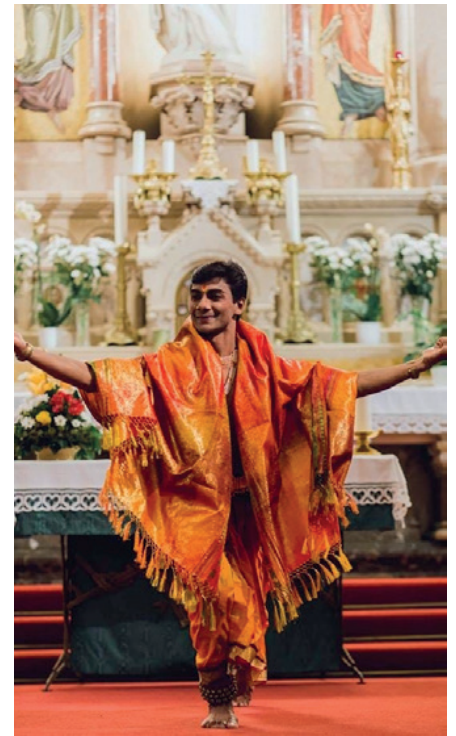


In preparation for the mission, he specialized himself in classical art forms such as, Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kuchupudi, Carnatic music as well as folk and tribal dance forms to understand inter-culturalism and the ethos of the country. After the formal trainings in the mentioned areas of specialization, he further equipped himself, during his philosophy and theology years, to be a performer, teacher, and composer cum choreographer and to bring out the intellectual dimensions of fine arts. He secured a Master's degree in Dance with a specialization in Bharatanatyam. Consequently, after his ordination, he delved deeper into the subject and completed his Doctorate in the Religio-Philosophical foundations of Indian Arts, and of the Dancing God: Siva-Nataraja. Soon after the completion of his Doctorate he was appointed as a Research Advisor in Dance at the Bharathidasan University, Thiruchchirapalli, Tamil Nadu.

Returning to the Province, he planned on opening a much thought out Institute of fine arts and culture. After consulting several experts in and outside the Society of Jesus, he named the institute 'Kalahrdaya' – the Universal Home of Art and Culture. 'Kalahrdaya' means the 'Heart of Art'. Finally, surmounting many challenges, he started the center at a rural area of South 24 Parganas District of West Bengal, a place called Bakeshwar near Nepalgunj. This was in line with the option for the poor of the Society of Jesus. The reasons, he mentioned for such a preferred choice as a frontier mission of the Province, were: the intermingling of people of varied faith and culture, the presence of the poor and the marginalized, to walk with them and also the youth and to empower and uplift them. He also mentioned that the aim of the institute is also to preach the gospel within the cultural context of the people and the promotion of the religious and cultural ethos through traditional art forms. This is achieved in a dualistic manner, by preaching the gospel through arts, as well as, by bringing back to the people their local art and culture, which at present is under threat. He and his troupe have taken Indian dance with Hindu and Christian elements to more than 30 countries in the world. Fr. Saju has been called a unique cultural ambassador of Indian art and spirituality.

For Fr. Saju, it has been more than a challenging journey, and Kalahrdaya is yet to achieve its desired purpose. Initially, Kalahrdaya had just three students. There were many problems created by the locals. The mission received acceptance after much perseverance. The trust and positive response of the people steadily grew by giving free tuitions and organizing many cultural programmes. Gradually, the number of students at Kalahrdaya increased and early this year there were a hundred and fifty students.

The courses offered here are - Classical dance, Vocal and Instrumental Classical Indian Music, Painting and Foundational English. The students are grouped into part-time learners and one year diploma students. The diploma course offered here is



PROSENJIT GOMES SJ





in Bharatanatyam; and vocal and instrumental music, painting; basic Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam languages are provided as allied subjects. Though affiliated to St. Xavier's College Kolkata, the course syllabus, staff and finances are completely managed by Kalahrdaya. In accordance to the Province's mission to serve and cater to the needs of the poorer sections of the society, Fr. Saju charts at present, a distant dream to set up a college of fine arts with graduate, post-graduate and doctorate level courses. Though it is a tough long journey to achieve this, the vision remains crystal clear, that is to form connoisseurs of arts, professional artists and teachers, especially those coming from humble and simple backgrounds, who would contribute to the cultural wealth of the country through the arts. "The art and culture are the heart and soul of our country. We need to revitalize them." He said with utmost passion. Moreover, for Fr. Saju, 'art for art's sake' theory does not make meaning; but the arts for him are for fine human formation and social development.

Furthermore, he mentioned the opportunities as well as the challenges of the mission. The opportunities include: providing the youth and children a forum to express themselves, helping them actualize their potentials, giving the serious students a formal training and empowering the weaker sections, and enriching the cultural heritage of the country. Some of the challenges include: lack of sponsors, no corporate support, limited finance, and need for infrastructural development. There are also unavoidable limitations, like lack of easy conveyance facilities, need for an expert team of staff, less motivation among parents for a holistic formation of their children. He hopes that more Jesuits in formation will seriously involve themselves in art and culture mission.

In the course of the interview, it also became clear that the Covid-19 pandemic and the super cyclone Amphan had hit the lives of the people badly. Kalahrdaya was closed since the lockdown times and poor students could not afford online facilities; moreover, the performing arts are quite difficult to learn online. But Kalahrdaya responded generously to the needs of the poor of the district. With the generous collaboration of friends and benefactors packaged dry food rations and clothes were supplied even to remote villages of the South and North 24 Parganas Districts, especially the Sundarbans area. Kalahrdaya also helped several of poor families to repair their houses damaged by the cyclone.



Though life is returning to a new normal in the post-lockdown times, Kalahrdaya tirelessly continues its mission to be at the service of the poor, not only by empowering the poor youth through training in the arts, but also by providing support to the needy families. As a closing note for the interview, Fr. Saju earnestly requested all the scholastics to take up the UAP' (Universal Apostolic Preferences) very seriously, and especially, to walk with the poor, the marginalized and youth.

Faith is confidence in what we hope for; the assurance that the Supreme Being is working, even though our senses fail to perceive. *"Blessed are those who have not seen, and have believed,"* (John 20:29). The word "Culture" is derived from the Latin word, *"Colere"*, which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation. It is a cumulative knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, religion, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.

On the 7th of January 2018, on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Pope Francis in his homily spoke about the transmission of faith. He reminded the faithful that transmitting the faith is a grace that comes from the Holy Spirit. It could only be done in any "dialect" or "language" used by our ancestors. The transmission of faith should begin at home where our language becomes a medium of opening to the faith. Later, faith is given shape, developed and moulded by the religious teachers with ideas and elucidation.

At heart people of all culture is religion and an awareness of the presence of a Supreme Being. For the transmission of faith, we need common ground. Like St. Paul when he preached in Athens, *"... I found also an altar with this inscription: to an unknown God,"* (Acts 17:22-31). It is not to find faults with other's religion and beliefs. Rather, it is to remove the misunderstandings and connect the missing links to the one that we believe.

Faith and culture are inextricably connected because a culture is always an expression of the faith. Distancing people from their culture weakens the essence of faith. Therefore, in the past few decades, we integrated our faith through inculturation. It involves the adaptation and acceptance of local cultures. This will not only make way for deep faith, but also help rediscover the cultural heritage.

There was a time when the Church rebuked converts from celebrating their traditional feasts. The consequence was alienation from their identity. The need of the hour is to touch and change people's hearts through different dynamics. Along with the word of God, our lives should proclaim the faith. Religion is not to bind us but to free us. In this context, the best transmission of faith could be to revive other indigenous festivals and help people return to their roots and assert their cultural freedom and identity.

To conclude, we can say that faith is the inborn grace of the Supreme Being who stirs our spirits leading us to the ultimate truth. That truth is first found in our cultures and traditions. Alienation from it leads to the decay of identity in life. Cultural traditions are like the very tree of life, which is inseparable from God who gives it life. Hence, the challenge of transmission of faith is tackled by addressing and adapting of religion to a culture's parameters.

# Transmission of Faith Through Culture

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KEDARNATH



PRAKASH M TOPPO SJ IS A  
SECOND YEAR PHILOSOPHER OF  
DNC, PUNE; HE BELONGS TO  
DELHI PROVINCE.

# SOLDIERS OF FAITH AND CULTURE



From our own happy home,  
From the culture we had always known,  
We joined the world of culture unknown.

We learnt to respect and to accept,  
We saw the beauty and the ubiquity,  
One we became with the culture once unknown.

Through our inculturation dialogue,  
Through the collections of our mission catalogue,  
We labour among all culture now as our own.

Magis is the constant spirit in our mission,  
We are the men, the Contemplatives in Action,  
All for God's Greater Glory, is what we carry on and on.

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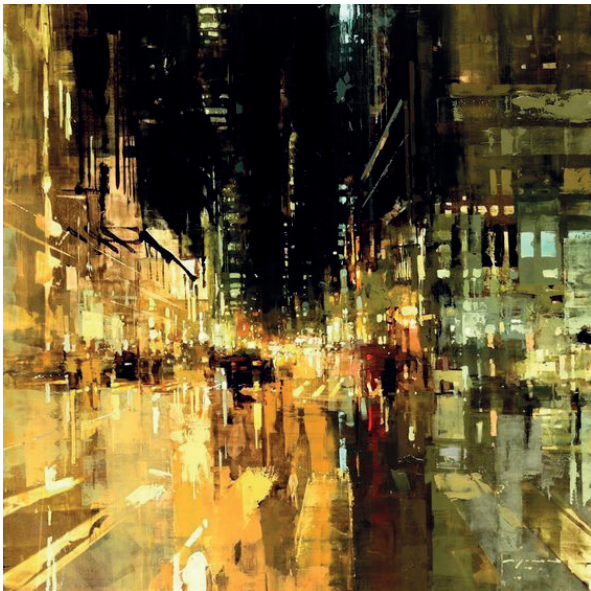
MANISH TIGGA SJ IS A SECOND YEAR PHILOSOPHER AT  
DNC, HE BELONGS TO THE CALCUTTA PROVINCE.





# DIALOGUE WITH MODERN CULTURE: CHANGE, SPEED AND COMMITMENT

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**Anthony da Silva SJ**



ANTHONY DA SILVA SJ, THE FORMER PROVINCIAL OF GOA JESUIT PROVINCE, IS CURRENTLY THE DIRECTOR OF XAVIER CENTRE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH, GOA.

## Introduction

Assuming “modern culture” to mean the prevalent culture as experienced in its multiple forms and expressions, in our times, I intend to highlight in this article the inner dynamics of modern culture in human society. These dynamics could then serve as an invitation to enter into a dialogue with self as well as with others belonging to the modern culture.

One of the striking characteristics of modern culture is its ability to speedily adapt to the signposts of the times, as for example, to the internet, the visual and performing arts, discoveries in physical and social sciences, technology, medicines, music, literature etc. Speedy adaptability also signifies speedy changes in the way we perceive as well as the way we respond to the changing world.

## Change, Speed, and Culture

From time immemorial, sages and philosophers have spoken of life as being in a “*continuous flux*”. Already Heraclitus the Greek philosopher of the 5th century B.C. said, “*All is flux, nothing stays still*”, or, “*No man steps in the same river twice*”. Our own Indian traditions speak of “*impermanence*” = *anicca* (in Buddhism), and *anitya* (in the Upanishads and the Rigveda). It is valuable to remember that the ancients came up with such concepts and explanations in their quest on how to avoid suffering and seek liberation within their cultures.

Our situation in the 21st century does not differ significantly. We too are questing for freedom, peace, liberation and happiness. Our modern cultures keep changing at a quicker pace but do not necessarily throw up satisfying solutions. The problems are perennial but the solutions ever elusive. The present Corona virus pandemic is a prime example of modern culture struggling to respond successfully to the rapidly mutating virus, labelled Covid-19. Constant mutations and changes by the virus make tracking and responding a nightmare for scientists.

Changes tend to bring about swift behavioural responses. For example, almost the entire world adapted overnight, to wearing face masks, social distancing and hand sanitation. People became amenable to foregoing many previously held cultural freedoms and privileges, such as travelling, socialising with family and friends, common worshipping in temples, mosques or churches, etc. In a flash, cultures were transformed the world over - the accomplishment of a single virus!

As Heraclitus and other philosophers have sharply observed, change is the only constant. Ultimately, it is the human response to changes that creates new cultures. Therefore, the challenge for humans is to learn to handle change and not fear it. Heraclitus's theory is not about resignation or fatalism to a culture of change, but about acceptance. It is about learning to live in harmony with change or as some say to be in "alignment". As the British philosopher John Sellars says poignantly, *"everything changes, the question is: do we change with it?"*

### **The dynamics of change and the dialogue with culture**

This very insightful question of John Sellars leads us to the second part of our reflection on dialoguing with modern cultures. How can we change harmoniously and productively within changing cultures?

Many social scientists in the present era tend to believe a new paradigm is emerging that will aid human society cope better with our ever changing cultures. Psychologist Joanna Barclay claims that *"we are moving from the information age, where knowledge-capital was our key concern, to the Age of Consciousness, where cultural-capital is driving transformation."* [1]

The age of consciousness is one of evolving awareness. We, the citizens of the world are becoming more aware of our responsibilities to the cosmos and the rest of creation, i.e. humans, animals or vegetation, the lands, seas, or waters. Global warming and climate change have become rallying cries across the world, where young and old are creating new cultures of awareness, empathy, and collaboration to protect our fragile habitat, the earth.

The corona virus, in spite of being the harbinger of death and destruction, has also challenged humans to reach out to one another in care and concern; the front-line workers in all areas of human services spare neither time nor their lives to give of their best. Diminished human activity has permitted the air, waters and vegetation to regenerate; humans have become more aware of the high levels of pollution that we so casually inflict on the environment.

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[1] Barclay Joanna, *Conscious Culture*, pg 175. New York: Morgan James Publishing, 2015.





## The Age of Consciousness where culture is the new capital

The age of consciousness is driven by a renewed stress on cultural values, such as, empathy, mindfulness about the self and the other, respect for diversity and a spirit of collaboration in safeguarding the earth. These basic human values enrich our cultural capital and create a platform for dialogue in the modern world. Furthermore, the age of consciousness sharpens our awareness of incessant and continuous change in modern culture. These ongoing changes become concretely visible in the shifts that occur in our belief systems, or values, some ancient and others more recent.

Now, the question before us is how does one initiate a dialogue with modern culture that is in a constant state of flux?

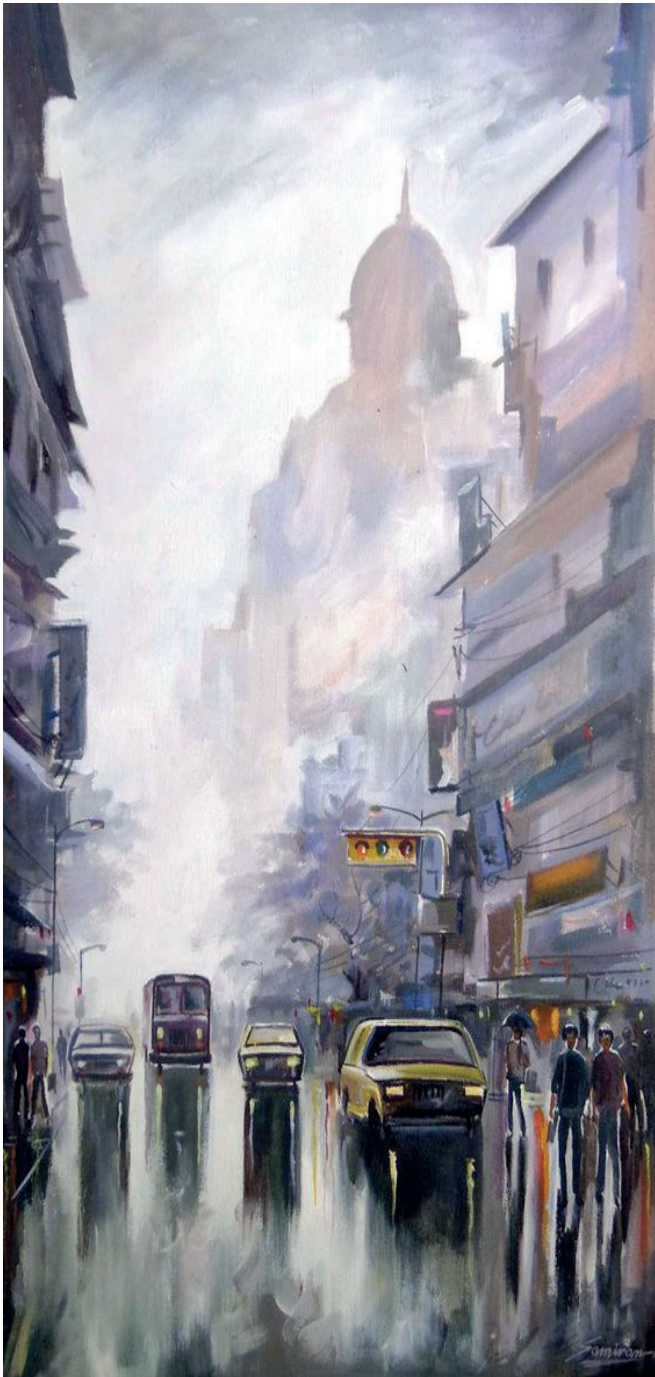
Present day neuro-psychologists and biologists speak in terms of raising or expanding our awareness, through a variety of mind-body practices. These practices, such as, mindfulness, meditation, yoga, physical exercise etc. facilitates a dialogue with one's self and one's values, as well as with the other. In the process, empathy is strengthened, and greater sensitivity to other cultures becomes a way of living.

Since human values are shared values they also have an in-built dynamic of connectivity and recognition between humans. Thus, belonging and responsibility to society becomes a natural by-product among collaborators. For example, now the Jesuits across India collaborate more enthusiastically with like-minded NGOs than was the case in the past.

Ultimately, the purpose of a dialogue with cultures is to evoke a common commitment for the betterment of society. Such a commitment flows out of an alignment of cultural values between diverse groups, sharing similar values. The national response to the recent unjust arrest and detention of Jesuit Father Stan Swamy is a great example of cultural solidarity for a human cause.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, dialogue and non-violent social encounters are the vehicles that safeguard, transport and transmit our cultural-capital to new generations. This is our challenge. What is my response?





CHENNAI

# DANCE: A CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE

Pravinkumar SJ



*A still from Sahradaya foundation's Don Quixote.*

When beautiful dancers dressed in a perfectly blending costume of the style of Bharatanatyam repertoire and bright Spanish patterns and textures danced to a delightful fusion of Spanish melodies in Indian traditional instruments, the experience was surreal. Such was the experience of witnessing “*Don Quixote*” – a performance by Sahrdaya Foundation. When Miguel de Cervantes penned ‘*Don Quixote*’ in the 17th century Spain, never would have he in his wildest dreams thought of such a telling of his story through Bharatanatyam. Nor would have the Bard of Avon thought that his heroine of *Anthony and Cleopatra* would one day be doing Kathakali – a project by Prabal Gupta. Such is the power of dance, and for that matter, any form of art!



PRAVINKUMAR FRANCIS IS A JESUIT BELONGING TO PUNE PROVINCE, SPECIALIZED IN CLASSICAL DANCE. HE IS CURRENTLY DOING 2ND YEAR PHILOSOPHY AT SATYANILAYAM, CHENNAI.

Art as a medium has always been transcending limitations posed by spoken human languages, geography, cultures or religions. It has been a common language of the world. The first ever imprints of human civilization were in fact art! In the last few decades Dance, in particular, has been explored more across styles and cultures to tell one's story to the other. There have been innumerable experimentations with fusing stories and dance styles from one region or culture with another to bring in novelty, exposure and better communication. In India, Classical dance forms have been telling stories out of the traditional chest of mythological and traditional treasures. Kalakshetra, a leading Arts and Culture Academy, for instance, has been producing traditional folk and indigenous dance pieces with the precision and finesse of Bharatanatyam since long. Social issues and modern literature too have found their way into this art form almost smoothly. A special mention goes to *IndianRaga*, a platform for young artists to learn and explore themselves.



*Parvathy Baul performing Baul*



They have been reinventing Indian classical music and dance with a touch of modern sounds and themes. Some among them are Maya Angelou's poetry, LGBTQ stories and beautiful Indian Classical versions of western melodies. And well known to us, Christian like *Dr. Barbosa, Fr. Saju George SJ* and a few others have been telling gospel stories through their classical dance forms.

Sadly these innovations have been restricted to the so called '*classical*' art forms. I say so because a selected few have labelled them as classical, which in itself demands a serious inquiry. This has left the rich cultural heritage of the folk and indigenous art forms in the dark. There is a need to bring these, too, into the foray of cross- cultural dialogue. Such ventures not only help communicate stories but cultures and minds of people as well. Such initiatives need to be encouraged in the world of art. One such delight was to see the Jesuit Scholastics move their legs in the *Sadri* fashion to the '*Shape of You*' in our annual drama last year! And soon enough the world would be reacting to *Karagattam*, *Lavani* and *Baul* on YouTube. Don't know what they are, do check them out!



Culture is a very broad term and can be defined in various ways. However, from my personal experience I would like to define culture as 'everything which influences a person's way of life'. Having been a part of the youth ministry during my philosophy studies and regency, I have seen how the youth of today struggle to find a balance between the traditional cultures that they are born into and the modern cultures that they find themselves living in. Although this struggle is applicable to all, it does have a pronounced impact on youth as they have the additional burden of making the transition from teenage life into adulthood.

It would not be fair to say that the youth of today are against traditional cultural practices. For many of them their traditional cultures give them a sense of identity. This sense of belongingness is very important during these years which involve tremendous physical and emotional changes. It gives them roots in an otherwise transient world. On the contrary, modern culture is what they experience in society outside their homes. This culture is an amalgamation of a variety of local and global cultures. Unfortunately, the value system of both these cultures being dissimilar, it creates confusion in the minds of youth.

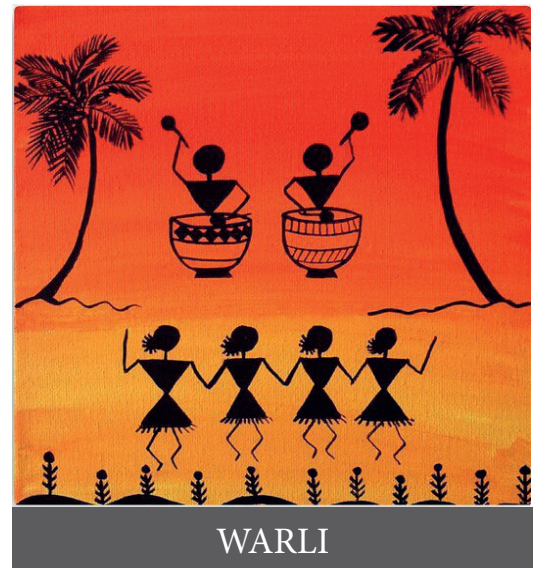
Traditional cultures lay stress on values like togetherness, unity, safety, respect for traditions etc. Modern cultures on the other hand lay stress on values like independence, diversity, risk taking and non-conformity. It is little surprise then that youth have a tough time trying to reconcile what the world tells them with what their family tells them. Many a times this 'culture gap' can lead to relationships being damaged beyond repair. Youth are forced to adapt and accept the modern culture to blend in with their peer group.

Is there a way out of this dilemma? Pope Francis in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation – *Christus Vivit* mentions how young people must approach their lives. He says, 'Roots are not anchors chaining us to past times and preventing us from facing the present and creating something new. Instead, they are a fixed point from which we can grow and meet new challenges' (200).

Personally, I feel that it eventually comes down to being true to one's self and being able to find the best of both the worlds. We have to stay rooted in our culture but not be tied down by it. At the same time we also need to embrace the good points in modern culture to ensure that we keep on expanding our horizons. Youth are full of potential, they must not be tied down by narrow traditionalism neither should they be distracted by the illusions promised by modern culture.

## CULTURE : A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

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SUMIT DSOUZA SJ IS A FIRST  
YEAR THEOLOGY STUDENT AT  
JDV, PUNE FROM BOMBAY JESUIT  
PROVINCE.

# SNEHASADAN

Peter D' cruz SJ

Snehasadan was built on January 19th, 1969, and Vidya Dham, the adjoining complex, was built in 1972. Snehasadan, a center for inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, was the fruit of the experience of 2 Jesuits, Frs. Lederle and Deleury, who began living in Sadashiv Peth some 11 years earlier, as they continued their studies as a means to get a deeper knowledge of Indian religion and culture. In 1965, Fr Lederle got a Ph. D. from Pune University for his thesis on “**The Philosophical Trends in Modern Maharashtra**”. Fr. Deleury did his Ph. D. on “**The Cult of Vithoba**”. They believed that cultures are complementary and meant to enrich each other. Hence, dialogue is imperative.

Snehasadan was originally a centre where Catholic Faith and practice interacted with Maharashtrian Religions and culture, becoming a bridge for cross-cultural exchange and understanding. It was also a centre for experimental liturgy in ‘the Indian Rite’. At that time, many Jesuits and others were also being trained for this apostolate. Fr. Lederle died in 1986 as Provincial of the Goa-Poona Province. Fr. Deleury had returned to France before that.

Over the years the apostolate at Snehasadan took many forms- the prayer hall was converted into a hall for small concerts and private parties, while the prayer hall was shifted to the Reception counter. Boys (sometimes, girls) were allowed to use the garden (sometimes, terrace too) for studies. A nominal fee was collected from such activities. Some directors also interacted with some organizations in the City, like the Gandhi Foundation and the Ramakrishna Mission.

I took charge of Snehasadan in July, 2019. Since then, I have been able to join the Sikh devotees of the Hollywood Gurudwar to celebrate the 550 birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. I also joined ‘the Lokayat’ for some of their protest programs, at Sambhaji Garden, J.M. Road. Lokayat is a secular group, committed to constitutional values and opposing the division of Society on the basis of religion and caste. They believe that all Indians should participate in all the feasts we celebrate in the country. For many years they have been celebrating Eid and distributing ‘sheerkurma’. Last year they celebrated Christmas by singing a few Carols on M.G. Road one evening. So S.I.S.R. decided to get involved with them in celebrating Christmas this year.



We approached Fr. Jeevandra Jadhav, the Manager, to allow his interested students to get involved in our Carol Singing program. Fr. Kenny was also approached to allow the Vincent’s scholastics to participate in this program. On the 17th Dec, we sang some Christmas Carols as a part of the Christmas Program of the St. Vincent Commerce College and organised similar programmes in different parts of the city. Fr. Peter also delivered a Christmas Message on the importance of our human dignity and brotherhood to us. It was an interesting experience of joy and fellowship.



On the 25th of January 2020 a Seminar was organized at the Neuner Hall, PG Block, JDV Campus, Ramwadi, Pune, from 9 am to 12.30 pm., on the topic “*The Role of Religion in Nation-building within the framework of the Indian Constitution*”, focusing on Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity. It was organized jointly by the Snehasadan Institute for the Study of Religion and the St. Vincent Commerce College, off Shankar Shet Rd., Pune. Most of the Speakers were authorities in their respective fields and the Seminar was very enriching.

PETER D' CRUZ SJ IS  
THE DIRECTOR OF  
SNEHASADAN.



We see three categories of Indigenous people in Jharkhand. Each is different from the other, and those differences often determine our approach. Mainline tribals like Oraon, Santal, Munda, Kharia are in large numbers. They are well in politics, education, lower government posts and benefiting from reservations. Minor tribes such as Birhor, Nagesia, Brijia, Asurs, Korwa are in smaller scattered groups. They are still primitive and often struggling for survival. Ganjhu, Bhuiyan, Turi etc. are 'Assimilated Tribes'. Because of closeness to landlords and caste communities, they have become Hinduised. They have been put on the SC schedules. These people are 'folk Hindu' rather than 'Brahmanical Hindu'. They tend to not be self-helping but relying on some landlords. It is to this group Hazaribag Jesuits began working for among others.

Fr. Tony Herbert SJ, in his article published in JIVAN of September, 2019 issue states that "Fr. Peter Doherty SJ in 1980s saw Hinduism was both a religion and a culture. So, he sensed that a disciple of Christ could remain in his or her Hindu culture. Then, he and his group began writing gospel stories to the local tunes, formed a singing mandali, and toured the villages in that area where they got a positive response. These soirees attracted many and became a regular feature in many villages."

The article further says that "Doherty took the cultural form of a 'satsang' which centred on a guru. He formed satsang community comprising disciples of the Sadguru, Jesus Christ. The Mass began to be celebrated in the form of a kirtan puja. He advocated the celebration of Hindu festivals. He performed house blessing, mundan (child's first tonsure) etc. as a pundit. He identified their dialect as Maghi, and with the help of his team wrote a book of the Maghi grammar. Translated the Gospel of Mathew, the Canon of the Mass into Maghi, and made a collection of bhajans known as 'Bhajanawali'. He spoke the Gospel through symbols and rituals that common people would understand. The local non-Christian people also relate to its symbols." Fr. Tony observes that the time of inculturation is over but the 'kirtan liturgy' continues.

In order to preserve and continue this legacy, Prerana Resource Centre (PRC), Hazaribag evolved in 1994. It also became a need after a decade's experience of the Dalit apostolate. Frs. Francis Kurien SJ and Tony Herbert SJ initiated it. The centre addressed the felt needs of having a focus place for the dispersed Jesuit community in this apostolate. It provided needed town hospitality for lay people and various supporting resources to those in the field. Such resources have been town backup for peoples' legal and medical needs. It has small but select library for deeper study of Dalits. It conducts innumerable training programmes, significantly the 'Jagriti Seminars' for lay people. PRC is also engaged in advocacy over environmental degradation and displacement in collaboration with others.



HAZARIBAG



## SATSANG MOVEMENT AND INCULTURATION AMONG DALITS IN HAZARIBAG

*Sch. Markus Murmu SJ  
The writer is a 2nd yr. Philosopher in JDV,  
Pune. He belongs to Hazaribag Jesuit  
Province.*



GUMLA

# AROUSE

Centre for Promotion of  
Tribal Culture

**GUMLA, JHARKHAND**

**Anuranjan Hassa Purty SJ**

British colonial administration in India labeled certain ethnic groups as “tribes” on the basis of their general impression about their physical and socio cultural isolation from the main stream of caste bound Indian society. The tribal India lives in the forest, hills and terrains and naturally isolated regions known as a rule by different names meaning either the people of the forest and hill or aboriginal inhabitants.

Jharkhand is one among the 29 states which came into existence on 15th November, 2000 after being bifurcated from the state of Bihar. Jharkhand is a significant state from the perspective of tribal people in India. There are 32 tribes inhabiting the state. Primitive tribes like Asur, Birajia, Hill Kharia dwell in the district of Gumla. At present Oraon, Munda, Khariya, Ho, Santal are some of the main tribes present in Gumla district.

AROUSE (Animation Rural Outreach Service) based in Gumla, Jharkhand. It is a social development center, basically working for the deprived, oppressed and unprivileged tribals to liberate them from poverty, hunger, exploitation and illiteracy. It strives to work for their social and economic development, preservation of heritage and culture. It is committed for the protection of rights and social justice through mobilization, awareness building, advocacy, sustainable income generation etc.

Tribals are commonly known as primitive, backward, less educated, forest dwellers, etc. However, from various research and study we find that they have a certain way of life, particular belief system. They live a communitarian life, worship God in nature, dance together, and have their governance system. In fact they have a rich culture. But today, the tribal culture is under threat. The reasons could be many such as influx of other religion and culture, migration, displacement, modern influence etc. As the matter of serious concern AROUSE has been very closely working to preserve and promote the tribal culture through various interventions and activities.





One of the pivotal projects of AROUSE is the PEACH Programme (Preservation and Extension of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage). This programme has shown a way of exchange of culture among different tribes and also for creation of interest in one's own culture. Lots of competitions in Adivasi dances and cultural programmes have been organized in various areas. AROUSE intends to create among the tribals awareness, interest, love and pride in their own tribal culture, customs, language and festivals. For this reason there are many tribal competitions held at different levels. Also a central tribal festival will be organized in Gumla.

Center for Promotion of Tribal Culture (CPTC) is one of the fundamental unit of AROUSE Society Gumla. Its main objective is to promote and preserve the tribal culture. AROUSE Tribal museum acts as a vital link with the ancestral past. It depicts the rich heritage of Jharkhand Tribal culture. People from different parts of the country and also from abroad come here to understand Tribal history. They appreciate this initiative to protect the rich heritage and identity of Tribal's in India.

Sericulture department situated in AROUSE Gumla, focuses to promote the local artisans with the resources available and give them the livelihood opportunities through silk production. A few villages and the farmers were identified to cultivate mulberry in their own villages. The purpose behind cultivating mulberry is to help the farmer to get extra income for their livelihood and make them self-reliant and self-sufficient. There are local artisans who are engaged in weaving silk saris, tribal shawl, gamcha etc. The final product prepared by artists are kept in AROUSE show room for sale. In the show room available items are Adivasi shawl, Printed Silk Saree, Gamcha, Stole, Bandi, Handkerchief, plain silk saree and clothes for children.



THE AUTHOR IS A JESUIT BELONGING TO RANCHI PROVINCE. HE IS THE DIRECTOR OF AROUSE, CENTRE FOR PROMOTION OF TRIBAL CULTURE.







## MADHYA PRADESH



# "KARAM RAJA" the Savior of Tribals



*Sch. Albester Kujur SJ*

*The writer is a 3rd yr. philosopher in JDV, Pune. He belongs to Madhya Pradesh Jesuit Province.*

Rohtasgarh is in Kurus, situated in Bihar, India. Where Kurukhs made a huge fort. They had their own king named Raja Harichandra. They were rich and spent more time peacefully and in good condition. It was the period between 500-400 B.C. and called Golden Period of Kurukhs in Rohtasgarh. It is a hilly place called series of Kaimur hill and situated at 1490 feet above from sea level and 45 KM far from Dehri On-Sone and 39 KM from Sasaram. It now occupies a part of the plateau about 4 miles east to west and 5 miles north to south, 28 miles in circumference. It is considered one of the largest and strongest hilly forts in India. This fort served as a safe shelter for treasures and families of Sher Shah Suri, Shah Jahan, Maan Singh, Mir Qasim. Records suggest that there are 84 passages to the hill with 14 main gate entries. However, 10 were closed by Sher Shah Suri.

In about 100 B.C., King of Cheros, descendants of Sung had been attacked at least three times, but they were defeated by the Kurukhs. Now Cheros are the tribal of India, found in Palamu and Chaibasa region, migrated from the sub-Himalayan tract and they bear the Dravadian physiognomy with light brown complexion. In 1538, it is said that Sher Shah Suri attacked the fort on Sarhul – the festival of the Kurukhs, when they were dead drunk. He chose this day, because he had known, Kurukhs were very strong and brave, he can't succeed in another day. Singi Dai, princes of Rohtasgarh, and her friends, Champa and Kaili, were the bravest women of the tribes. They have shown the soldier of Sher Shah, coming to the fort, at once; they used their mind in leadership of Singi Dai. All men were dead drunk by the Hadia (house made rice bear). Women dressed on men clothes, they tied up pheta in head, wore dhoti, trousers and langot, armed with weapons and went out to the battle field. Enemies were driven out from the fort three times.

A milkmaid from another village had been coming everyday to Rohtasgarh for selling milk. Afghan soldiers asked woman about the secret of brave tribals, then she explained to the soldiers, Kurukh soldiers are not men, but women. All Kurukh men are in dead alike, after drinking hadia. She told them to observe some actions of women for their confirmation, because women used to wash themselves after they defeated the enemies; she continued, if they will be taking water from both hands and washing their faces with both hands, then they are women and if they will be washing faces with their one hand, then they are men. Women were washing their faces into Son River after defeating enemies and they drove them out from the city. Afghan soldiers saw them from far away. They went again to the fort and attacked and captured the fort. Kurukhs were defeated and they were driven out forcefully from Rohtasgarh.

However, Afghan soldiers followed them in order to finish them but Kurukhs hid themselves into a cave. The cave was surrounded by the Karam tree and its leaf hid the cave from everywhere. Finally, Afghan soldiers could not find the cave as well as the Kurukh people. Though Kurukhs stayed there for some days and they were grateful to the Karam tree because it saved their lives and whole Kurukh tribe. Thus, they accepted the Karam tree as their King (Karam Raja) and they started worshipping the tree "KARAM". Then they began to celebrate the Karam feast every year and same feast is still celebrated in Chotanagpur and in various parts of India.



Institute of Fine Arts and Culture, Andhra Loyola College  
Vijayawada

Fine arts have the magical power to transpose and transform a human being from a mundane being into a transcendental being with a pure soul. Unfortunately, in the south Indian context, since many centuries, only a small privileged section of people had the monopoly over fine arts ensuring that it served their benefits, making it highly inaccessible to the others, especially the underprivileged sections. Any endeavour or effort made by these poor people to learn or acquire these fine arts, leave alone mastering them, were met with formidable and strong opposition and discouragement added with insults. This had led to the formation of the lacuna in the cultural realm of the otherwise, a culturally unique and rich Dravidian culture, resplendent with sixty four vibrant fine art forms.

Kaladarshini had emerged like an elixir from that turbulent state of fine arts, which are highly unassailable to the common man. The timely historical initiative taken by the Jesuits of Andhra Province was welcomed with a lot of apprehension by the Hindu world and with scepticism from the local church. But the fivefold vision envisaged by the founders of Kaladarshini, Fr. Joe Sebastian & Co came as a whip of fresh air to the culturally languishing and starving common people and the unique institute of fine arts was born on 31 July 1990.

The fivefold objectives are:

1. Cultural conscientisation
2. Cultivation of cultural tastes and traditions
3. Cultural formation at different levels



FR KOTI RAVINDRA  
SJ IS THE CURRENT  
DIRECTOR OF  
KALADARSINI.



4. Creative cultural production
5. Cultural research

Kaladarshini boasts of more than 30,000 students so far, who entered its portals with stars in their eyes and have left beaming with satisfaction and achievements in their choice of art forms.

Kaladarshini offers regular classes to the aspirants of all age groups in three modes namely part time, full time and summer courses in fourteen disciplines of fine arts. Classes are taken by experienced teachers who have served the institute for 28 years with dedication.

Kaladarshini organises annual cultural festival which lasts for five days for the students of Vijayawada city. Nearly 2000 students from 100 institutions participate in 10 fine arts and the awards are given by eminent jury.

Kaladarshini has a mobile troop which comprises many senior and junior dramatists and dancers who perform ballets and dances all over India with more than 1200 shows to its credit.

Kaladarshini collaborates regularly with the local cultural units and department of language and culture of the government. Many drama, dance, music festivals, symposiums and workshops by experts are being conducted on a regular basis. Annual art exhibitions too are a major attraction.

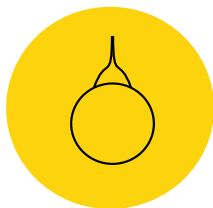
'New model art school', a concept school started in 2001, to reach the arts to the poorest of the poor and remote talented youth of Andhra and Telangana. The students are trained both in fine arts and academics simultaneously.

There is no doubt that today, Kaladarshini stands as a proud symbol of Indian arts and culture and ambassador of the same. It finds its delight and fulfilment in making art available to all without any discrimination. Today it renews its vision and goals, so as to be an instrument of service at the disposal of the society and the country and also as a cultural means to humanisation, with its manifold programmes.



#### **AWARDS**

Four Nandi Awards during the Nandi Natakostave 2000 for the play on the kingdom of God. Nandi award is the most prestigious award of the A. P. State Govt., for excellence in the field of art and culture.



#### **FOUNDER**

Joseph Sebastian SJ

Estd: 1990

Koti Ravindra SJ  
( Current Director)



#### **PROJECT**

New Model Art School

To reach the arts to the poorest of the poor and remote talented youth of Andhra and Telangana.



#### **ADDRESS**

Kala Darshini Institute of Fine Arts & Culture, ALC  
Vijayawada  
520008

Tel: 0866-2473250  
Web: [www.andhrajesuitprovince.org/kaladarshini-vijayawada/](http://www.andhrajesuitprovince.org/kaladarshini-vijayawada/)





## KURISHUMALA ASHRAM : AN INCULTURATED INDIAN MONASTERY



SAVVY GEORGE SJ IS A SECOND YEAR PHILOSOPHER AT DNC. HE BELONGS TO KERALA JESUIT PROVINCE.

The Monastic life is something common to the great religious traditions of the world. In India, it originated centuries before Christianity, prompting the noted theologian Raymundo Panikkar to term it as the 'primordial religious dimension.' What follows is just an overview of how the monastic life is inculturated and how it finds expression at the heart of the Sahya Mountains, The Kurishumala Ashram in Kerala.

Kurishumala community closely resembles a Hindu ashram. The monks wear the khavi, go barefoot or wear simple sandals which would be left at the door before entering the monastery, and sit on the floor while eating. All the guests are invited to Satsangh, a meeting of the community in the evening, and to share in the community meals. The buildings are simple. Kurishumala is a fine example of inculturation on numerous levels. The style of monastic life is the fruit of the meeting of the Christian monastic tradition, of Cistercian age, with the practices and soul of the traditional monasticism of India. The liturgical life is also the fruit of the meeting of a Benedictine-oriented experience of prayer with the great liturgical tradition of the Syrian Church as well as with the most contemplative strata of Hindu mysticism.

The founder of Kurishumala Ashram had taken a conscious effort to have an Indian flavour in all their activities and objectives. The adaptation of Syrian liturgy for the daily prayer is one among them. The Syro-Malankara Qurbana celebrated on Sundays and feast days, the Bharatiya Pooja on weekdays, the hymns sung at the regular prayer services, the bhajans and keertans sung at the Satsang, the icons on the southern wall of the church, the brass lamps in front of the tabernacle, the colourful copes used during Qurbana, the vegetarian diet and sparse furnishings are all concrete manifestations of this 'marriage' between the Syrian and Indian traditions effected at Kurishumala. In the Bharatiya Puja, celebrated seated on the ground, the first part makes abundant use of the Indian religious symbols of fire, flowers, and incense. Indeed, because of the cosmic dimension of Hinduism, Hindu worship makes generous use of offering to God the beautiful and good things of creation. Flowers, incense, and light are the traditional signs of the offering of self and of the union of the one praying with God in love.

Inculturation is not merely a social phenomenon; it is a spiritual and theological reality. It takes place when a culture or a cultural tradition is put in contact with the Gospel or with a way of living the Gospel. The monastic community of Kurishumala in Kerala stands out and has shown to adapt to local customs, both those coming from Hinduism and those coming from the Syro-Malankara Christian tradition.



Classical Culture is closeness to God, closeness to Human  
Closeness to Nature,  
Classic is the cultured life with a  
Cultivating art,  
Dance tells us  
Devotion at a deeper level,  
Architecture articulates the  
Amazing science of culture,  
Songs sewed together in  
Soothing music with sounding life lessons,  
Dramas are developed to depict the  
Dazzling feelings of human,  
Palm leaves flash the flourishing life  
Inscriptions illuminate the integrity of life  
Couplets communicate the contingency of life  
Legends leave us the legacy of life  
So, it is the culture that protects Nature  
And  
Gives birth to pollution free future.

- Anthony Praveen Kumar SJ

# Classical Culture

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PRAVEEN KUMAR SJ IS A SECOND YEAR  
PHILOSOPHER AT DNC PUNE, HE  
BELONGS TO MADURAI PROVINCE.



**W**e as rational beings need to take time out and think seriously about our present culture. With the above title given I do not mean that we should not use machines rather I say that we need human culture and not machine culture. We are slowly losing our identity as humans and living as robots without any emotions and care for our fellow beings.

Tolerance, inter-cultural dialogue and respect for diversity are more essential than ever in a world where people are becoming more and more closely interconnected. The world and the people who work and live in it have become ever more connected as the internet becomes more accessible. Yet despite the ability to connect and learn about happenings on the other side of the globe, many communities have become more polarized and entrenched in a particular worldview. The world is more interconnected but it does not mean that individuals and societies really live together – as revealing the exclusions suffered by millions of poor, women, youth, migrants and minorities. Today there is more information, technology and knowledge available than ever before, but adequate wisdom is still needed to prevent conflicts, eradicate poverty and live in harmony in a safe world.

St Ignatius, the founder of Jesuits, always liked to live together as a community, having various cultures, backgrounds and languages. Therefore, peace and harmony should never be taken for granted. It is an on-going process, a long-term goal which requires constant engineering, vigilance and active participation by all individuals. It is a choice to be made in each situation, an everyday life decision to engage in sincere dialogue with other individuals and communities, whether they live a block or a click away.

In our increasingly diverse societies, we need to bring about peace and harmony in order to live together as a family and ensure harmonious interaction as we are unique and it need to be respected, tolerated and loved. As a religious, I have seen people living together as one in villages and slums. They do not care about their religion, colour nor status. Most of their problems would be solved among themselves by joining hands together. We, who live in cities need to learn a lot from them. Where are we heading?

When we see a person losing one's life, instead of helping we are busy taking selfies or videos. Where is the respect for human life? What has happened to the family culture?

I feel we need to go back to our ancient traditions, where people loved and respected each other, shared what they had with the one who had little. We need to spend time with people we love by interacting with them, listening to their joys and sorrows. Thus, we strengthen our bond and live as real humans.

Can we seriously think and do something regarding this, or else our next generation would lead their lives like robots (live with no emotions and feelings, work without thinking).

Finally, *"We need to use gadgets and love people and not love gadgets and use people!"*

# No to Machine Culture

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BENGALURU



ARUN LOBO SJ IS A FIRST YEAR PHILOSOPHER AT DNC. HE BELONGS TO KARNATAKA JESUIT PROVINCE.



# CULTURE AND DIALOGUE

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KIRAN JOSEPH SJ IS A  
FIRST YEAR PHILOSOPHY  
STUDENT AT DNC, PUNE.  
HE BELONGS TO CHENNAI  
PROVINCE.

## Culture

Culture means the way in which a group of people live, think, feel, organize themselves, celebrate and share their life. In every culture there is an underlying system of values, meanings and views of the world, which are expressed, visibly in gestures, symbols, rituals and styles. We are living in a pluralist world. Groups of people are divided in terms of religion, ethnicity, caste, language, economic status, etc. Such divisions exist everywhere in the world and sources of tensions, conflicts and violence too.

We have five characteristics on culture. They are learned, shared, based on symbols, integrated, and dynamic. Culture is learned. First, we learn from each other. There is no mistake but we have only lessons and experiences. We learn culture from families, peers, institutions, and media. Culture is shared. Here, people grow in hospitality. It is the nature of all. People like to show their love through food and they begin to share their love and worries. The relationship grows because of sharing. Culture is based on symbols. The meaning of symbol is language. People have their own language. It is a mode of communication. They are passionate towards it. People are attached to this social bond. They use sacred thread, cross and chains. Culture is integrated. People are from different back grounds but all aspects of a culture are related to one another and to truly understand a culture in humanity is to welcome everyone into the umbrella of love. Culture is dynamic. People find unity in diversity. It is the main success of culture. Hindus attend functions of Christians like Muslims too.

## Dialogue

Dialogue is an essential part of our life. We the humane Society always associate with one another. Aristotle calls it human beings are social beings. We cannot avoid people. We need others help. Others need our help. If we have genuine communication, all problems can be solved then dialogue becomes fruitful.

The best example for dialogue is that a child speaks to his parents. The worst example is that early days so called high caste people Brahmins did not allow Sudras to under vedas. They stopped them having dialogue with God. Everybody has got a right to speak and to enjoy freedom, equality and justice. Religious ideas are part of our culture and dialogue. Caste system was found in Hinduism and racism was found in Christianity. I am sure that no God wants to have these kinds of social discrimination against humanity. God was born in the form of human. Second Vatican Council has exhorted all to have dialogue with others. Here, there are four-fold dialogues namely. The dialogue of life, dialogue of action, dialogue of religious experience and dialogue of transformation of one's own life. Every dialogue calls us to be generous to relate with all. We cannot find generosity in any cities because it stays in our hearts. Words comes out from our mouth. Emotions come out from our hearts in the form of love. Love does not only go with the emotion but it is a character. Unknown people love us. Their love in action cannot be compensated. It flows from their hearts. Relationship values love. Only, we the human can feel and share this bond of love with one another so let our culture and dialogue get rooted in love.

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# INTERVIEW

## WITH FR. JOB



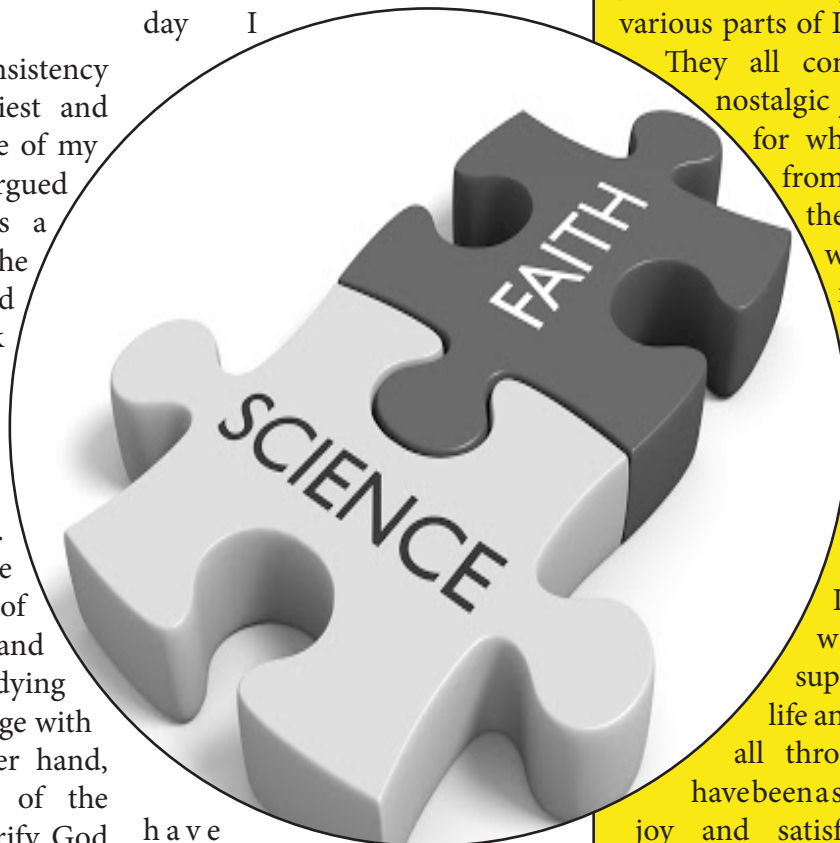
PREPARED BY DASAN BERNARD SJ, SECOND YEAR THEOLOGY STUDENT FROM ANDHRA.

### **1. How is your life journey as a scientist fit in with your being religious?**

I find no tension or inconsistency in being a religious priest and a scientist. In fact, in one of my published papers I have argued that a Jesuit-scientist is a priest in its fuller sense. The argument is simple, based on the age-old Two Book belief. According to the Two Book belief, God has given us two books – The Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature. Ordinary priests are ministers of the Book of Scripture, and give glory and honour to God by studying and sharing that knowledge with the people. On the other hand, scientists are ministers of the Book of Nature, and glorify God by revealing the marvelous power God has invested in our universe. Johannes Kepler, the Father of modern astronomy, used to call himself a “priest of the Almighty.” A Jesuit priest is a priest in the fuller sense because he is both a minister of the Book of Scripture and of the Book of Nature.

### **2. How do you feel about the long magnanimous contribution to JDV and to the lives of many thousands of students?**

Officially I began my mission in JDV in 1975 as a Regent teaching “Cosmology and Philosophy of Science.” From that time to this day I



have been teaching in JDV as a regular teacher, although there were occasional interruptions when I had to be in the US for my doctoral studies. Even from there when time permitted, I used to come to teach my course. Now it is 10 years since I retired officially; but I have not yet stopped teaching full load at JDV. Although when I stepped into the portals of DNC and JDV in June 1972, I never thought I would spend the most important part of my life there, I consider it a privilege and joy to have been closely associated with JDV and

DNC. The students have been most cooperative and supportive all through my long career in JDV. Occasionally I meet them in various parts of India and abroad.

They all come to me with nostalgic joy and gratitude for what they received from JDV. Most of them are doing very well in whatever mission they are engaged in. Many of them come for the science-religion programs I conduct in various parts of India, and extend wholehearted support. Indeed, my life and mission in JDV all through these years have been a source of immense joy and satisfaction for me.

### **3. What are some of the major issues we encounter from the platform of science religion dialogue and how can we respond to them? What sort of conclusion do you arrive at after such serious dialogue between them?**

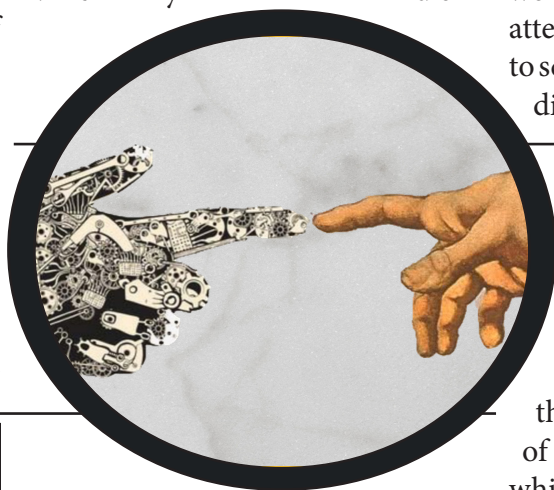
In my view, of all the world-religions Catholicism is best equipped to have a creative and productive dialogue with modern science. But, unfortunately,

there is a scarcity of leaders and scholars with competence and commitment. Right from the inception of the Jesuit Order, the Jesuit scholars have been engaged in this unique and most important mission. The Collegio Romano under the leadership of Christopher Clavius took the lead in the early period of our Society. Jesuit missionaries in China and India also were at the forefront of this apostolate. However, in recent times it seems to me there is a slackening of interest in this field. Perhaps after the 32nd GC a little too much importance is given to the social apostolate, in some ways at the expense of this form of intellectual apostolate. I hope and pray that before long Father

General and his team will take this matter up and do the needful.

Coming to the major issues science-Catholicism has been encountering, the most serious issue is the changeover from the pre-scientific mind-set to the scientific mind-set. Catholic teaching and theology are still v e r y m u c h

spirituality. In our times it is hard to find such persons opting for the priesthood or religious life. A third challenge is that in our seminaries throughout the world very little attention is given to science-religion dialogue. In



fact, in most seminaries very little attention is given to impart some knowledge of science to the seminarians. To my knowledge, JDV is the only major institution of priestly formation in which quite a bit of emphasis is given towards familiarizing the students with scientific thinking and developments.

Pope Francis and other leaders of the Church are showing signs of being open to a dynamic worldview. My hope and prayer is that slowly the Church will begin to feel at home with the dynamic worldview, and then a healthier and more fruitful dialogue between Catholicism and modern science will become possible.

After being seriously and sincerely engaged in science-Catholicism dialogue for almost half a century, I can confidently say that Catholicism and modern science can have a healthy and productive partnership in building up a better world and a better humanity. However, much more preparatory work will have to be done to make this happen.

.....to be continued



Dasan Bernard SJ

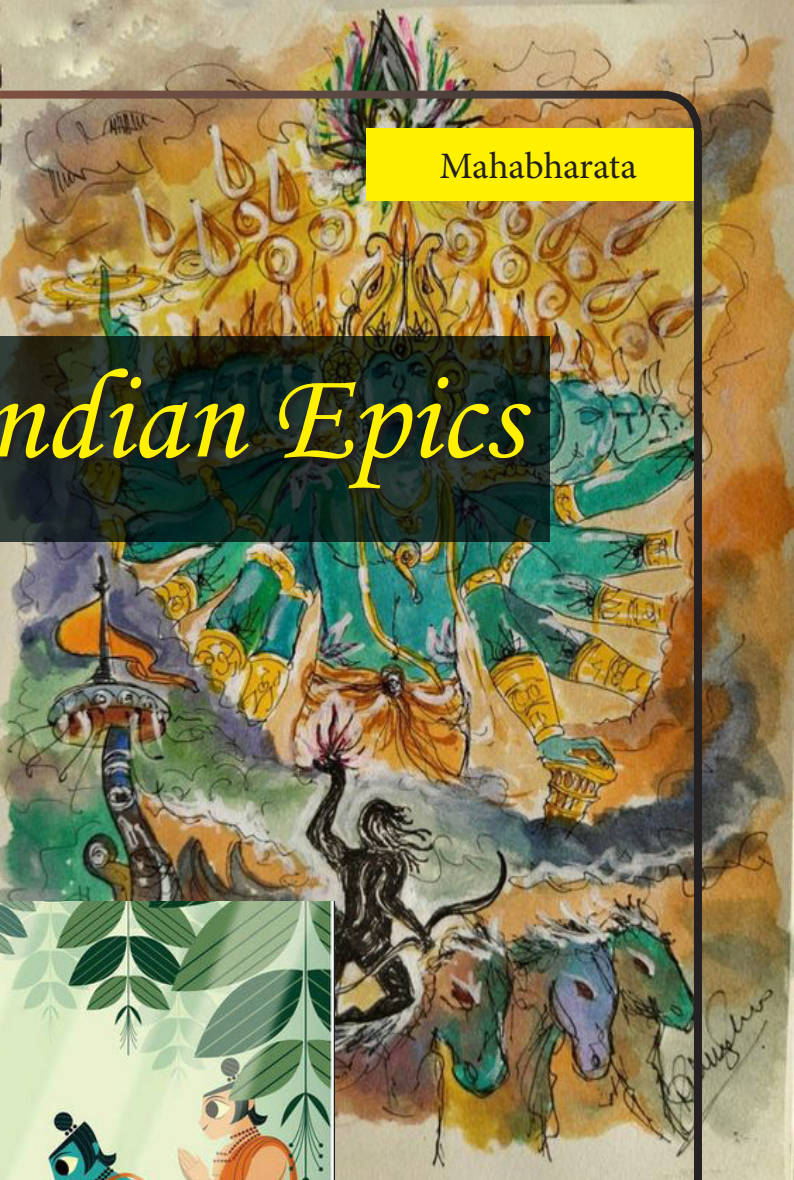
imprisoned in the medieval Aristotelian-Thomistic system, which presupposes a static worldview that is resistant to serious change. On the other hand, the scientific worldview is very much dynamic and open. This hesitation to make the switchover from the static to a dynamic worldview I consider the biggest challenge. Vatican II did make a valiant effort to do this. However, it seems to me that not much effort was made to imbibe and implement the spirit and substance of Vatican II in this regard. It may be noted that Teilhard de Chardin is not yet rehabilitated into the Catholic mainstream, although occasionally we hear that some efforts are being made along this line. Another problem is that not many talented persons are opting for the priesthood or religious life these days. Creative science-religion interfacing needs persons like Teilhard who are good scientists and creative thinkers with a deep



Cilappatikaram

Mahabharata

# The Great Indian Epics



NEXT



Ramayana

ISSUE

How do the great Indian Epics shape the life, politics, culture and economics of our nation?

What inspiration can we draw from these great literary works?

What are some of the major themes of pertinent importance?

How do we need to re-read some of the characters such as Hanuman, Ravana, Ekalavya, Karna, Kumbhakarna in the light of modern India?

If you are interested to contribute, please  
contact:

[dnctimes@gmail.com](mailto:dnctimes@gmail.com)/[rosansj@gmail.com](mailto:rosansj@gmail.com)

## Competitions:

1. **Short Story** : Based on any themes or characters from Ramayana, Mahabharata, or Cilappatikaram, in less than 600 words.
2. **Painting(color)**: Digital sketching is not allowed. Theme: The Great Indian Epics and Modern India.

**Last Date: January 15, 2021**

Participation: Any Jesuit Scholastic from India or any student of DNC can participate.

*Attractive Cash Prizes Await!*

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



*We wish you all ...*



*Merry Christmas &  
A Happy New Year*

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