

 **Express, Educate, Empower** 

DNCTIMES

Issue 4, December 2019



Jesuit

Priesthood

Ministries

Children Day (CCA)



Hockey Tournament (CCA)



Annual Celebration (CONFER)





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There was a time when priests were the central figures in the lives of people in a parish, even to the point of reading a letter and formulating a reply to it. But today, things have improved so much so that we are speaking more in terms of lay collaboration, where we priests and religious have a lot to learn from lay people. Therefore, as GC 34 Decree 6 says, “Dynamic movements in Church and Society suggest that we undertake a specific consideration of the priestly dimension of Jesuit life more complete look than the last three Congregations were able to offer.” However, if this was thought over nearly 25 years ago in 1995, as men who would act by discerning the signs of the times, should more vigilantly reach out to the need of the hour and update according to the context.

Pope Paul VI, when he addressed the GC 32 Congregation, declared ministerial priesthood as an “essential character” of the Society. Quoting once again from GC 34, it says that “Jesuit Priesthood is a gift from God for Universal Mission.” It was against these backgrounds; we need to have attempted to reflect on Jesuit Priesthood in this issue.

Many of the articles in DNC TIMES call us towards a renewed and Christ-centered priesthood. They remind us that priesthood is not a profession rather it is a call to service. Thanks to **Fr Ted Bowling**, for he overflows with memories and profound experiences of the exercise of the priesthood that are very inspiring and motivating for the young generations, as he is one of the senior-most priests in the Society, having a sound all-round knowledge and lives an exemplary life of service with no strings attached. **Fr. Francis Gonsalves**, with his experience of spear heading the Congregation for priestly formation, where he categorically states that it is useless to be a priest unless we live a Christo-centric life as priests. I am indebted to **Fr. Michael Amaladoss**, who was in the core committee which formulated the decree on Jesuit Priesthood, for sharing with us his reflections on Jesuit Priesthood Today. **Sch. Savy**, in his write-up shares the core characteristics that had drawn him to become a Jesuit. **Sch. Rojas** is very forthright in culling out the challenges faced in Jesuit formation and calls us to take up the challenge of transformation which would have a constructive impact on our Formation Structure. There are a few more articles along with a Christmas message from **Sch. Praveen**. All of them would certainly, lead us into a deeper reflection on the theme.

As we are heading towards drawing the curtain on 2019 and ready to raise the curtain on 2020, I would like to thank all the members of the Editorial Board-2019 for their unique and insightful contribution in bringing out different issues of DNC TIMES. I too would like to express my heartfelt thanks to **Fr. Eric, SJ (JAM)** and **Fr Sathya**, the Animator, for their constant support and guidance. It gives me immense pleasure to welcome the new team under the leadership of **Sch. Rosan Roy, SJ** and his team. Please do continue to write to us with your comments and suggestions on dncetimes@gmail.com.

Wishing you all ‘A Merry Christmas and A Prosperous New Year 2020’.

Sch. Amalan SJ (MDU)



Jesuit Priesthood Today

When Ignatius was converted, he wanted to serve God as Sts. Francis and Dominic had done. But he did not join the Franciscans or Dominicans. He was waiting to discern God's call to himself. His first desire was to go to Jerusalem and preach the Word of God there as Jesus did. But he was not allowed to stay there. He turns back, hoping that the situation would improve. When he comes back to Spain, he realizes that to preach the Gospel effectively, he will have to study Theology. So he goes to Paris. As he gathers a group of companions, he discovers that it would be better to become a priest in order to proclaim the Word authoritatively. When finally the companions discover that they could not go to Jerusalem, they decide to offer themselves to the Pope, ready for universal service, wherever there is need and wherever the Pope sends them. So they become freelancers, ready to go anywhere and do anything. The Society itself did not have any fixed apostolates and is not tied to a particular place like a diocese. Its missionaries went to Asia, Latin America and Africa. But its theologians also went to the Council of Trent. Peter Canisius went around dialoguing with Protestants in Europe, particularly Germany. There was, however, one constant: wherever they were, they stayed with the poor and the sick and served them. Pope Paul VI summarises their service:

Wherever in the Church, in the most difficult and extreme fields, in the crossroads of ideologies, in the frontline of social conflict, there has been and there is confrontation between the deepest desires of the human person and the perennial messages of the Gospel, there have been and there are, Jesuits.

They were missionaries, school masters, Theologians, servants of the poor, spiritual guides, retreat preachers. There were also some Bishops in mission countries.

What inspired them were the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, on the one hand, and the context of their life and work, on the other. They followed the call of Christ to work for the Kingdom of God. They followed his way of poverty, self-denial and humility. They sought and found God present and working in all things in the universe and they collaborated with God. They discovered that the way of God is the way of love, expressed in a total self-gift. The Eucharist was for them the concrete celebration of this exchange of love. Such a sharing of love helped them to

build community. The challenges to this sharing of love kept changing with time and place.

After the Second World War, there was a time of phenomenal economic growth and unchallenged political power in the Euro-American West. A certain self-confidence led to the phenomenon of secularization and atheism. The Pope called upon the Jesuits to counter this atheistic trend in the world. At the same time, the rest of the world was being economically exploited and people were becoming poorer. The gap between the rich and the poor was increasing, both globally and locally. So the Jesuits felt called to serve faith and promote justice in the world. Some years later, they felt that in order to promote faith and justice, they have to dialogue with the many poor, the rich cultures and the living religions.



It is important to see that this three-fold dialogue should also be the focus of our priestly ministry today. The need for this dialogue is only becoming more urgent. Periodic surveys tell us that people are becoming less religious and more agnostic, if not atheists. An increasing number of people claim that they are spiritual, not religious. Those who are still practicing some religion seem to be

decreasing. Even in the so-called Christian countries, people are leaving the Church in large numbers. This seems to be a global phenomenon and it certainly challenges our priestly ministry. The Pope's call to Jesuits to 'dialogue' with atheists seems to be becoming more urgent. Today, as priests, we cannot be satisfied with some sacramental ministry for the few believers. Our call to mission, to proclaim and to realise the Kingdom of God as companions of Jesus in today's world, is more challenging. Our traditional ministries like preaching retreats or running educational institutions or serving the poor may not be sufficient. We have to dialogue with the secular culture of today. We cannot even call it atheist, because belief in God does not seem to be an issue today. And the people who still seek to believe seem to take refuge in emotion-centred charismatic movements. In this situation, we are not called to be better parish priests and serve the people who still want to believe. We have to reach out to the non-believers. We have to address the socio-political and cultural context that promotes such non-belief. The growing decrease in vocations imposes a greater responsibility on those who remain. We also have to rethink the ways in which we form our priests today for their ministries. It would not be untrue to say that the Jesuit priesthood today is in a crisis!

Fr. Michael Amaladoss, S.J. (MDU)



Challenges in Jesuit Formation

I am living my sixth year in the Society of Jesus. These are some of my observations.

Caution: it is all about challenges!

Convictions: Most of the disciples of Jesus were poor and illiterate; yet they were able to transform the world even by challenging the Roman Empire. Ignatius of Loyola and a handful of his companions were able to shake Medieval Europe. Gandhi, Mao Tse-tung, Lenin and so on, were able to lead successful revolutions. Their followers were ready to sacrifice their very lives and everything they had for a noble cause. Though unfortunate it is, there are still many young people who join terrorist organizations with a readiness to sacrifice their lives. Why is this not happening in the Society of Jesus? Our Vows are powerful enough to free ourselves from the worldly responsibilities so that we can commit ourselves to our mission. Yet many Jesuits become lethargic and cold over time.

One of the most important qualities required to take up challenges, to live life in its fullness, is to have strong convictions and the firm desire to live by those convictions. Many young Jesuits do not have any answer

to the question: “Who is Jesus?” The quality of one’s Jesuit life depends on one’s answer to this question. This question is more important than ‘who Jesus is to me’ in the affective level, which is given importance in the early stages of formation and which may become ‘irrational’ for thinking minds, over time. Many live as Jesuits without knowing why they have joined the Society in the first place or what they really want to do with their lives. Our Formation Structure does not have the facility to openly and critically discuss questions. In the different formation stages, we try to blindly follow the traditional faith. Later in one’s life, as one faces real threats and challenges, one might find this kind of faith too irrational, undependable or even utter nonsense. We rarely discuss faith critically. The questioning minds should be encouraged. I think the Maieutic method of Socrates is still useful in our Formation so that young minds may be cleared of misconceptions and may proceed with greater clarity.

Cura Personalis: It is an important term in Jesuit Formation and in Jesuit life. However, today’s formation is mostly focused on the crowd and not on the individuals. Many Superiors and Formators come to conclusions about the “formees” based on their casual observations and



hastily prepared feedback. A person is much more than his outward appearance. The Society of Jesus is our home and family. And the family will grow only if the elders show genuine interest in the integral growth of the youngsters. Many Jesuit Scholastics live with the seeds of division, unhealthy politics, power hunger and other aberrations in their hearts. Many are lonely, bruised and emotionally weak. In many cases, Scholastics are afraid to open up and reveal what is in their heart. How many elderly Jesuits are there who can really guide the youngsters? Scholastics require personal accompaniment, support and motivation.

Vision: Our Formation structure is at least several decades old. The challenges and opportunities of the past and the present are entirely different. The future that we are about to face will be presenting before us tremendous changes and challenges. Has not our formation structure become an obsolete structure? Can it really help us to face the challenges of the present and the near future? Many of our Formators cherish their past and talk highly of their days of Formation. They believe whatever was successful in their past will be effective in the future also. The kind of transformation that the world has gone through after the advent of technological revolution is unimaginable. We need a clearer vision for the future considering all the possibilities. It is really unfortunate that, after long years of formation, after a Jesuit's Ordination, Province Consultors gather and discuss what that person is good for and where he can be placed. This happens when in the outside world many people start their unique career at the age of 20. A Jesuit in his mid-30s, after years of Formation, is not knowing what to do with his life!! How saddening is that! A person's talents, skills and aspirations will become quite clear to the Formators by the time he finishes the novitiate. He should be carefully groomed and prepared for a specific mission, a mission where he can do really well from then onwards. Today is the age of specializations. Unfortunately, this is not a world where a "Jack of all trades " can do well. We need Jesuits who are specialists.

Magis: Magis is the most widely used and popular Jesuit jargon. A lot of emphasis is given to it in the early stages. If truth needs to be told, the present-day Jesuit Magis

is at par only with the mediocrity of the outside world. We give a lot of importance to festivals, gatherings and sumptuous meals, but we forget certain elements which are more important. Jesuits must give utmost importance for intellectual formation. Our philosophical and theological formation is urgently in need of a systemic change. The present-day system is sluggish and is doing injustice to the formees. There was a time when Jesuits were the best educators, explorers and intellectuals. Today we are simply being dwarfed by the outside world.

If 16,000 men, who have taken the Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience cannot transform the world and make some creative and constructive impact on it, then there is something seriously and radically wrong with them!

Sch. Rojas Thomas SJ (KER)

The writer is doing third year philosophy at JDV, Pune.



MAGIS

to give and not to count the cost



Priesthood: A Call to Service



The desire to become a priest occurred to me during my school days and I give the credit of sowing this seed of my vocation to my parents and to the priests and religious whose lives have been inspirational in nurturing that seed. It's not something unique with regard to my vocation but I guess it's the same experience of many who are called to the priesthood. Down the centuries, people have experienced the care of God through the inspiring lives of priests and the Church is blessed with such men to continue its mission. I feel greatly blessed to have been in the company of such men who have left a rich legacy in whom the Holy Mother Church has always kept its hope when it faced challenges and difficulties.

As a Jesuit who is called to share in the life and mission of Christ, this world becomes for me the place of mission. It's a call to be in the world but at the same time not of the world. It's an invitation to minister effectively to both the rich and the poor, at the same time keeping the focus of the preferential option of serving the poor. In this regard, the models for us Jesuits are the first companions of St. Ignatius who envisaged a universal, itinerant ministry of evangelization, teaching and doing works of charity, living a poor life. They wanted to be like Christ in giving freely of themselves to anyone in need. This defines our call to be a Jesuit which is to serve others and not to count the cost. It's a call to be men for others with total availability and generosity, pushing ourselves beyond our comfort levels to serve people in the frontier missions. We are called to excel in whatever we do. In order to be effective in one's mission, we need to be always seeking the will of God through prayer and to see what God has already done in the lives of individuals and to discern how God will continue his work. This would give us an insight

to direct our focus in order to channelize our time and energy.

Looking back with a grateful heart, what I cherish most about my Jesuit formation is the trust and freedom with regard to personal responsibility. This has helped me to deepen my intimacy with the Lord and to develop my God-given talents and to make the right choices. This journey has not been easy; at the same time not tough either, as there have always been good Jesuit friends, both fathers and brothers on whom I could rely in moments of difficulty and struggle.

As I take a step closer to the priesthood, I sense that I am unworthy, yet called to be a companion of Christ to share his vision and mission. In continuing his mission as a priest, I will be getting involved in the lives of people, and so I need to be a credible witness of what I preach by living it. The grace which will be conferred upon me by this Sacrament also reminds me that I am anointed for a purpose, and this gift of grace which I will receive is not for my own glorification but to bring hope into the lives of people. Breaking the Word of God in a manner that is liberating and freeing the people from guilt of sin, and reconciling people to God's love and mercy by administering the Sacraments is a unique privilege of those who are ordained. Indeed, I feel greatly blessed to be receiving this grace in the near future. This is going to be my path to holiness as a priest; through my exemplary life, to become a people-centred pastor and thus give witness to God's love and mercy.

Sch. Joseph Victor (KHM)

The writer is doing third year theology at JDV, Pune.



Goodbye, Brother!

The Society Doesn't Need You!

November 2019 has got me musing over the meaning of priesthood for three reasons: First, I received a WhatsApp video titled: “*We don’t need you!*” wherein a Capuchin Friar plainly tells “formees” to abandon priestly studies and choose another profession if they think that priesthood is a: (i) 9 am. to 5 pm. business; (ii) rise in social status; (iii) job for mere dispensation of sacraments; (iv) license to find fault with ‘sinners’; (v) platform for showcasing one’s own talents; and, (vi) kingly call to rule over others.

Second, November 2019 transported me back 30 years ago to November 16, 1989, when I was a student of Theology—like you, my brothers—shell-shocked that six of our Salvadoran Jesuit-Brothers were shot dead in the head. The remnants of their brains were strewn on what today is called ‘Garden of Roses’ in Salvador’s Central American University. Reason? They were ‘dangerous intellectuals’ who threatened the unjust established order with their speeches, writings, conferences. And, “guts”!

Third, with some help from CCBI, JDV has just concluded a 2-Day International, Interdisciplinary Symposium entitled: “*Towards Renewing Church and Society: Revisiting Vatican II through the Eyes of Pope Francis.*” Our Jesuit-Pope is amazing. Last month, he endured immense opposition for organizing the Amazon Synod since he was open to married men as priests and was “okaying” an indigenous Amazonian rite with native symbols, images, songs, etc.

The Keynote speaker at the Pope Francis’ Symposium, Felix Wilfred, said, “Pope Francis is the most hated man on earth” for: (a) his Theology emerges from his love for the poor; (b) he challenges the rich and powerful—comfortable clerics and Vatican Curates, included; (c) his faith in God stems from ‘truth in reality’ which makes him ‘walk the talk’.

From the above three November events, what can I say about the priesthood? Jesuit priesthood? I’ve been

requested to reflect upon chapter 6 of the Jesuit’s 34th General Congregation entitled: “*The Jesuit Priest: Ministerial Priesthood and Jesuit Identity.*” Beautiful documents, undoubtedly; but basically, simply saying what has been stressed in scripture and tradition: (a) know Christ; (b) love Christ; (c) serve Christ. To put it in the words of our late Father General, Pedro Arrupe: “fall in love with Christ,” for that will determine my every word, every action, every option—unto my last breath.

When I reflect upon that “*We don’t need you!*” list, frankly, I shudder since I’m guilty of all those aforementioned ‘sins’: often acting holier-than-thou; promoting myself rather than pointing to Christ; showcasing my talents; lording it over others; being a “sahib” instead of a servant, etc., etc. So, I simply cannot preach to others. However, it would help you and me to examine ourselves against the short comings given above in the light of the glowing example of our Jesuit priest-heroes.



Ignatius, Francis Xavier, the Salvadoran Martyrs and our own Jesuit-Pope, Francis, share one thing in common: intimacy with Christ and unshakeable faith in the incredible power of God’s Spirit. They are known for daring to do things differently. They show us that Jesuit life is meaningful

only if one is truly a ‘companion’ of Jesus—madly in love with Him and ever ready to be crucified with Him.

After 23 years of teaching ‘Priesthood’ at VJ, Delhi, and JDV, Pune, and 27 years of living as a priest, I’m more and more convinced that everything we say and do as priests will be useless unless Christ is the centre. If I’m credibly to live as an *alter Christus*, there is no other way but that of knowing, loving, serving Him. If I fail in this, someone should simply have the courage, the “guts” to tell me: “Goodbye! The Society doesn’t need you!”

Fr. Francis Gonsalves, SJ (G.UJ)

Professor & Dean of Faculty of Theology at JDV, Pune.



JESUIT LIFE – MAD LIFE

Every spiritual voyage is a journey from beginning to beginning. As the famous Chinese proverb says the journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. It is indeed the tiny steps I took six years ago that keep me moving in the footsteps of our Lord. What could be a fitting tagline for this journey? Jesuit Life – a MAD life. Sounds weird? I think this way of life has made me MAD (Made A Difference) in my life. A journey with an unquenchable fire to make a difference in mine and others' lives. A journey to find the 'real' meaning of my existence in this VUCA (short for volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world. Yes, it's a journey toward complete 'madness'.

It was really a great struggle for me after my graduation whether to join an IT firm as a software developer or to choose my vocation to the priesthood. To make a better choice, I volunteered to work among the youth for one year through the Jesus Youth movement. It was in that year I was introduced to many Congregations and many different types of Spiritualities. The fire in my heart ignited when I met the Jesuits. It was a major turning point in my journey towards priesthood.

Months and years passed by like a stream with many ups and downs. All these years, I have encountered many questions from the youngsters, which prompted me to ponder over the decision I made. Many asked, *"What made you choose this way of life even after your graduation? Are you mad to waste your life?"* In the beginning I was not paying much attention to these questions. But as life moved forward it struck me, challenged me and made me think. Why Jesuits? As I reflected about my vocation to the Society of

Jesus, four important points lingered in my mind.

1. A Jesuit is a pardoned sinner

A Jesuit defines himself as 'A sinner yet called to be a companion of Jesus'. This was the captivating punch line I heard initially about Jesuits during my quest for following our Lord. It was a moment of confirmation to my call to the Jesuits. The initial love I had for the Society still continues to grow by imbibing the real meaning of this statement. We realize our unworthiness when we gaze at Jesus. That gaze will encourage us to depend on his mercy and move forward.

2. Ignatian Spirituality- A practical one

Usually, the word spirituality is a boring or outdated term to the modern youth. But, on the contrary, Ignatian Spirituality is very practical

and simple, not a complex algebra! The Society of Jesus has always been known for practicality and unflappability in the service of its motto: *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* (For the Greater Glory of God). Equally well known is the Jesuits' reputation as educators

– giving rise to the adage: "Give me a child of seven, and I will show you the man." Ignatian Spirituality also calls for self-renewal through its powerful Spiritual Exercises.

3. Universality and Sense of Mission

The Society of Jesus is the largest men-religious order with regard to its members. The universal outlook and pioneering spirit in the missions they undertook kept them at the forefront of many prominent missions. As an apostle, Jesuits must be "all things to all men" - men ready to go anywhere, live anywhere, do anything, suffer



anything, be anything, in order to be instruments of God's salvation. Thus, the Society has no one particular apostolate: there is literally no work that a Jesuit may not do, if it is for the greater glory of God. The availability of Jesuits for new missions and their daring spirit attract many to the Society of Jesus

4. Joyful Smiles

The happy and cheerful/gentle faces of Jesuits I have seen in the early stages of my formation were a decisive factor in my vocation. They were very friendly and ever approachable. I have not seen such gentleness from any priest in my entire lifetime. As the old saying goes, 'sanctity lies in being cheerful'. The outlook of Jesuits towards community life and companionship is realistic. Though it is said, if there are three Jesuits, there will be four opinions, but at the end of the day everybody shares their joy and sorrow under one roof realizing they all are on the same page.

No road is long in good company. This company of 'MAD' people around me is adding more liveliness

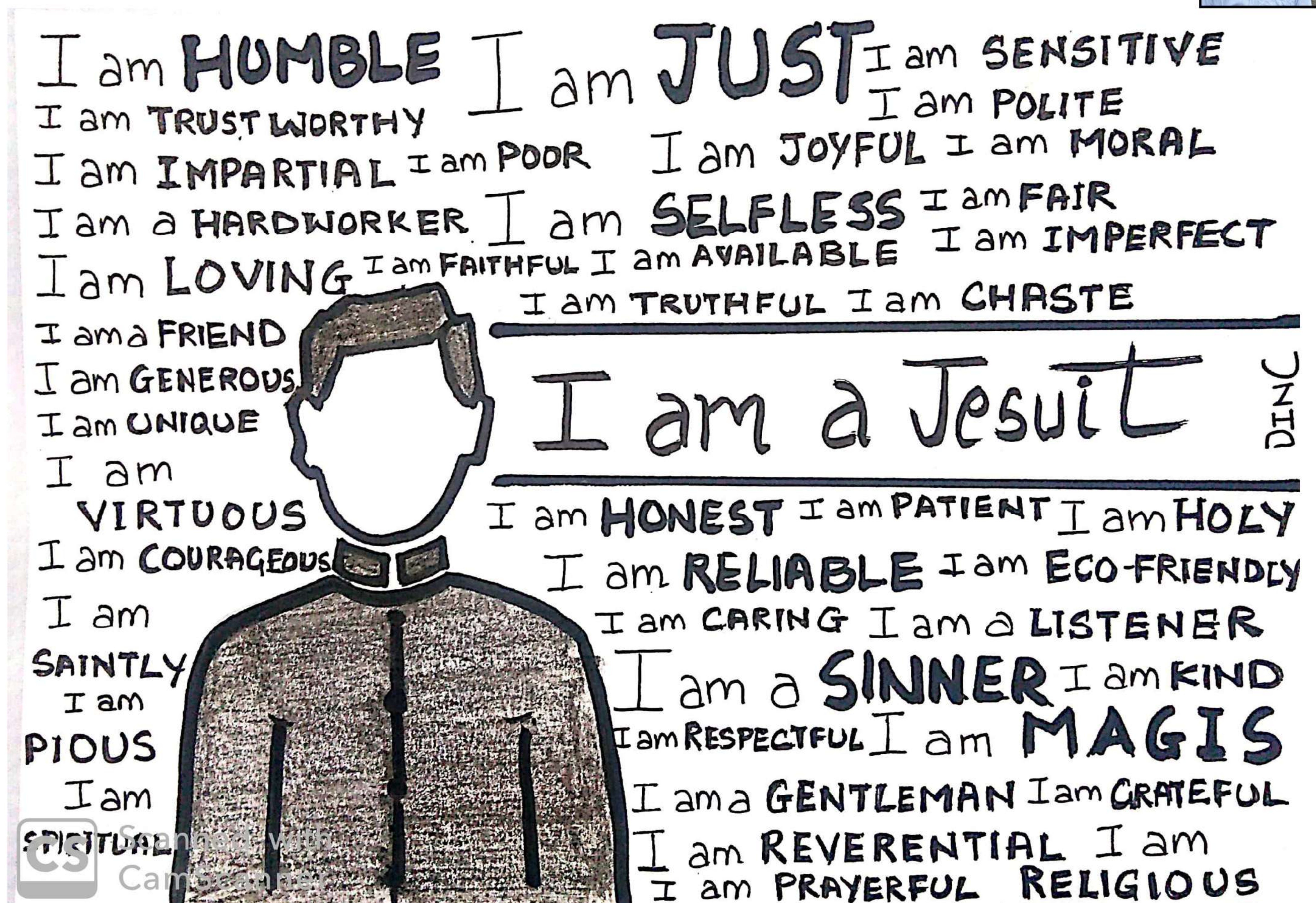
to my life daily, thus reducing the anxiety of a long journey. As St. Ignatius says, "Most people have no idea what God would make of them if they would only place themselves at his disposal." It needs a lot of courage to be different, to be 'MAD' for Christ.

Sch. Savy George (KER)

The writer is doing second year philosopher at JDV, Pune.



Sch. Vincent Paulraj SJ





Oh, Jesuits! Oh, You, Jesuits!

Oh, you, Jesuits! Gone too, too far apart

Whilst chasing the desires of your heart

Too blind to see Love's will

Who lives to win till they fall still?

Oh, Jesuits, hail! Still relishing the honey

Extracted from your fore father's journey

With love, toiling day and night

To envelop the world with light

Oh, Jesuits! Go not far with the wind

Of wily deceits of a worldly mind

Examine the moment taken for granted, no more

For it is nothing but merely good will's open door

Oh Jesuits! The wire of companionship becomes thinner

Home of deep love and humour that's turn colder

The earlier union of minds and hearts decay

Wake up and rush back home, no more to delay

Oh Jesuits! Heed the cry of the broken

Trust not too much in *intellect's token*

Lest you lose the heart of love

And abandon the mission from above.

Sch. Rex (KHM)

The writer is doing second year philosophy at JDV, Pune.







Jesuit Priesthood and Intellectual Apostolate

In the Old Testament, the book of Leviticus deals with priestly ministry. The priests offered animal sacrifices to obtain the forgiveness of sins and as a sign of reparation, that was the custom in the Jewish society. That was the only kind of ministry the priests were performing. They were expected to sacrifice animals as a way of sustaining themselves. According to me, the priests were not doing any ministry but it was merely a designation. In the Old Testament, priestly life was not a good model for people, but, in the New Testament, Jesus presents a new concept of priestly ministry. Here, Jesus, the High Priest sacrifices himself for the Kingdom of God. Now, a new role has been introduced and that ministry has been handed down to his disciples. Jesus told his disciples ‘Go and proclaim the Good News among the lost sheep’. What do the words “the lost sheep” mean? It means the poor, the sick and the oppressed; go and help them. Do not accept anything from them. Work with them joyfully and lovingly. In the Fifteenth Century, St. Ignatius exhorted his first companions “to go and set the world on fire”. In the Spiritual Exercises he urges us to seek and find God in all things: through acts that are God-centered, not self-centered.

The priest is not his own. God has chosen him to take care of His flock. Some of us Jesuits are called to take a special vow to the Pope – to be ready for any apostolate, anywhere, for the greater glory of God and the greater good of souls. Now times have changed. Now, we have the problem about the fewer number of vocations. Even our own Jesuit priests find it difficult to move to the places where their services are needed. Due to discriminations based on race and caste, we are born in a culture, ethnic traditions we are used to. Priests are reluctant to move to other places where people actually need them. They are not open to the mission they are called for and needed most.

Intellectual Apostolate

Intellectual apostolate is one of the important areas for which the Society of Jesus is remembered for and appreciated in the Church and in the world. Our understanding of the intellectual apostolate is sometimes limited to the schools and educational institutions we run. And we train also people for such an apostolate. But we have a glorious past of revolutionary forefathers who were scientists, architects, artists, etc. in the Society of Jesus. They were the people in the Society of Jesus who offered their intellectual gifts for the Greater Glory of God in all the times, since the beginning of the Society. All of them tried to address the problems of their time. But, nowadays, we don't find many members in the Society who are able to respond to the needs of the time. In the we have the problems related to our common home, the Mother Earth. The environmental problems and issues related to it and the measures to be taken to protect it are the main concerns in the world, in the light of the ecological destruction and misuse all around the world, especially in the Amazon areas. As it is also one of the four great concerns of Universal Apostolic Preference, we also need to be addressing problems and for that we should also be intellectually rich enough. The victims like Greta Thunberg should be our inspiration in this regard. If there are groups of people spearheaded by the Jesuits to meet with such situations and problems, it can surely contribute to the betterment of God's creation.

Br. Patrick SJ (G.U.)

The writer is doing diploma in theology at JDV, Pune.



A Sharing of Memories on Jesuit Priesthood

1. What drew you to join the Society of Jesus?

I joined the Society of Jesus in 1941 after finishing my High School studies because in that particular Religious Order I could become both a priest, an inner urge that came to me already as a 13-year-young boy, and, possibly at the same time a teacher of Science, especially Chemistry, a new urge that came to me after completing my studies in both Physics and Chemistry when I was just 17 years. There were other reasons too.

2. According to you, what are some of the characteristics of Jesuit Priesthood?

Looking back after my ordination to the priesthood in 1955, and my appointment to the Staff of Philosophy at JDV in 1957 with residence at De Nobili College, herewith, are 5 characteristics I have found:

- Obedience in accepting a given apostolic job;
- Working together as a community;
- Exercising priestly gifts alongside of one's particular assignment/expertise;
- Relevance: reading or noting signs of the times;
- Creativity or discovering newness in daily routine

Please note that I have not written under each of these headings separately, but you will easily be able to recognize these characteristics as I write.

A Jesuit takes a Vow of Obedience and, therefore, is ready to abide by the wishes of his Provincial Superior. However, I have always found openness with Provincials, who usually take seriously the talents and wishes of scholastics and priests into consideration, before taking any decisions about their assignments.

So, I was happy about my appointment to JDV to teach Basic Science and "Scientific Questions Connected with Philosophy", as well as being asked by my Patna Provincial to give a helping hand to **Fr. Peter Sontag S.J.** in the running of his "Institute for Home Study", (IHS), a correspondence course for people of another faith on the life and teachings of Jesus.

Once assigned to a particular community and work, a Jesuit priest works with other members of his community to achieve the goals of the work assigned to him. When I was assigned to the Staff in the Department of Philosophy of JDV in 1957, I asked one of the students of JDV who was talented in art work to magnify and reproduce drawings from

from books in Physics on large sheets of papers and hang them on the class room platform stands when needed. That was a student's invaluable contribution for the greater understanding of the to the whole class.

Also, at that time in 1957 there were many enquirers asking information about the life and teachings of Jesus. So, some students of Theology would help out in correcting test papers of this correspondence course, and write a brief note to go back with the next lesson to this particular enquirer.

In the beginning I was only helping Fr. Sontag in running the IHS work but, after his death in 1963, was asked by the Rector of DNC to take over the IHS work completely.

As a member of the Community, I also had an obligation and a desire to help out students in ways other than routine teaching by

- Checking the quality of the Philosopher's reading of the First Reading on the night before the Mass next morning;
- Proof reading of short articles written by the Philosophers.
- Proof reading 2 PhD Theses for JDV which required a scientific background.
- Giving some free classes on English diction and various types of speeches. This was discontinued after 2 or 3 years because it was meant to be taught in the Juniorate.

Being a Jesuit Priest also means exercising priestly ministries, either fully as some priests do, or partially by offering Mass in a parish or convent, helping out with confessions, preaching on special feast days, or giving retreats. After my Tertianship, I had given a few retreats during a 10-15-year period, but I didn't feel up to giving the more modern kind of Directed Retreats.

Being open to change is another trait of a Jesuit priest. In the beginning of my teaching days at JDV we had a fairly good Chemistry and Physics Lab. Then, in the 1990's the President of JDV was searching for space in the academic block to locate computers for the use of JDV students. He approached me about using the Science labs for this purpose. Since they were not so necessary as before, I readily agreed to his suggestion to hand them over.

Also, towards the end of the 1990's, there was no

longer any need of a Basic Science Course since the professors themselves of “Cosmology” or of “Science, Religion and Society” could give the required knowledge of science for understanding the problems in hand.

3. *What are some of the most memorable moments of your priestly life?*

Two of those most memorable events occurred in the 5-month -period of Jan.5 to May30, 1958, after my 1st round of teaching at JDV was over. I was asked by my Patna Provincial at that time to utilize that period of time in a small village called Chuhari, in Northern Bihar, to practice the use of whatever Hindi I had already acquired. Visiting families in Chuhari was a fruitful way of doing this. I was staying at the time in the parish house. One evening a lady's Sari caught fire while she was cooking the meal for her family. She was very badly burned and so the Parish Priest asked me to go and give her the sacrament of the sick. What could I say to comfort them? There was actually no need of words. Receiving this Sacrament was enough. I will never forget that evening.

During this same period another lady in the same village had told me that her son had gone to Kolkata looking for work, but ended up in trouble. He was convicted of rape and imprisoned. She asked me if I could visit her son in prison and let her know if he was alright. Accordingly, I arranged my train travel back to Pune via Kolkata. The Jesuit priest in Kolkata, who was in-charge of Prison Ministry there, arranged for me to meet him. I met the young man in the “prison parlour” and told him how much his mother loved him and how sorrowful she was because of his confinement. However, I could not send back a favorable report because the young man still seemed to be unrepentant.

On the other hand, I have had more joyful contacts with Catholics serving a sentence in the Central Jail in Yeruwada, Pune, where Mahatma Gandhi was once imprisoned by the British Raj. One of our DNC Staff members was the regular Chaplain, and, often enough, he asked me to substitute for him when he was busy or out of station. At that time the Catholic prisoners were offered a special room where the priest could hear confessions and for celebrating Mass. On Christmas day itself, there was also a small celebration after Mass for the prisoners and a few prison officials. A joyous and memorable day! Sometime afterwards a new Prison Warden was appointed and the frequency of the celebrations of the Catholic group was curtailed, and also the prison ministry was shifted from DNC to the new parish

nearer to the prison.

4. *What are the challenges you have faced as a Jesuit priest?*

Strange as it may seem, my chief challenge in Pune has been moving around Pune by scooter to the places I needed to visit, mainly:

- a. The Bishop's House near the Race Course concerning affairs of the Family Welfare Centre which I helped to found in 1973 to offer Catholics and people of any other faith an alternative way of Family Planning;
- b. The Catholic Enquiry Centre in the Camp area of Pune;
- c. To procure guest speakers for the new JDV course on the “Psycho-Biology of Human Sexuality”;
- d. For offering Mass and hearing confessions, etc.;
- e. For medical treatment and purchase of personal needs.

There are two hazards in Pune and, many other cities, for moving about on a scooter. One is the ease of contracting a stomach chill or cold in the winter season. The other is the possibility of an accident. I have suffered from both. Stomach chills can be over in a few days. Body damage from an accident can take much more time to heal. Had I not been wearing a helmet, I would probably have been killed when I was thrown off my scooter by a drunken man who pushed his bicycle into my path. This took place in the darkness of the night around 8:30 p.m. It was partially my fault because I was driving too fast. Thus, I ended my days of using a scooter in 1998.

5. *You have been at DNC journeying with young Jesuits for a long time, what is your message for young Jesuits?*

a. After 10 or 15 years of living your Jesuit priesthood, ask permission to take a 6-month or better still a 12-month-Sabbatical period to update and broaden what you have learned during your 5 or 6 years of Philosophy and Theology. You will know at that time what you need most. In 1970-71 I had one full year free to update my Theology at the Chicago Province Jesuit Theologate, which at that time was located in South Chicago as part of a Theology union of various Christian Churches, especially the Lutherans. One subject I opted for was a 16-classes-presentation on the topic of abortion. Because of what I learned there, I was able to give a homily on abortion at Mass time in a Chicago parish at a time when it was a burning issue. One lady who

was present told her Parish Priest that it was the best homily she ever heard. Actually, I was only giving in a simple way what I had learned in those 16 classes. When I returned to India, I wrote a small booklet called “Does Legalizing Abortion Make it Something Good?”; Our Institute for Home Study published it and sold many copies only at cost price to parishes, schools, etc. to help stem the tide of doubts.

Also, I was able in that year in Chicago to attend classes on Physics every Saturday morning at the Illinois’ Institute of Technology on various ways of explaining more simply the principles of Physics. I took that learning back with me to Pune to make the classes in Physics more interesting and clearer for the students of JDV

b. On the spiritual side, it was also important for a person on his own to be faithful to his daily round of prayers: meditation, Mass, Examen, monthly recollections; good spiritual reading was also a big help to stay on track. To sum up, a person can and needs to use a Sabbatical to renew himself both academically as well as spiritually.

Fr. Ted Bowling S.J.(PAT)





A Simple Christmas

Christmas is a time when streets are flooded with lights, churches are filled with the sound of carols, and houses are teeming over with gifts. Christmas always brings something new to us. The birth of Jesus, two thousand years ago, brought great changes in history. According to the Late Bishop Fulton Sheen, it splits history into two – events were dated **BC** (Before Christ) and **AD**, (Anno Domini, year of the Lord). It brought a lot of joy to the hearts of people. The birth of Jesus is a time of joy.

The understanding of joy in this 21st Century is entirely different from that of the past. Today we human beings search for the inner joy, but unfortunately, we only find the external appearances /trappings of happiness. It is on account of our search for inner joy, most often we focus on externals. Most of us search for joy and glory in mere externals. Thus, we always fail to find the real inner joy. As it has mentioned before, it is this **Inner Joy** which needs to be sought for only within ourselves.

In the Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius of Loyola outlines a path to find this inner joy. In the Two Standards Exercise he invites us to love **Poverty** as against riches, **Contempt** as against worldly honor and **Humility** as against pride. In this consumeristic world, we tend to accumulate objects - clothes, gadgets, books, whatever- we see and show ourselves as persons of honor and attempt to find joy in that. But, afterwards, we are mostly worried about

how to protect those objects and worldly honor. Unfortunately, this struggle continues forever. Neither does it bring that inner joy nor do they serve the purpose for we procured these objects that were a delight for the eyes. In the process of accumulating these external forms that bring with them ephemeral joy, we forget the importance of human relationship. Thus, we have begun to use human beings like mere objects. The consolation a person gets from a true relationship cannot be given through creatures. Our hearts were shaped for God and only God can fill that space.

As a Tamil proverb says 'there will be fear in the journey when the carriage is heavy.' our life is a journey. Let us attempt to avoid all the unnecessary worries about worldly possessions and honor. A simple and humble life will give us the real Joy of Christmas. Though this path is not easy, many Saints and Servants of God have showed us this way by their exemplary life. Let this Christmas and New Year – 2020 - become a really joyful one with the desire to seek and find God in all things and all things in God,

Wishing all our patrons, our readers of DNC Times, one and all, a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2020 - that is full of surprises from the God of Surprises.

Sch. Praveen Kumar. I (MDU)

The writer is doing second year philosophy at JDV,



Thank You **DNCTIMES** Old Team



All the Best **DNCTIMES** New Team



Merry Christmas



Happy New Year 2020

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Youth Synergy