



VJ TODAY -07

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2019

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Courses offered in Vidyajyoti College of Theology

B.Th. (Degree)
B.Th. (Certificate)
M.Th (Two Year)
Doctorate in Theology & DEPTH

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS ON THE COLLEGE OPENING DAY – 8 July 2019

Respected Fr P.R. John, Principal, Vidyajyoti College of Theology, dear Fr. Tony Raj, the Registrar, honorable Faculty Members, fellow Jesuits, distinguished guests, and my dear Sisters and Brothers,

We are here to kick start our academic year in Vidyajyoti while we are still in the post-election lull and inertia amidst religio-cultural dilemma. Today many political parties use religion and god-men and god-women for political mileage and for political mobilization. Religion has come to the centre stage once again in the country. In this context where and how do we situate or position our study of theology? As I was reflecting on what to say in this inaugural ses-



Michael T. Raj SJ (Rector)



sion, I stumbled upon a recent speech of Pope Francis (thanks to Fr Stan Alla SJ who posted it in our common email).

Pope Francis addressing the Jesuit Theologate in Naples on 21 June this year spoke of how he saw theology and its role in the Church and world today. He stressed dialogue as one of the most important components of doing theology today.



He said, “Students of theology should be educated in dialogue with Judaism and Islam to understand the common roots and differences of our religious identities, and thus contribute more effectively to the building of a society that values diversity and fosters respect, brotherhood and peaceful coexistence.”



The Holy Father also stressed the importance of compassion in doing theology. He said, “It is important that theologians be men and women of compassion – I emphasize this: that they be men and women of compassion – inwardly touched by the oppressed life many live, by the forms of slavery present today, by the social wounds, the violence, the wars and the enormous injustices suffered by so many poor people who live on the shores of this ‘common sea.’”

He concluded his speech by firmly reiterating his vision: “Theology after *Veritatis Gaudium* is a kerygmatic theology, a theology of discernment, of mercy and of welcoming, in dialogue with society, cultures and religions for the construction of the peaceful coexistence of individuals and peoples.”

In our multi religious context in India, Vidyajyoti needs to move more towards compassionate dialogue with people of other religions and ideologies: Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism, Sarna, etc. Let us work towards the four important human values the Pope stressed in his speech: diversity, respect, brotherhood, and peaceful coexistence.

Vidyajyoti is known for its contextual theology. We do theology here in a dialogical process between text and context. Our sitting in the classroom desks will take us on our feet to the streets and homes of people in our fieldwork, and our fieldworks will bring us on our knees to pray in our chapels. And the cycle will continue: Lecture – Fieldwork – Prayer. The Association of Rectors of Major Seminaries

in India (ARMS), in its annual meeting released a statement of action plan for all the seminaries in India. The focus this year is on “Pastoral Formation”. The statement strongly recommends a few concrete actions, namely,

- 1) Promoting animators of Small Christian Communities for building Basic Human/Civil Communities;
- 2) Introducing the study of the Indian Constitution in the pastoral curriculum;
- 3) Teaching and practicing the values of secular democracy and pluralism;
- 4) Promoting missionary discipleship with prophetic mission;
- 5) Giving enough scope for village and family visits in pastoral formation;
- 6) Protecting and preserving nature, heeding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor; and
- 7) Promoting exposure to the urban areas, villages as well as civil and religious institutions which are engaged in dialogue and development.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us face it; in keeping with the vision of Pope Francis and following the recommendations of ARMS, particularly in this academic year, let us again and again remind ourselves in our classrooms, in our fieldworks and ministries, in our pastoral reflections and sharing, in



our assignments and dissertations, the values of dialogue, of compassion, of democracy, of pluralism, of eco-care, and of human rights. Without doing so, our contextual theologizing may go out of context. I cordially wish you, the Faculty and Students of Vidyajyoti a full year of discerning search for a theological response to the socio-cultural, religio-political conflicts of today. May dialogue be your strategy and compassion be your energy. May God almighty continue to bless all of us and bless all our efforts. Thank you.

Inaugural Words



P.R. John SJ (Principal)

Respected Rector, Fr. Michael Thanaraj, Registrar, Fr. Antony Raj, staff and students and dear new comers, a warm welcome to each and every one of you. It's a moment of great privilege and honour for me to do so at this memorable event of the Inaugural Day of an academic year 2019-2020, of Vidyajyoti College of Theology. We are beginning new Academic Year with a great desire of – “Announcing the Gospel with Joy” – with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist that will be presided over by His Excellency Giambattista Diquattro, Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal and graced by Anil J. T. Couto, Metropolitan Archdiocese of Delhi, and the Patron of our College.

This year we have 169 students enrolled in the College – 115 at the NTC and 54 in the 3 RTCs affiliated to VJ. Vidyajyoti has been blessed this year with two additional staff members – Fr. Leander Xalxo, S.J., from Madhya Pradesh Province as

Spiritual Guide and Counselor and Fr. Sunil Padanamakkel S.J., as the Administrator. We welcome and wish them fruitful service at VJ. We are grateful to Fr. Michael Alosanaya S.J., Fr. Joseph Mohan S.J., and Fr. Thomas Venad, S.J., for their services for the past few years to Vidyajyoti as the Spiritual Counselor, Administrator and Professor of Scripture respectively.

“Announcing the Gospel with Joy” is the theme for this academic year: Why are we called to be the “announcers of the Gospel?” Why should we anchor our faith in Jesus Christ when we live in a situation of market freedom, people choosing the specific, not the universal? Why do we desire to study theology? Is theology studied only in the Church?

Will our study of theology shape us to be persons of magis for God or turn us to be mediocre in the cog of human history?

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes:

Evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. Many of these are quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face, even in countries of ancient Christian tradition... It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but “by attraction.” (EG 15)

Attracted by the beauty of Christ, first and foremost a student of catholic theology is invited to be a person of faith. He/she must believe in what he/she studies. He/she must worship the subject of his study, and that subject is Christ Jesus. And he/she

must do so within the Church. Otherwise, it's only religious studies, not theology.



The goal of life in Vidyajyoti, is not reaching the destination of diaconate ordination, but what is important is the journey; the process of three years is more important. That implies “a

style of life at desk, on the streets and in prayer. Here in VJ we don't study theology, but do theology. It is a Sadhana and dharma. Doing theology develops through dialogue. Pope Francis in his recent address at Naples “Theology after ‘Veritatis Gaudium’” in unequivocal words, called for a “thoughtful and prophetic” renewal of theological education “as part of the new phase of the church's mission, marked by witness to the joy born of encountering Jesus and proclaiming his Gospel.” There is a need to envisage a “welcoming theology” fostered through dialogue. He said, theologians must be “men and women of compassion” who are touched by the social ills of war, violence, slavery and forced migration and who are nourished by prayer. Vidyajyoti, through the fieldwork attempts,

tries precisely that.

It is here that I would like to quote a few lines from Fr. Don John Birllantes, Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome who organized last year a conference for Ecclesiastical Higher Education Institutions in Asia-Pacific Region wrote:

“John., personally, it gives me a lot of joy to have been able to express to those present that we are here in Rome to give you support and to assist you in developing well-prepared and well-staffed Educational Institutions that can give excellent academic training to our seminarians, clergy, religious and laity. In this spirit, I wish the whole Community of Vidyajyoti College of Theology a more enthusiastic academic

year ahead, as that we all brace ourselves to participate in promoting the Church “in uschita”, (goes forth), which our beloved Pope Francis envisions for the 21st Century.”

In this context, I may, underscore three aspects that are important: A student of Vidyajyoti will be a person who engages “theology at desk”, “theology on the streets”, and “theology in the chapel”. Missing any of these will cost the church very dearly.

Many and great are the challenges before us. But with the grace of God and our generous cooperation we can truly dare. May I commend all of us to the maternal care of our Blessed Virgin Mary! Thank you.

News Bulletin

Inaugural Mass and Orientation Program



P. Praveen SJ (I B.Th.)

The academic year for 2019 – 2020 began with an Orientation program, which was held on 8 July in the college to introduce the students to the dynamics of the academic life in the college through various guidelines. Fr. P.R. John,

the Principal welcomed the guests and the faithful and invited them to enter into the solemn inaugural Holy Eucharist presided over by His Excellency Giambattista Diquattro, the Apostolic Nuncio to India and Nepal. The Nuncio delivered a beautiful and meaningful sermon in which he highlighted the mission of Jesus in the light of His commitment to the mission of His Father. He also appreciated our ministry and encouraged us to continue it with more vitality and fervor. His grace Rev. Anil J. T. Couto,

Archbishop of Delhi was the concelebrant. He gave a concluding remark by saying that Jesus has to be made the real focus, without which our goals remain unfulfilled. Fr. Michael T. Raj, the Rector of Vidyajyoti proposed the vote of thanks and observed that



the presence of two esteemed guests was indeed a grace-filled one. The singing by the choir created a perfect and prayerful ambience, in which faithful could participate with reverence and that made the Eucharist livelier.

Inaugural Lecture

As part of the commencement of the new academic year, VJ college organized an inaugural lecture on “Future of India under the new regime” on 9 July 2019. Mrs. Pamela Philipose, the ombudsman of The Wire, a famous online magazine, delivered the lecture and Mr. Harsh Mandar, a former civil servant, outspoken social activist and public intellectual, moderated the lecture and gave his concluding remarks. Mrs. Philipose identified various trends

of disintegration in democratic governance of our country and the conscience-keeping institutions. She also touched on the rise of cult-leadership and populism in and around the one supreme leader. She highlighted the crucial and vigilant role that civil societies and independent media



Dony Raja SJ (II B.Th.)

must play to keep the hope of our citizens alive. Harsh Mandar spoke on 'the wasteland of compassion' that India is turning to be. He challenged the culture of silence and the us-them division that is pervasive among various religious groups. He made a clarion call to go beyond the ghetto-mindset and parochial attitude to show

solidarity for all those who suffer and become victims of the indifference of the majoritarian state.

On the whole, both the guests gave us a clear focus and needed content for a renewed theological reflection in the new academic year. Fr. Principal welcomed the gathering and the chief guests. The student council made all the necessary arrangements for the programme. ●



3rd Victor Courtois Memorial Lecture



Mark SJ (I B.Th.)

The 3rd Victor Courtois Memorial Lecture was held on 6 August 2019. The theme of the lecture was "Christians and Muslims Reflect Together - A Case Study case study at Minhaj University Lahore."

Prof. Herman Roborgh, the Head of the School of Religion and Philosophy, Minhaj University Lahore, Pakistan, was the main speaker. The session was chaired by Dr. Ravi Nandan Singh, assistant professor of Department of Sociology, Hindu College, Delhi University.

A brief introduction on Victor Memorial Lecture was given as to how it came about. Fr. Victor Courtois' initiative and commitment to Christian and Muslim dialogue was appreciated and recounted with gratitude. In the light of the Memorial Lecture, the relevance of the celebration of the 150 birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was also highlighted. He practiced non-violence and peace which was very relevant with the theme of the Memorial Lecture.

Prof. Herman Roborgh's talk was based on his own experience of teaching Christianity in Pakistan for three years. It was an exploration of how Christian beliefs could be explained or communicated

to Muslim students in Lahore. Therefore, he gave an elaborate sharing of his work of interacting with the students at the university in Pakistan. Teaching Islam in Pakistan and sharing Christian faith with Muslim students deepened his faith as a Christian. He also focused on the importance of being critical and suggested that students need to read the



scripture critically that does not deny their status and value as revelation. He further points out respectful listening as another important aspect while interacting with students of other faith. Finally he said that comparative theology is a new approach to the study of religion that seeks to learn from the wisdom of others. This new approach leads to the personal transformation of the students of religion. ●

Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Vidyajyoti celebrated the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola on 31st July reflecting on the theme "Ignatius's Vision for Mission Today". Through this feast, we give thanks to the Holy One, the Most High proclaiming His glory (cf. Sir 47:8). Joy filled our hearts on the day of celebration to see the arrangements and

decorations done in honour of St. Ignatius with utmost care and love by all the Sisters and Brothers. It reminds us of the love and care and the pastoral zeal that St. Ignatius had put in



Maria JMJ (III B.Th.)

for the development of the Society and the Church at large. The heart of the feast day celebration was the Holy Eucharist, which was solemnized by Fr. Michael Thanaraj SJ, the Rector and the con-celebrants. Fr. Michael Thanaraj SJ gave an inspiring homily in which he invited us to get inspiration from the life of St. Ignatius and emphasized the four major challenges in the context



of the mission of the Church in India today; namely lack of God-awareness, absence of clear focus in what we do, culture of multiple choices and instant gratification and the need for excellence in the right spirit. The beautiful choir added flavour to the Eucharistic celebration.

Street Children and Rickshaw Pullers' Day



Sunil Gaikard SJ (I B.Th.)

It has been a great pleasure to the members of 'Asha Ki Kiran', the ministry for the street children and rickshaw pullers, for keeping a day for them on 17 and 18 August respectively. Both the days elevated the spirit of joy of giving and sharing in solidarity with the under-privileged and the least of the society. It was a surprise to see the eagerness and longing of the children as they began to appear in smaller and larger groups, right from the early morning. As soon as the children entered our campus, they started having their usual fun with one another and some took delight in taking a nap for a while. There were around 60 children, who participated in the program. After having good haircut and good shower, they were shining with glow in their new clothes that they put on. The sisters expressed their sisterly love to the children in celebrating the feast of Raksha Bandhan. They cherished sumptuous breakfast. Soon after the breakfast all the children gathered in the college hall, where they portrayed cheerfully their talents and skills on the stage. A movie was screened after their stage performances. Fr. Poulose Mangai, SJ and Sr. Dezy, M.C. interacted with the children and helped

them understand the importance of their life and value of their being as the Children of God. After lunch, we all bid farewell to children and were deeply gratified and felt grateful to God for His blessings. On the next day, keeping their daily labour aside the rickshaw pullers gathered in our college, to celebrate



the day. As they gathered, we offered them breakfast. They were warmly welcomed by Fr. Poulose Mangai SJ. Srs. Stella and Jenitha gladly tied rakhis to the rickshaw pullers. After a short interaction with Fr. Poulose, they enjoyed watching a movie. They were served lunch and all felt contented. We could sense the deep joy of being cared for, on their faces as they exchanged words with us. It was a graceful day for all of us.

Guest Lecture

A guest lecture was organized on 27.08.2019 titled 'Ignatius of Loyola and Academic Life – A Reflection on the Ambivalence of Ignatius about Learning'. Fr. Philip Endean SJ was the keynote speaker. He gave a scholarly talk on the mentioned theme. The core of the talk was the role and impor-



tance of academics in contrast to the necessity for spiritual and pastoral commitment of Jesuits. He explored the reflections of Ignatius and his approach to the studies in facilitating the spiritual progress and pastoral



Jojappa SJ (I B.Th.)

efficacy of a Jesuit in formation. The speaker also explicated the struggle every Jesuit goes through in the pursuit of knowledge while also trying to keep the spiritual growth uncompromised. It is very important to ask, to which activity we need to give more preference? Can we spend more time on academic life and less on the spiritual? He further added

that for Ignatius, to have more knowledge without adequately caring for one's spiritual well-being is a temptation. Thus there arises the need to balance both in our daily life. At the end of the talk, Fr. M. I. Raj SJ summarized it stressing on the need for integration of both these aspects of Jesuit life.

MTh Thesis Defence

Two MTh defence took place in the college. The first defence was by Fr. Binoy John (Poomkudiyil, Joseph, O.C.D.). The Title of his dissertation was: "Discipleship, A Call to be Agents of Transformation: A Johannine Approach to Mission Based on John 4:1-42". He defended his thesis on 23 July 2019 at 4.00 p.m. in Vidyajyoti College of Theology. Fr. Milianus Beck

SJ was his guide. The second defence was by Sr. Joeyanna D'Souza FSP. The Title of her dissertation was: "The Internet Pornography Addiction, an Analysis from a Catholic Perspective". It took place on 22 August 2019 at 4.00 p.m. in the college. Fr. Alla Stanislaus SJ was her guide. Thanks to Frs. Valan, Poulose and Sr. Shalini for being examiners.

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

On 9 August 2019, the indigenous people the world over celebrated the silver jubilee of the declaration of the International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples by the United Nations. The indigenous people of India decided to celebrate in a very grand manner. Therefore a three-day program was organized in Delhi. On the first day, we began with a protest at Jantar Mantar against the ignorance of the rights of indigenous peoples. The second and third day were filled with various programs held at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi. It was a celebration of distinct indigenous identity, culture, history and language. The whole purpose of this celebration was to bring awareness among tribals about their constitutional rights, cultures, and customs, which would enable them to



assert their social, cultural and political rights and to promote unity in diversity of cultures and communities. Tribals from ten different states participated in the program. The whole celebration



Claver Minj SJ (III B.Th.)

was marked by variety of cultural programs, fashion show and speeches by experts from different states. The speaker emphasized that Indigenous identity is at threat. It could be saved by practicing our cultural heritages. The Tribal students of Vidyajyoti were happy to present a nukar-natak based on the present day reality of indigenous people in our county. The title was, 'Antim Sawal' which means 'the Last Question'.

Maha Dharna by the Tribals



Monuri Venu ADL (II B.Th.)

We, the Students of Vidyajyoti College of Theology in collaboration with Adivasi organization participated in Maha Dharna along with Adivasi brethren to fight for their rights at Jantar Mantar. It was also an International Day of the World's Indigenous peoples. All of us are aware that India is marked by its rich traditional heritage of tribal/folk arts and culture. Since the days of remote past, the

tribal and rural people of India have continued to evince their creative magnificence. Apart from their outstanding brilliance from the perspective of aesthetics, the tribal/folk art and culture



forms have played an instrumental role in reinforcing national integrity, solidarity, fortifying communal harmony, intensifying value-system and promoting the elements of humanism among the people of the country. However in recent past, they began to experience some threats to their life formula of jal-jangle-jamin, due to which they feel like fish out of the water. Maha Dharna was organized in order to bring this to the notice of the governing body of the country and we stood by the side of the people to assure them that jal-jangle-jamin is their basic rights for their survival.

ONAM CELEBRATION



KP Saji SJ (II B.Th.)

Life becomes a festival when gaiety and culture blend. Onam delivers the message of both. We celebrate Onam to commemorate a glorious past. All of us yearn for a time like the time of king Mahabali's reign, when prosperity, joy and love blended to their perfection. In order to realise this dream we need to put forward creative and sustained effort. Vidyajyoti the college of Theology as one family celebrated this festival expressing our wishes and aspirations to the people of good will on 20th September, 2019. On this blissful occasion, Fr. George Praseed IMS was the chief guest. Fr. Chandy SJ gave a beautiful Onam message. Sch. Vivian Lopez dressed like the king Mahabali, added a historic element to the celebration.

The festival of Onam is an attribute of inter religious harmony and a fact that Christians exist in society with other people. This realisation brings us to the fact that traditions and celebrations have to be celebrated together. Togetherness can be fostered only when celebrations happen together. Onam in particular is not a festival of the other, the unknown, the infidel or the pagan. It is a festival for all, because it celebrates a king who fought against injustice and encouraged equality. Mahabali's sacrifice is a reminder that all have to stand up against injustice. It is not an option, as justice can never be an option. Justice can only be attained by fighting collectively.

50 Anniversary of Journey for Justice and Reconciliation

A Convention to walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated in a mission of justice and reconciliation was organized

Dharna began with a few and powerful slogans like; Ham Ladenge, ham Jitenge, followed by some Tribal Songs and dance. Some spokespersons of the Adivasi Association openly elaborated the present situation of Adivasi life style in our country. One of them with pain in heart said that if anyone speaks on behalf of Adivasi is tagged as 'Urban Naxal' or 'Terrorist'. He also said that one of the freedom fighters who fought against British rule was an Adivasi. Everyone's hope is the goodness and wellbeing of the Adivasi Community. We ended the protest with a few Adivasi cultural songs.

Justice is the precursor to peace. So for peace, we all have to strive for justice.

She or he cannot claim be a good Christian in the church, professional at work, a person rooted in the culture and a genuine companion to the friends while distancing herself or himself from social concerns and causes. Faith and life go together. Injustice has no place in our society. All of us have the responsibility to stop injustices levied on the people. As Je-



sus showed respect to the Samaritan woman, (cf. Jn 4) one should respect the beliefs of others without compromising one's belief. Onam and other festivals are opportunities to understand each other and foster unity among us. Such celebrations have a transformative effect on us and we become the agents of love and acceptance. "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:7-8).

by Jesuits in Social Action (JESA), ISI, New Delhi in collaboration with Vidyajyoti College of Theology in Navjivan Renewal Centre, Delhi, for two days on 26



Nirmal Kullu SJ (I B.Th.)

& 27 September 2019. Around 150 Jesuits of South Asia Assis-
tancy along with the collabor-
ators actively participated in
this convention. All the mem-
bers of staff and students of
Vidyajyoti took part ardently in
this convention.

The Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. George Pattery SJ helped us seek the blessing of the Lord for the rest of the day. During the inaugural session many Jesuits such as Frs. Sebastian Jeerakassery SJ and Donald Miranda SJ the Provincials of Delhi and Patna respectively blessed us with their encouraging words. The POSA Fr. George Pattery SJ and SJES Director Fr. Xavier Jeyaraj SJ addressed the gathering and set the platform for the gathering. Fr. George Pattery SJ challenged us with the four questions of Gandhi: what is religion for me today? What is my national identity? What is my political identity? How should I live in this world today?

The keynote address was given by Smt. Kavita Srivastva a social activist from Rajasthan. She gave differences between Hindu religion and Hindutva ideology. She emphasized that dignity of human be-

ing is God's given gift which can't be earned, but we need to fight for that. She challenged us to be truthful and fight against the false ideology which is created by media and to be ready to pay the price for it.

We engaged ourselves in reflecting on three important themes. They are: to be affected by the poor, Justice and Reconciliation and to walk with poor. Many panelists shared their reflection on these themes which was useful to review our mission. Sch. Manoj Lakra SJ one of the panelists is a story in himself of displacement. Smt. Annie Raja another panelist challenged the Jesuits to come out of their comfort zone

and join hands with the human rights defenders.

We had fruitful and serious group discussions that followed the panel discussions. At the end of the day we had a fruit gathering session which was lead by Mr. Uday Narayan Chaudhary, the

former speaker of Bihar Vidhan Sabha and Fr. P. R. John SJ. Mr. Chaudhary shared his own experience of working with the Jesuits and their contribution in his upliftment. Overall the convention was booming, productive and reminiscent which enlightened and challenged all of us and encouraged us to step into the world of poor and marginalized. Fr. Sannybhai, JESA Secretary thanked all the participants for their active participation.



Ministry

Prison Ministry



Simon Murmu SJ (III B.Th.)

The Prison ministry has been an exceptional and remarkable experience during our doing of theology. We are greatly delighted to share this rich experience. We must acknowledge that we have had very little time to interact with the inmates. However, we will not deny the fact that small interactions with a few have enlightened us. The prison is more like a rehabilitation center than an actual prison in the strict sense. Here, the work of the person in-charge is to provide cor-

rectional facilities, impart rehabilitative atmosphere such as tailoring, bike repairing, singing, drawing, basic computer training etc., which are much safer in approach and life transforming. A lot of awakening programs such as motivational seminars and yoga

are conducted in this confinement. It is a creative approach that has a transforming power. However, the ultimate concern is the question of 'how many will be

released this month/this year or how do the inmates



approach for the legal aids or how many are being rearrested or how many are spending time under trials for years'. Theoretically these points appear logical and rational that the law should provide these facilities. Nevertheless, the system has a long way to improve upon. I believe, in life every person has dig-

nity and potential but in jagged circumstances, many people break the law or are indicted for delinquency. This confinement in the prison has given a little, but good opportunity to be educated, and learn a skill to build up their livelihood to actualize their potentials.

Experience with the Destitute

My experience with the inmates of Nirmal Hriday is like that of finding meaning in the meaningless situations. It is the experience of both comfortable with complete happiness and uncomfortable with communication gap between the inmates, and me. Honestly speaking any normal person finds no



meaning in spending time with differently abled people. Though many people of good-will come to give a lot of things to them, hardly anyone listens to them. I have the privilege of spending qualitative time with them. It makes me more contented than sitting in the classroom with conceptual knowledge. It also makes me know more about myself. Being

with dejected people helps me grow in my spiritual life. Praying and singing with them give me satisfaction and boost my prayer life. I sometimes feel heavy in my heart to listen to some of them who are able to speak. It is very painful



Prabhakar SJ (II B.Th.)

to vibrate with them when they tell their stories of dejection and abandonment. Even though they have nothing they are the happiest people I encounter. Whenever I meet them, I am always reminded of God's gratuitous gift of good health of mind and body to me. It gives me an immense joy to realize that I am lovable as well as loved. As Mother Teresa would say, "Love is the ultimate gift of ourselves", I experienced it personally. I receive loads of loving encouragement and inspiration from the Sisters of Missionaries of Charity, who spend their entire life serving the poorest of the poor. Taken as a whole I feel that I am blessed to spend time with the inmates. I will surely attach importance to these moments throughout my religious life.

Theological Reflection

Seeker of the Truth



Ajay Bara SJ (I B.Th.)

For me, doing theology is a constant and meticulous search for meaning of one's own life as well as a deep search for truth and holiness in the given situation or context. I personally consider myself a believer and seeker with complete self-awareness. In my point of view, socio-cultural analysis is an indispensable element in contextual theologizing. It helps us understand better the social situations or a particular existing problem of a group of people, bringing about awareness as well as

making better sense of any social or cultural issues. For me, the context of doing theology is not only the external social, political, economic and religious situation that I experience, but also my inner-world where I become aware of immense potentiality within so as to be more effective as well as affective in doing theology in order to accelerate my constant search for truth and holiness.

I personally believe that each one's heart is restless in search of truth and holiness. As a matter of fact, it is a universal phenomenon. Furthermore, the Triune God keeps revealing His unconditional love to His whole beloved humanity. In turn, it is up to each in-

dividual as to how he or she responds to the 'Divine Revelation' in a given particular context. By all means, human experience is fundamental in the Faith and Revelation interplay because theology itself emerges from experience. It is one's faith response that plays a vital role in deepening one's faith in the Universal Revealer Himself. The unique and special act of the transcendental God is that He reveals His love to all the humanity irrespective of cast, creed, and religion. Therefore, I would conclude say-



ing that Faith and Revelation are two unique sides of the same coin. They are inseparable complementing each other. Henceforth, as an ardent and honest pilgrim in search of truth and holiness, one must respond to God's Revelation in total freedom. In this constant search, the seeker with complete trust and commitment must do one's best and the Revealer Himself shall do the rest.

God in Jesus Christ and in Other Religions



Thomaia Charles ADL (II B.Th.)

We began our theological journey of Faith with a specific focus: "God in Jesus Christ, the Church and the Sacraments". The courses in the first phase (Prophets, Gospel of John, Pauline Corpus, Christology and Sikhism) enkindled us to see and to experience 'God in Jesus Christ' in the light of prophetic revelation, Gospel according to John, Pauline Corpus and Christology. They paved the way to experience God's manifestation in Jesus Christ as evidenced in the New Testament.

The study on the prophets in the existing Indian scenario helped us to grasp our own vocation as prophetic call in proclaiming the goodness of the Lord in establishing the reign of God (Kingdom Of God) in oneself, in our communities, ministry places and in people we encounter in our day today life.

The course on the Gospel of John presented Jesus as "Eternal Logos (Word)" that pre-existed (Jn 1:1) and became flesh and lived among us (Jn 1:14). The evangelist portrayed Jesus' option for the poor, marginalized, out-caste and oppressed as life-giver and life-promoter and called us to bear witness to Gospel in the midst of discrimination, atrocities, violence, etc. in the unjust society. Jesus is the life, who came to give that life in an abundant way (cf Jn 10:10) as

eternal life. Hence we are called to be the part of his eternal life.

The study of Pauline Corpus ignited us to the awareness of and communion with the Father and the Spirit in and through Jesus Christ. God's will of redemption is achieved in and through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the symbolic mediator or bridge that unites both God and Humankind. The study urges to experience the effects of Christ Event while going through the Pauline letters.

The course on Christology helped us to become aware that in the person of Jesus, there is fullness of

revelation. Jesus is both human and divine, who came down to redeem us from the clutches of sin. God the Father initiated the restoration of the human family in and through Jesus Christ. This kind of redemption St. Paul would call as follows: "To gather up all things in him, things



in heaven and all things on earth" (Eph 1:8-9). In the person of Jesus, God builds one corporate reality. Hence in and through Jesus we are not only adopted children of God but also participate in the eternal Sonship that belongs to the Word.

The study of Sikhism enabled us to understand that God's universal salvific work is being revealed in the people of other faiths, especially in Sikhism. It also helped us to see the work of grace and spirit in the religion.

Meaning of Being a True Christian in Today's World

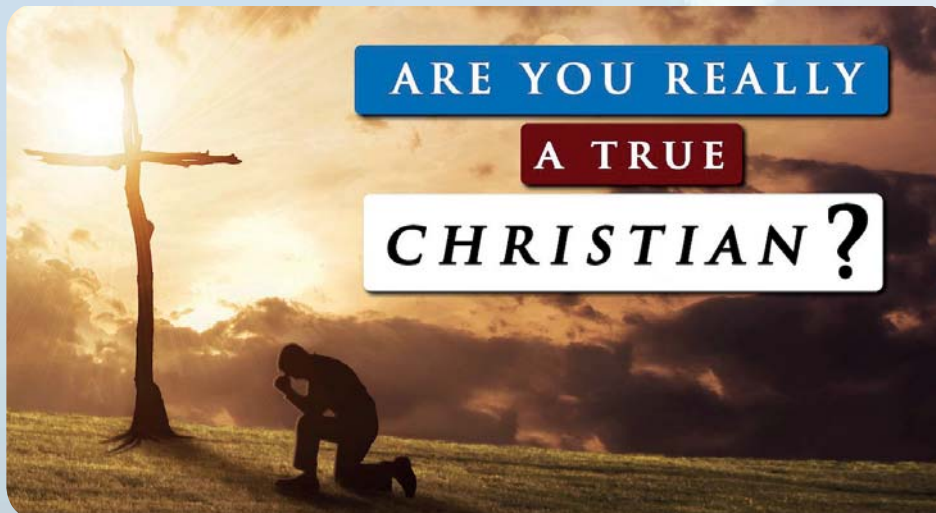


Mini Thomas CHF (III B.Th.)

The objective of theology is that it aims at transformation of individuals and structures. It also helps our life and faith to challenge each other. Vidyajyoti provides the students with many opportunities where our faith encounters current political, social issues which are really challenging. The Dharnasand conferences that we participate further expose us to the reality and they bring a transformative element in our faith. As I began my third year theology, I was very much eager to know how the subjects are going to help me to integrate the theme of the year 'Christians in the World'. So far we have completed sessions on Virtue Ethics, Bio-medical Ethics and Marriage Law etc. The Virtue Ethics explained the difference between theological virtues and cardinal virtues. Theological virtues are acquired and infused virtues and it deals with our relationship with God. The cardinal virtues deal with our relationship with one another. The classes helped me to reflect how natural I am in responding to people and situations. We need to grow in 'relational responsibility' which means 'doing good to all because we are related to all'. Love is the life line of Christianity. Love is lived faith and lived hope. Love coloured with justice (true love) desires the well-being of everyone. In other words it refers to 'Agape relationship'. The

classes on Biomedical Ethics enabled us to understand in detail the Church's stand on different ethical issues that we come across today. Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical Letter, *Evangelium Vitae* says, "In our present social context, marked by a dramatic struggle between the 'culture of life' and the 'culture of death', there is a need to develop a deep critical sense, capable of discerning true values and authentic need" (E.V.95). According to the Christian tradition the principal values of any human activity is human and life. In the Bible the human perceives him/herself as an active, creative and responsible being. He/she is not an absolute master but a responsible manager. God has blessed us with reason and freedom to follow the laws of life. We are created in

love to love. We can confidently say that Christian love takes the form of all virtues. So, as a Christian our responsibility is to promote, to defend, to



protect and to help to flourish life. The classes on Marriage Law helped us to grow in pastoral care and pastoral prudence knowing well the natural and the ecclesial laws pertaining to marriage. Marriage is an institution of the order of creation. It is raised to the dignity of Sacrament through Christ. Each topic regarding marriage law was expounded with the help of examples which gave us a clear picture of each canon that refers to Christian marriage.

Post Graduate Program at Vidyajyoti



Sebastian SJ (I M.Th.)

The post graduate program commenced on 14th July 2019. This year, it is a blessing to have three students for MTh and three for Doctoral studies. Variety is the hall mark of this batch because; we have one student from the Arch Dioces-

es of Agra and the other from the Arch Diocese of Madras Mylapore and four others from four different religious congregations. The Greek in the New Testament was the first course to start with, and it was indeed Greek to all of us to understand the rules and grammar. However, the group was able to crack it as we had sufficient time to dwell into the vocabulary and the grammar of Greek, which enabled us

to read the passages of New Testament in Greek and understand them.

It was a new experience to all of us to get introduced to the methods of contextual theology in India. The three-phase pointers of pluriform religiosity, multi cultures and rampant poverty in India are set as the contexts to understand God, Christ, Liberation, Mission and Gospel in an atmosphere of the riches of Indian religions, thoughts and people's movements. The presentation on the writings of Indian Christian theology

stalwarts George M. Soares Prabhu SJ, Felix Wilfred SJ, Michael Amaladas SJ, Samuel Rayan SJ, Sebastian Kappen, Jacob Parappally and Alangaram

enkindled us to look forward to a well-founded Indian theology with the smell of its soil, scene of its colorful cultures, worship of its mystical religiosity, reality of its poverty and challenges of its modern thoughts and People's movements.



Freshers' Voice

Experience of Vidyajyoti College



Bhadagi Jayanti SJ (I B.Th.)

It is my privilege to share with you my first hand experience and feelings of college life in Vidyajyoti College, Delhi. It is indeed a great joy to be part of it. When I entered the campus of Vidyajyoti College, I felt the

vibration of love, peace and serenity. Though I had heard about the climate of Delhi that it was extremely difficult to stay here, the external climate did not matter so much because the internal atmosphere made me feel more comfortable. I was very much impressed and inspired by the

exemplary life of Fathers, Brothers and Sisters at V.J. College. I received a very warm welcome and found the experience very moving. I cherished the companionship of everyone at V.J. Though we are coming from various parts of India yet there is a unity in diversity among us. I enjoy the Theology classes. I have got wonderful opportunity to be part of the street children and rickshaw pullers ministry. I consider it a great blessing to help them through this ministry. I experience inner peace and joy whenever I interact with them. It helps me reflect and theologize well in the class.

"Some memories are unforgettable, remaining ever vivid and heart-warming"

How was your first day in Vidyajyoti College of Theology? Being asked this question brings back all the memories I have when I first stepped in the college. Some of us may say it was a good experience while others the day was mind-numbing. My firsthand experience in Vidyajyoti College of Theology was very humbling and mind-opening. Though I miss many of my old friends about whom I thought I would never miss them, got a taste of new friends. I feel like a plant uprooted from one place and planted in other fertile soil at a new place. I consider Vidyajyoti is the right and fertile soil in which I am planted for the next three years for theological studies. It throws light on or values more

on contextual theology, which would mean doing theology in the field than of paper, where Jesus says, "whenever you did it to the least of these sisters and brothers of mine you did it to me" (Mt. 28: 40). Quite often, we recount that variety brings beauty to something; exactly it is the variety of friends, professors and the subjects that bring beauty to my life in Vidyajyoti. Finally I consider the VJ life the grace of God upon me as a gift of love.



Jibin CST (I B.Th.)

Well Begun Half Done With the Beautiful Experiences



Eugene ADL (I B.Th.)

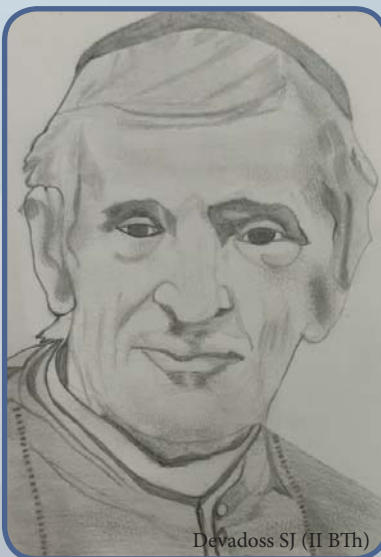
With a lot of excitement and joy, we stepped into our theological voyage. After laying our steps toward God within history and the response of faiths, we looked forward to know and experience the will of God during the theological journey. Placing our initial move in our journey with an introduction to theology and social analysis, we have learned to establish and cherish the social contact in our midst. Indeed, this course made us to ponder and feel the taste of Theology and guided us to theologize in and around us. Attending seminars and input sessions by professors of various disciplines helped us understand the theological aspects well and systematically.

The course on self-awareness enriched us to be aware of ourselves as well as of the surroundings. Some of the awareness exercises paved way to be more intimate with our feelings and emotions. Understating the true definition of faith and revelation enkindled our mind to have a deeper meaning of our faith. We felt the thirst and longing for faith in Christ. Dei Verbum enabled us to unfold our doubts and gave us the clear meaning to the Word of God as well as faith and revelation. As the Scripture is

one of the sources of doing theology it provided the instructions such as how to read and understand the text. Sufism enriched our mind with a lot of insights, which is also a support for our own faith. Interviews with some Sufis helped us to know more about their way of life. Culture is expressed through a variety of symbols and rituals which is a symbolic action. Each religion and culture has their own signs and symbols to show to their faithful people. Now we are aware of the importance of symbols and signs and their implications for one's culture and religion. By going



through numerous experiences of the classes as well as the social work enhanced our thoughts and deeds and widened the knowledge about the world and its needs. Each experience is instructing us to strengthen our faith and making us aware of our response to God's call and mission of Christ.



Devadoss SJ (II BTh)

Bl. John Henry Newman
Born: 21 February 1801
Died: 11 August 1890

Mother Mariam Thersia founded the congregation of the Holy Family with three friends, who took care of the poor and the needy. There was a great deal of objection to their work in the beginning. But she persisted and the accent of her work was on families, mainly poor suffering families.

Newman has been called the "absent Father of Vatican II" because his writings on conscience, religious liberty, Scripture, the vocation of lay people, the relation of Church and State, and other topics were extremely influential in the shaping of the Council's documents.



Devadoss SJ (II BTh)

Bl. Mariam Thersia
Born: 26 April 1876
Died: 8 June 1926

Interview

1. What has been your experience of teaching young theologians and your expectations from them?

My observation is that the young theologians showed keen interest to learn and I am of the opinion that this desire naturally leads them to equip themselves and have integral formation as Church expects.

2. How can the history of the church help us theologize the present context?

Grace builds on nature. In the course of centuries, the Church has reached the stage with all ups and downs, mingled with victories and failures, knowing the past, the students can with their own caliber, analyze the situation in their ministry which they take up and pass on the mission of compassion and mercy, always understanding the reality of the church.

3. What is your comment on the theme of this academic year, "Announcing the Gospel with Joy?"

Gospel itself is 'Good-spell'. Announcing it with joy is nothing but understanding the value of vocation, which one embraces, transmitting the faith and value though one has difficulties in one's life and conveying the mission of Christ.

Devadoss SJ (II B.Th.)



Fr. R.B Victor

Fr. R.B Victor is a priest of Nellore Diocese. He taught at St. John's regional seminary. At present he is the Director of Pastoral Centre

1. What was your experience of Vidyajyoti?

My experience of Vidyajyoti was one of pleasant, happy and enriching time. It was a time of grace and I feel grateful to the Vidyajyoti administration that permitted me to be part of it. I came here with a lot of thirst in my heart to deepen my scriptural knowledge, to enhance my understanding on Church related matters and to rejuvenate myself spiritually. The eight weeks lectures I attended helped me gain some insights, besides they clarified many of my doubts. Furthermore, the physical ambience, the good library, the discussions with the professors and classmates, the seminars held here are means to make a person whole. And obviously I enjoyed all of them.

2. What are your expectations from Vidyajyoti College of Theology?

My expectations are that Vidyajyoti may produce theologians who can read the signs of the time and respond to it prophetically. They may be leaders of integrity with pastoral care. In the present scenario as the Church faces scandals and corruption let you be the voice of Jesus, who through the prism of love brings justice.

3. What is your message to us as young theologians of the Catholic Church?

The Catholic Church will be in your hands in the coming years. My message would be that you be dynamic priests who walk the talk. I wish that you would build the Body of Christ with genuine commitment. You may be priests who show the healing, guiding face of Jesus not the established hierarchical Church. I pray that the three years of your study here may give you a profound experience of God's love and impelled by that you interpret the Word of God.

Usha Kujur OSU (II B.Th.)



Sr. Anjana SND

Sr. Anjana belongs to the Congregation of Sisters of Nore Dam. She had been principal at various places. She is now on her sabbatical.

VJ COLLEGE COMMUNITY



FIRST YEAR B.Th. BATCH



SECOND YEAR B.Th. BATCH



THIRD YEAR B.Th. BATCH