



Fr. Louis Marie Léveillé



Fr. Pedro Arrupe

SEPTEMBER 2020

MNL Madurai Jesuits' Newsletter

PROVINCIAL'S PROGRAMME

Given below is Fr. Provincial's Programme (August to October 2020) incorporating the changes that had to be made owing to the COVID-related developments. As and when there is greater clarity regarding the evolving Coronavirus situation, programme changes may be made and communicated to you.

AUGUST

- 01 Contact Visit: St. Mary's, Dindigul
- 02-03 Contact Visit: SJC and Clive House, Tiruchi
- 04-05 Visitation: VMI, Vilangudi
- 06-07 Visitation: Kalangarai, Nagapattinam
- 08 Consult (Online)
- 10-12 Visitation: SHC, Shembaganur
- 13-14 Visitation: Estates in Kodai Hills
- 15 Visitation: Ayyampalayam
- 18 Consult (Online)
- 16-31 Province Office

SEPTEMBER

- 01-08 Province Office
- 09 Contact Visit: DACA, Madurai
- 10-12 Contact Visit: SXC, Palayamkottai
- 13 Contact Visit: Xaveriana, Thoothukudi
- 14 Contact Visit: Thozhamai Illam, Kanyakumari
- 15 Contact Visit: Carmel, Nagercoil
- 16-17 Visitation: LTI, Madurai
- 18-20 Province Office

- 19 Consult (Online)
- 21-22 Visitation: IDEAS-LAAS, Madurai
- 23 Contact Visit: St. Mary's, Madurai
- 24 Contact Visit: AAC, Karumathur
- 25-30 Province Office

OCTOBER

- 01 Province Office
- 02-03 GBM: Higher Education (Online)
- 04 Silver Jubilee Mass – St. Anne's, Crawford, Tiruchi
- 05-06 Province Office
- 07 Ordination: SJC, Tiruchi
- 08-09 Province Office
- 10-11 GBM: Secondary Education (Online)
- 12-16 Province Office
- 17-18 GBM: Social Action (Online)
- 19 Consult (Online)
- 19-23 Province Office
- 24-25 GBM: Communication (Online)
- 26-28 JCSA Meeting (Online)
- 29-31 Province Office



Announcements

Ordination 2020: Owing to the prevailing pandemic-induced uncertainty, the CEN-MDU Deacons will be ordained Priests in the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes at St. Joseph's College, Tiruchi, during an Ordination Service with limited attendance that will start at 05:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 7, 2020. There will be live streaming of the Ordination Service. Most Rev. S. Antonysamy, D.D., D.C.L., Bishop of Palayamkottai, has kindly confirmed his acceptance to be the Ordaining Prelate.

One of the ordinandi is **Deacon Raphael Alexander** who arrived in Madurai safe and sound on August 16th. The recent Vande Bharat Repatriation Mission initiative and he having tested COVID Negative in Paris made his journey possible. He was tested again and his COVID Negative status was confirmed at Madurai Airport, too, on arrival. Following that, he had his quarantine at LTI community, Madurai. He writes: "Thanks to the LTI community for accepting me here for the self-quarantine and their affectionate care with the balanced nutrition to boost my immune system. I also take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Europe Occidentale Francophone Province, particularly, the Centre Sevres Jesuit community for their magnanimous and benevolent care during the three years of my formation in France."

Community Prayer Book: After *Pray! Pray Much!* (SG Pedro Arrupe Prayer Services), copies of *Towards Loving Service* (Prayers on UAP and CAP) prepared by JDV, Pune, and VJ, Delhi, are being despatched to our communities/teams.

Dhaanam Movement: In the absence of a vaccine for COVID-19, Tamil Nadu has authorized a few hospitals to go for "plasma therapy". Recovered COVID-19 patients are invited, after 14 days of recovery, to donate the plasma (500 ml) that contains the antibodies which can save at least two lives, particularly at their initial week of infection. The procurement of plasma is done through a safe "apheresis method" after a thorough check-up of the donor. After the plasma segregation, the blood is infused back at once and the donor is eligible for another three donations with an interval of 14 days in between. In the present pandemic context, this is indeed a "Eucharistic response" to the COVID - 19 crisis. Dhaanam movement <jerrysj1@gmail.com> is at your service for any further details on this proactive response to the neo-viral phenomenon.

Interreligious Literacy & Dialogue Centre: Fr. Vincent Sekhar is planning to start an Interreligious Literacy & Dialogue Centre in Madurai Province, based for the time being in Arul Anandar College (Autonomous), Karumathur. The major objective is to bring about cordial relationships between religious communities through religious literacy, dialogue, and goodwill practices. It is also in view of building mutual trust and cooperation, peace, and harmony. Send any suggestion and a fitting name in Tamil to: <sekharsj2010@gmail.com>.

FYI & A: 1. Please read the request on p. 4 of MDU Catalogue 2020: "Any error noticed in the Catalogue may kindly be brought to the attention of the Socius." Even now it is not too late. Please go through the Catalogue (particularly what concerns you and your community/team) and report any error on/before 15 September 2020.

2. Certain communications including the soft copies of the letters of Fr. General, MNL, JIVAN etc., are sent not only to Superiors/Team Leaders but also to individual MDU and CEN Jesuits. The mailing list, however, is always a work in progress. It does not include all the addresses but only of those who requested/will request <curia@mdusj.org> to be included in it.

Socius

New Mobile Numbers

Fr. A. George Stephen Thayriam: 80983-38135
Deacon G. Raphael Alexander: 95978-08395

APPOINTMENTS BY FR. GENERAL

Fr. Soosai Mani: Provincial of Delhi Province

Fr. Dionysius Gerard Leonard Vaz (Dion): Provincial of Karnataka Province

Fr. Sujewa Pathirana: Socius to SRI Provincial

Fr. Keith William Abranches: Rector of Collegio Internazionale del Gesù, Rome (assumes charge in July 2021)

Fr. Peter Mclsaac: Regional Superior of Guyana and Jamaica (Fr. General has made it known that a new Province will be created in two years' time taking in the Jesuits of the Dominican Republic and Cuba as well as Guyana and Jamaica, at which point a new Provincial is likely to be appointed.)

Fr. Joseph O'Keefe: First Provincial Superior of the most recently created Jesuit Province: United States East (UEA).

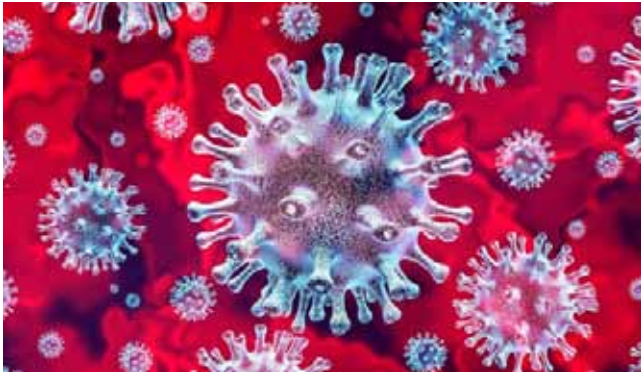
APPOINTMENTS BY FR. PROVINCIAL

Fr. A. George Stephen Thayriam: Province Development Director (additional responsibility)

Fr. Vincent Irudhayaraj: Editor of *Paathaigal*

Fr. M. Xavier Antony Selvam: Owing to COVID-related travel restrictions and academic disruptions, commencement of his Licentiate studies at the Biblicum, Rome, is postponed to the next academic year 2021-'22. He continues to serve as a Pre-novitiate formator and Spiritual Guide at VMI, Vilangudi, and also assists with the writing and editorial work of MDU Curia.

HEALTH-COVID-19 UPDATE



Beschi, Dindigul: Because there was a COVID-19 Positive case in Paraimedu next to Beschi campus, the District Collector ordered COVID testing to be done in Beschi Illam on 1 August. In all, 41 persons, mostly younger Jesuits, as well as domestic workers of Beschi and Maduralaya were tested. Test results came on 6 August, and all 41 persons tested were COVID-19 Negative. As the Collector took the initiative and ordered the testing, prevailing fees of Rs. 3,700 per test were not charged. On 13 August, **Frs. M. Viaguladasan and Maria Jeyaraj** had a sudden deterioration of their health. COVID-19 test of both of them came out Negative, and soon they recovered completely. **Fr. R. Dhanaraj** was rushed to St. Joseph Hospital on 31.08.2020 as his SpO2 was below 80%. A battery of tests was done which detected bilateral pulmonary thromboembolism and deep vein thrombosis. He was responding well to medication and was taken off Oxygen. He was discharged on 3 September and he is on anticoagulant medication. He is allowed to engage in his daily activities as usual.

Loyola, Vettavalam: **Fr. Vino Selukas** underwent COVID-19 test on 4 August at the Boys' Hostel, Loyola College, Vettavalam. The result came after two days, and as he had tested positive, he was admitted on the same day in Rangammal Memorial

Hospital, Athiyantal, Tiruvannamalai. He gave the second test on 11 August and the result turned out to be negative and so he was brought back on 13 August to Loyola, Vettavalam, to continue his quarantine for one more week. **Fr. Gerlin Amaladoss**, suffered chest congestion on 1 September and was taken to a hospital in Thiruvannamalai for first aid treatment and then on to CMC, Vellore. Having done all the required tests (including COVID-19), the doctors diagnosed three blocks and did angioplasty and cleared two blocks. The third one in the artery of the left chamber was not cleared as they diagnosed other complications and Fr. Gerlin has continued to be kept under intensive observation.

Kodai Hills: Manalur was the last leg of Fr. Provincial's visitation of our houses in Kodai Hills. As he was leaving in the Provincial's car on 15 August morning for his last stopover at Ayyampalayam, **Fr. A. Soosai Raj**, Manager, St. Mary's Estate, Manalur, who was feeling unwell also left in another car for Batlagundu. After a quick check-up at Leonard Hospital, a CT scan taken in Batlagundu itself indicated that he could be mildly COVID-19 Positive. So, he proceeded to Dindigul and was admitted in the COVID-19 isolation ward at St. Joseph Hospital. A swab test taken on 17 August determined that he was mildly COVID Positive. As a precautionary measure, Fr. Danis postponed his visitation schedule indefinitely.

Subsequent to Fr. Soosai Raj's COVID Positive condition and admission in St. Joseph Hospital, Dindigul, health workers visited St. Mary's Estate, Manalur, on 19 August and tested 29 persons in all, including Sch. Vigash. They instructed that the cook who had gone down should report to the Ayyampalayam camp for testing on the following day. There would be a stoppage of work and self-quarantining in force till the test results were made available. In the afternoon, on the same day, health personnel visited SHC, Shembag, and tested four Jesuits and four co-workers who had interacted with Fr. Soosai Raj during his last visit.

Fr. Soosai Raj was discharged from St. Joseph Hospital on 27 August and home-quarantined at Beschi Illam. Back in Manalur and Shembaganur those who had been tested for COVID-19 because of their association with Fr. Soosai Raj, have all tested negative.

AAC, Karumathur: On 21 August, **Fr. S. Lazar** was rushed to Moondrumavadi Hospital, Madurai, and from there shifted to Venkateshwara Gastroenterology

Hospital for severe pain in his gall bladder. On the following day, he successfully underwent laparoscopic surgery to remove gallbladder stones. After remaining in the ICU for two days, he was brought back to the regular ward. He was discharged on 30 August. **Fr. Amalraj Santhanam**, PP of Kadamalaikundu, an attached member of the community, was taken to Madurai where a lung specialist found some symptoms of mild COVID-19 in him. He was asked to take the prescribed medication and have a week-long home isolation which he has been having at AAC. Because of Fr. Amalraj's stay in the community, first without and then with isolation, the community has been implementing stricter social distancing protocols. All the regular community activities have been temporarily suspended and the members have been requested to follow different timings for meals and Mass. Since the driver drove him to the hospital, he, too, has been advised to be under isolation as a precautionary measure.

De Britto, Devakottai: On 22 July, **Fr. Babu Vincent** returned to Devakottai from Madurai and was in room quarantine for two weeks. The joy of having him back in the community did not last long as **Br. Victor Paul Sengolraj** started developing chest infection. He was brought from De Britto, Devakottai, to Dindigul on 26 August and from there taken to Madurai Apollo hospital on the basis of a CT scan report strongly suggestive/indicative of COVID-19. On 27 and 29 August, two swab tests were done, and both were negative. Yet, Br. Victor continued to have a severe lung infection and he was on 5 litres of oxygen with which he was maintaining SpO2 up to 95%. The driver, the attendant who brought him from Devakottai to Dindigul, Sr. Smita PDDM, Br. Santiago and driver Sekhar who took him from Dindigul to Apollo, Madurai, were kept in isolation till the negative swab test result came. They ended their isolation on 28 August morning but were asked to remain watchful for any symptoms. By September 5th, Br. Victor was feeling much better and his Oxygen support has been reduced to 2 litres. A third swab test confirmed his COVID Negative status and he was moved to the common ward on 07.09.2020.

Arul Kadal: Nine community members including Frs. Raj Irudaya, Xavier Rajan and Sahayaraj John Stanley, and Schs. Albin, Benitto Arulselvan, John Richard, Jayaseelan, Bosco and Udaya Prakash got infected by Corona. The ordeal began on 4 August. All of them were admitted in St. Thomas Hospital,

Chennai. Meanwhile, Arul Kadal was declared a தடை செய்யப்பட்ட வீடு. Getting in or getting out was not allowed and violations were to be reported to Pattinappakkam Police Station. On 11 August, Frs. Xavier Rajan and Raj Irudaya were shifted to Kauvery Hospital, Chennai, for intensive care and treatment.

By God's grace, seven of those admitted in St. Thomas Hospital recovered and returned to Arul Kadal by 17 August. On 21 August, Fr. Xavier Rajan developed further health complications and was shifted to ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome) Ward of Kauvery Hospital. His CT scan report pointed to both his lungs being infected by COVID-19. He continued to breathe through the flow of supplemental Oxygen support. However, both Frs. Raj Irudaya and Xavier Rajan began feeling better from 22 August. Fr. Xavier Rajan was discharged from the hospital on 31 August. All those discharged are room-quarantined for 14 days and there is door delivery of food and refreshments thanks to the Kitchen Committee and Infirmarians. Fr. Raj Irudaya, too, was shifted from ICU to the normal isolation ward. His impending discharge from Kauvery Hospital was intimated to Arul Kadal on September 4th morning. After finishing all the formalities at the financial section of the hospital, Fr. Baskar received a briefing by Dr. Siddharth on the post-hospitalization care of Fr. Raj. As per the directions, he has to be isolated in his room for seven days. Fr. Raj, accompanied by Fr. Baskar in the ambulance, reached Arul Kadal at 07:00 p.m. The entire Arul Kadal community waited at the entrance to receive him warmly with *Mangala Aarathi*. It was a joyful moment of a true sense of reunion.

Dhyana Ashram: Chennai Corporation officials came to test Dhyana Ashram inmates on 23 August. Test results came on 25 August. Fr. Lawrence Amalraj and Ms Savarimaniammal, a resident domestic worker, tested positive. While she was hospitalized in Omandurar Government Hospital, the hospital doctors sent Fr. Lawrence Amalraj back to Dhyana Ashram for home quarantine. A second test done at St. Thomas Hospital indicated that he was COVID Negative. Ms Savarimaniammal, too, has returned to Dhyana Ashram.

Fr. A. Antonysamay, who was still in Berkeley, USA, at the time of his brother's death on July 7th, underwent an angioplasty there and was discharged after three days of hospitalization on 20.08.2020. He is now back in India. Having completed his mandatory 14-day quarantine at Loyola, Chennai, he is expected to reach AAC, Karumathur on September 9th.

NEWS DIGEST

Tertianships

Prerana, Bengaluru: Since the tertianship at Shembaganur is suspended for this year due to COVID-19, Karnataka Province is hosting the tertianship at Prerana, Mount St. Joseph, Bengaluru; 23 tertians from 12 Provinces started arriving at Prerana from 24 August 2020. Fr. Prashanth D'Souza, Director, Prerana, welcomed them and introduced them to the quarantine protocols of the house/campus. Instructors, Frs. Arul Sivan and William D'Souza, too, arrived in advance to plan for the programme. On 1 September, the tertianship began with the Eucharist, concelebrated by Fr. Stany D'Souza, soon-to-be POSA, Fr. Dion Vaz, who is stepping into Fr. Stany's shoes as KAR Provincial, and Fr. Antony Joseph, Rector of Mount St. Joseph Jesuit community, Bangalore. The tertians count on your prayerful support during their formation at the School of the Heart.

Benedict Santosh

Sitagarha: Tertians (26) began their Long Retreat on 2 September 2020. They, too, request your prayers for themselves and their Instructors, Frs. Ignatius Tete and K.C. Stephen.

Kalvi Urimai Padhukappu Thesiya Kootamaippu-TN and Puducherry National Federation for the Protection Educational Rights - TN and Puducherry)

National Education Policy (NEP) – 2020 was released by the Central Government on 29 July 2020 with the Cabinet's approval. We immediately plunged into action and formed the *Kalvi Urimai Padhukappu Thesiya Kootamaippu* on August 5th to reflect on, respond to and implement action plans remonstrating against the declared NEP. Jesuits in Madurai and Chennai Provinces played a vital role in the formation of this federation. Educationists, NGOs, social activists, leaders of peoples' movements, TNP-CRI, TANCEAN (Tamil Nadu Catholic Education Association), Muslim organizations, students' leaders and interested individuals are part of this group. This is a completely apolitical federation. It gets the cooperation and collaboration of the political parties as and when required.

1. Some concerns and contentious issues in NEP-2020:

1. Though education is in the concurrent list, NEP aims towards centralizing it through

National Education Commission (Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog), the introduction of the Indian Education Service (IES) and centralized curriculum by NCERT. States are reduced only to being executors.

2. Starting regular and formal schooling for children from 3 years onwards.
3. School complexes/clusters against the concept of neighbourhood schools.
4. Untrained volunteers to teach in regular schools.
5. State School Exams in 3, 5, 8 Standards.
6. Vocationalization of education from VI to VIII Standards.
7. Semester and streaming from XI to XII Standards.
8. Promoting privatization of education on the false claim that India does not have resources for public education.
9. Three language formula and imposition of Hindi.
10. Merit-based scholarship and no reservation in education and employment.
11. NEET for all higher education courses.
12. Pass in NTA (National Testing Agency) test for teachers for promotion, increment, incentive and salary structure.
13. Not acknowledging the valuable contribution of minorities towards education.
14. Multiple pathways and promotion of the non-formal school system, denying access to physical school.

2. Actions programmes already accomplished:

- On August 16th, one-day webinar on NEP was organized from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for more than a lakh participants addressed by student leaders, academicians, NGOs and political leaders.

- From August 24th to 30th, continuous webinars were conducted every evening on various themes of NEP.

- Facebook protest against NEP was held on August 30th. People protested in more than 5,000 places in Tamil Nadu and uploaded their protest photos or videos in their Facebook accounts.

3. Future course of action:

1. Preparation of small videos on the evils of NEP for conscientizing students, parents and the public.
2. Mobilizing students' unions and teachers' unions.
3. Memorandum to all political parties, CM, MLAs and MPs of Tamil Nadu.
4. Preparing models of alternative education.
5. District level mobilization and protest once

the lockdown is completely lifted.

6. Signature campaign.
7. Postcard campaign with people’s participation
8. Twitter campaign.
9. Good morning messages every day in WhatsApp and Facebook.
10. Mobilizing support in other States especially in non-BJP ruling states.

S.M. John Kennedy

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Draft 2020

The virtual meeting on EIA 2020 which was coordinated by Fr. John Irudaya Kumar began on 3 August. Frs. S. Maria Packiam, Santhanam, S.M. John Kennedy, Raj Irudaya, L.R. Michael Raj, Arulanandam and X. D. Selvaraj participated in this meeting. This team has started a movement known as ALL INDIA PEOPLE’S FEDERATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION.

In collaboration with collaborators and students, AICUF, CRI, Bishops, NGOs, movements and political parties, CEN-MDU Jesuits have jointly conducted various programmes, namely, organizing awareness programmes on EIA-2020 through webinars demanding the withdrawal of EIA -2020 draft notification which has a significant negative impact on the natural resources and the lives of people. A lakh of people from Tamil Nadu were motivated to send their demands to the Central Government to withdraw the EIA 2020 draft.

The Institute of Dialogue with Cultures and Religions (IDCR) and Environment Division, Entomology Research Institute (ERI), have jointly conducted a national webinar on ‘Environmental Concerns in India Today’ with the keynote address delivered by Dr. M. Selvanayagam, Dean-Research, LICET, Chennai on 9 August. As a member of the Eco Jesuit Network of South Asia, Fr. S. Maria Packiam shared the initiatives of the All India People’s Federation for Environmental Protection with the different zones of Eco Jesuit Network of South Asia to encourage our collaborators and the common people of India to send their objections to the Central Government of India.

S. Maria Packiam

AICUF calls to be consistent

As the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world to a standstill, we the Tamil Nadu AICUF members, have been trying our best to keep the young people active and alive in all possible ways. One among them is having constant and consistent virtual discussions on the current burning issues such as EIA, NEP, and



Human Rights Violation at Sathankulam. We had two awareness webinars for the AICUF youth and youth animators. On 9 July, Mr. C. J. Rajan, an advocate and Ex-AICUFer, shared his thoughts and legalities on custodial deaths like those of Mr. Jeyaraj and Mr. Fenix at Sathankulam. AICUF members strongly condemn such inhuman acts. On 30 July, Mr. Sundarajan, founder of Poovulagin Nanbargal, expressed his thoughts on EIA 2020 and the necessary response by the youth of today. TN-AICUF tries to keep the flame of social justice burning in the hearts of young people through continued interaction and consistent accompaniment. Kudos and thanks to the State Executive Committee student leaders.

N. Parthasarathi

Walking with the Migrants Beyond Covid-19 Pandemic

*“It is impressive to learn that **Walking with the Migrants Beyond Covid-19 Pandemic** was undertaken collaboratively, by 3 dedicated organizations with a vision and desire to make a difference in the lives of migrants, supported by experienced eminent personalities from various walks of life”- Cardinal Oswald Gracias.*

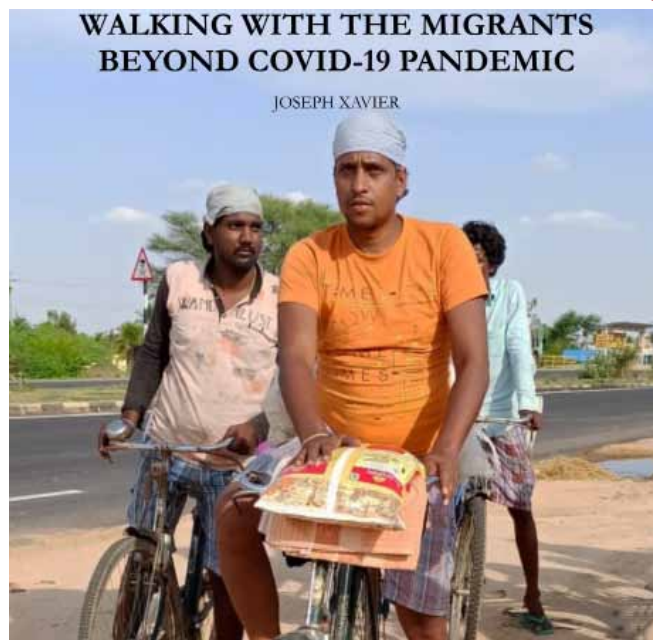
This study was undertaken by the Indian Social Institute, Bengaluru, partnering with Caritas India and Indo Global Social Service Society (IGSSS), conducted between June-July 2020, primarily to amplify the voices of migrants themselves, stakeholders who are actively engaged with migrants and a panel of experienced and concerned public intellectuals and activists. The study emphasized the need for future interventions, to guide the engagements of all the three organizations, along with understanding and underlining the present and future role of the government, civil society, trade unions, and academicians among others, in improving the quality of lives of migrants.

This timely planned and executed study, authored by Fr. Joseph Xavier, Director, ISI-B, was joyfully released on a virtual platform on 30 July 2020 by His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias, of which the first copies were duly received by Mr. Manavalan, IAS, President, IGSSS and Mr. Vijayanand, Former Chief Secretary, Govt. of Kerala.

What is the uniqueness of this study? Apart from amplifying the voices of the migrants, the report presents a good literature review, theoretical framework and strategies and plan of action for the short term, medium term, and long term. It also echoes the voices of civil society activists - Ms. Aruna Roy, Ms. Medha Patkar, Mr. Nikhil Dey, Prof. Babu Mathew, Prof. Virginius Xaxa and Prof. Bernard D' Sami, national networks – Action Aid and Oxfam India, academicians, policy research organisations, field-based CSOs and bureaucrats. Major networks in India have taken up this study for reflections and actions within their organisations.

Cardinal Oswald Gracias was pleased with and appreciated the collaborative efforts of the three organizations in taking up a study that is deemed to be the need of the hour. He pressed on the need for a more pragmatic and systematic planning, to facilitate the migrants' lives with their deserved dignity, if and when they return to metros and cities. Mr. Vijayanand, IAS, who recently retired as Chief Secretary of Kerala, emphasized the need for disseminating the rich document with State and Central Government officials and translating the document in Hindi to reach out to masses at the ground level. Many other dignitaries, who spoke on the occasion, highly valued such a collaborative venture. Speaking on this occasion, Fr. George Pattery, President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia and the Governing Board of Indian Social Institute, Bengaluru, and Fr. Xavier Jeyaraj, Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, Jesuit Curia, Rome, appreciated the timely publication of this study and made an earnest appeal to strengthen collaborative efforts across all organisations to respond to the plight of the migrants.

The virtual report launch event was well-timed and organized by the heads of three organisations. While concluding the presentation of the research outcomes, Fr. Joseph Xavier, expressed the need to grow in empathy and compassion towards migrants and look for new opportunities to strengthen collaborative efforts for policy interventions. Fr. Paul Moonjely, ED, Caritas India, and Mr. John Peter Nelson, ED,



IGSSS, moderated the initial round of reflections and open discussion, respectively. Academicians, experts in the field, members from CSO's, bureaucrats, among others, were present throughout the 2-hour virtual event, participated enthusiastically and congratulated all the three organizations, blessed and expressed pleasure at the release of a very well-timed report.

Read the report: https://isibangalore.com/images/researchPdfs/Walking_with_the_Migrants_Beyond_Covid-19_Pandemic.pdf

A. Joseph Xavier

Pre-Ordination Programme (POP) 2020

Pre-Ordination Programme (POP) 2020 for the Scholastics of the Southern Provinces was to have been held as per the yearly plan in Kuttikanam, Kerala, between 12 April and 12 May. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme was delayed and eventually dropped. PCFs, Fr. Stephen L. Pragasam (MDU) and Fr. J. Antony Robinson (CEN), together came up with a creative solution to the problem and organized it jointly for the two Provinces at Dhyana Ashram, Chennai, with Fr. Jerry Rosario as facilitator. Jerry, as always, rose to the occasion and planned it meticulously in his own creative way. In addition, with a good number of books and materials necessary for perusing during the programme, a provisional POP library was set up in a short while with the help of Fr. Raj Irudaya, Superior of Arul Kadal.

POP 2020 was held from 1 July to 31 July including an eight-day retreat. In a typically Ignatian way it had

the following four weeks with different themes:

- First Week (5 days) – Inspiration Week
- Second Week (7 days) – Invitation Week
- Third Week (9 days) - Ignatian Week
- Fourth Week (10 days) - Integration Week

The inaugural Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Fr. Robin, PCF, Chennai Province, on 1 July. In his inaugural address, he elucidated the expectations of the POP which put us on the right track.

On 2 and 3 July, Fr. Jerry enthused us with his input and sharing on the theme “Arrupe’s call for POP and Analysis of Priests today.” On 4 July, Fr. Joe Arun guided us into another key concept, Dispositions, drawing the foundational sparks from the Spiritual Exercises, our First Fathers and Jesuit Saints. On Sunday, 5 July, Fr. Darwin, Superior, Dhyana Ashram, celebrated a solemn Sunday Mass and shared his reflections on the inspirational theme of Mother Mary and our praying for the grace ‘to be placed with her Son.’ From 6 to 8 July, Fr. Raymond of Madras-Mylapore Archdiocese conducted a course on Psycho-Sexual-Spiritual Integration as a Priest. His sharing helped us know the reality of priesthood at the ground level and inspired us to become integrated persons for the mission of God. On 9 July, Fr. Francis P. Xavier, dealt with the Universal Apostolic Preferences at a webinar. With ample time for interaction with him after his presentation, we became more familiar with and convinced of the UAP.

July 10th was like a day of repatriation for us to be at Arul Kadal for the Schola Brevis. Former CSI Bishop Rev. Devasagayam delivered the keynote address on Pandemic Covid-19 and Christian Response. On 11 July, Fr. Valerian (JAM), a professor from Satya Nilayam, Chennai, had a session with us on Jesuit Cosmic Vision of Life. We liked the way he combined philosophy and theology and presented to us in a creative way the Jesuit connectedness and Jesuit cosmic vision of life following the footprints of Teilhard de Chardin. On 12 July, Fr. Xavier Alphonse gave us an experiential session on Jesuit Administration and Animation. He invited us to become collaborative administrators rather than mere authoritarian executives. From 13 to 16 July, Fr. Michael Alosanaya enlightened us on the theme Ignatian Roots for Priestly Life and Union of Minds and Hearts.

On 17 July, Fr. Raj Irudaya exposed to us another important theme, the Jesuit Priest - a Discerning

Leader. With a brief introduction to different kinds of leadership, he delineated the fundamentals of Ignatian leadership which helped us imbibe his discerning spirit. On 18 July, Fr. Michael Amaladoss presented to us Decree 6 of GC 34 on Ministerial Priesthood. As he was part of the drafting committee of that decree, he handled the topic extremely well. On 20 July, Fr. Anand Amaladass discussed the major spiritualities apart from our own Ignatian spirituality. Inception and historical development of each spirituality was dealt with in detail with precision. On 21 July, Fr. Leo Anand exposed to us the Seven Pillars of Priesthood by Pope Francis.

Every evening saw a synthesising Eucharist during which experiential sharing was done by people from varied backgrounds such as Sr. Nesam FBS, Mr. Naveen, a CSI lay leader, Fr. Joe Andrew, Director of Chennai Pastoral Centre, Fr. Sathyabalan and Fr. Basil.

On 22 July, Fr. Jerry synthesised the whole POP. It was a day of fasting and we prepared ourselves for the eight-day retreat. From 23 to 30 July, we had a guided retreat with Fr. Louis Adaikala Raj—his first retreat for Jesuits. The momentous POP 2020 came to an end with the festal Eucharistic celebration of our Founder St. Ignatius on 31 July morning, during which we offered “the fruits and graces of POP” individually signed and renewed our Vows. The presence of the members of the CEN curia, Fr. Jebamalai Raja, Provincial, Fr. Ilanko Xavier, Socius, and Fr. Robin, PCF, added lustre to the auspicious event.

We thank both the PCFs, Fr. Stephen L. Pragasam and Fr. Robin, for their systematic planning. We are indebted to Fr. Jerry for his able and innovative coordination. We extend our sincere thanks to the Dhyana Ashram community for their awesome hospitality with much care and love.

Arul G.

Writers and Researchers Forum of Madurai Province

Fr. Vincent Sekhar, Head of the Department of Human Excellence, AAC, Karumathur, hosted a webinar for the *Writers and Researchers Forum of Madurai Province* on 5-6 August 2020. He began by inviting us to pray for the victims of Beirut explosion of the previous day (4 August 2020) and went on to explain the dynamics of the two-day sessions. Fr. Pugazh read out the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 February 2019 at IDCR, Loyola College, Chennai. It was followed by the first presentation by Fr.

Godwin Rufus on *“Ignatian Spirituality and Mysticism in the Selected Novels of Paulo Coelho: A Critical Study.”* The delineation of Ignatian mysticism found in Coelho’s novels brought our certain commonalities between them and the *Spiritual Exercises* and the Jesuit *Constitutions*. His insights led us to good discussion and appreciation. Fr. Paulraj Packiam made the second presentation on the *“Employability of the Graduates in Higher Education Institutions with Special Reference to Jesuit Colleges in Tamil Nadu.”* It was a good link between the three Es - *Education, Employment and Economy* – and how they made a great impact on the graduates. The session was moderated by Fr. Arockiasamy Xavier, Principal of St. Joseph’s College, Tiruchirappalli. Thereafter, there was the individual budding scholars’ sharing, moderated by Fr. Joseph Xavier from ISI, Bengaluru. It was a good platform for sharing one’s research enthusiasm and plans. And the first day concluded with the repeat of the prayer for the Beirut blast victims.

On 6 August, the webinar resumed with a short prayer for generosity prepared by Fr. Vincent Sekhar in the context of *Partnership with Others*. Fr. Lawrence recapitulated the first day’s events and the first presentation was made by Fr. Michael John. His doctoral thesis titled *“Perception and Practices of Servant Leadership Characteristics among HR Professionals of Private Organizations in Kancheepuram and Chennai Districts”* highlighted the demands and the profundity of *Servant Leadership* approach believed to bring in a profound transformation in HR personnel. It was an eye-opener. The second presentation was made by Fr. Arul Oli. His doctoral dissertation *“Confidentiality Techniques to Enhance Data Security in Public Cloud Storage”* helped us understand that maximum security is the demand of the digital age, and at the same time, a tough task in securing data. The day’s two presentations, moderated by Fr. Gilbert Camillus, were followed by individuals’

sharing and it was moderated by Fr. Sahaya Philomin Raj. Several scholars and institutions shared on their recent socially and spiritually relevant publications. Participants, in general, were satisfied with the pattern and the method of the webinar and they thanked Fr. Vincent Sekhar for holding the WR forum for the 15th year. Fr. Sekhar thanked Fr. S. Jayaseelan, Sch. Anil Nama (AND), and Fr. Joseph Xavier (ISI) for their technical assistance and Fr. Pugazh and Fr. Lawrence Benedict for preparing and reading out the reports.

Lawrence Benedict

Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network (PWPN)

Respect for the Planet’s Resources

In September 2020, we pray that the planet’s resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner.

Dindigul: Maduralaya

Armed with a COVID Negative test certificate, **Fr. George Stephen Thayriam** availed himself of a VBM (VANDE BHARAT MISSION) flight and managed to arrive in Madurai Airport, from where he was picked up immediately and brought to Maduralaya before 4:00 p.m. on 3 September 2020. Keeping the required social distance, community members welcomed him with a bouquet and from Maduralaya portico up he went to Room 230 to begin his mandatory 14-day quarantine.

AMUTHU: As a follow-up to extending our helping hand to the needy and the deserving ones during the COVID lockdown, AMUTHU identified 180 conservancy workers and 80 widows and distributed dry food rations packet measuring 12 kg. On 10 August 2020, a production unit was officially



inaugurated in the tailoring centre at Porulur. The purpose of this unit is to provide earn-while-you-learn work opportunities to the trainees while they are in training. The newly designed AMUTHU logo was also released on the same day in the presence of staff and tailoring students.

Jeyabaskaran

Dindigul: Beschi Illam

Novitiate: After their quarantine and First Probation, 11 first-year novices (6 MDU, 4 CEN, 1 CCU) entered the Second Probation on 27 July 2020 which was marked by Cassock Day celebrations. All through this academic year 2020-'21, the Novitiate has planned to welcome the first-year novices into the Society and accompany them with the theme "Friends in Christ". From 24 to 27 July, as Fr. Inigo preached the annual triduum for the second-year novices, the first-year novices were guided in a triduum by Fr. Michael Panimaya Raj. From 28 to 30 July, an orientation programme was organized by Frs. Novice Master and his Socius. Special sessions by Fr. Jesu Raja Raju and Sch. Lenin helped the novices to understand the spirit of the Society of Jesus, especially our way of proceeding and community itself being a mission. On the eve of our Founder's feast, Fr. Dhanaraj gave an exhortation based on the *Principle and Foundation*. He emphasized inner freedom as the salient quality to imbibe the spirit of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Respecting Corona protocols, we deliberately kept St. Ignatius feast day celebrations low-key. Fr. Michael Doss was the main celebrant and Fr. Michael Panimaya Raj preached a homily on Jesuit commitment and apostolic zeal in the perspective of *Sume et Suscipe* (Take and Receive). The choir trained by Fr. M.S. Bastian rendered remarkably well a few semi-classical songs composed by our Jesuits. On 15 August, the Feast of Assumption of our Lady and 74th Independence Day were celebrated. In the evening, juniors and novices exhibited their talents during a short cultural fest. On 16 August, there was a quiz programme conducted by the Juniorate team for novices on the theme 'Indian Freedom Fighters'. From 24 to 29 August, a course on Emotional Maturity by Fr. I. M. Joseph was organized for our novices.

Juniorate: After a month-long stay and study in Madurai, the Juniors moved back to Beschi Illam. On 27 July, we had the inauguration of the CEN-MDU Common Juniorate for the academic year 2020-'21 in CIS, Beschi Illam. Fr. Danis Ponniah, Provincial, was the chief guest. In his message, he underscored the significance of leadership with credibility. Frs. Michael Doss, Superior and Stephen, PCF, wished the Juniorate team well. Fr. Swaminathan assured the invitees that the Juniors would take the road not taken. At the end of the programme, Fr. Danis blessed and opened the new computer room. In the evening of 31 July, the Juniorate celebrated the feast with a cultural programme. To begin with, the Juniors

sang Alma de Cristo. Then, Sch. Milton's recitation of his Ignatian poem and Sch. Franklin's speech on Maturing Spirituality captivated the gathering. The mime on "the Impact of COVID-19 in Our Daily Life" won thunderous applause from the audience. In his message, Fr. Inigo encouraged the Juniors to follow Ignatius in going against the odds of life. On 13 August, the Juniors attended the webinar "My Call for Fidelity, Audacity and Consistency: A Pedagogy for Formation" organized by Fr. Antony Robinson, PCF (CEN). On 15 August, Fr. Williams, Dean of Studies, Beschi Juniorate, unfurled the tricolour flag, and Sch. Jones held the gathering spellbound with his well-articulated Independence Day speech deploring the government's neglect of the welfare of the people and promotion of religious fundamentalism. That evening, the Juniors joined the novices for a cultural programme. They sang mellifluously and staged a drama on the rise of religious fundamentalism in India. Fr. G. Arockiaraj, the chief guest, in his short yet profound speech, touched upon three vital factors that make the idea of India: Sacrifice, Unity and Service.

Philosophers: With Beschi Illam getting crowded with the relocation of the Juniorate, the nine DNC Philosophers, who had been stranded here, headed to Shembaganur with Fr. Pugazh on August 14th where Fr. Patrick, the Superior, welcomed them with open arms. After a brief period of quarantine and mid-semester online examinations, they are now kept on their toes with online classes, assignments and other community activities.

JRS: The volunteering spirit of the youth club members of JRS-TN to come forward to fix five streetlights in the camp on 2 August in Pavalathanur was very much appreciated by the camp government officials. In the first week of August, Jesuit Madurai Province supported the Sri Lankan refugees by giving dry rations to 170 vulnerable families in Arani and Vellapadi camps. Thanks to the strenuous efforts of the field staff, on 12 August, eight students from Pavalathanur and Kurukupatti camps in Salem district have received income certificates from the VAO to pursue their tertiary education; 43 refugee women are undergoing a three-month tailoring course conducted by JRS-TN in Okkur and Thumbalahali camps from July 2020. On 12 August, the International Youth Day was celebrated by the members of the youth club across 106 refugee camps on the theme "Youth Engagement for Global Action". On that day, environmental awareness was generated among the refugee community in Okkur, Anaikuttam and Thapathi camps.

Michael Panimaya Raj

Dindigul: St. Mary's

We had our Community Orientation on 25 and 26 July. Fr. Wilson OFM Cap, the Director of Anugraha Counselling Institute, was the resource person for the first day of orientation. Later in the afternoon, we had personal sharing. On the second day, we engaged in prayerful deliberation to evolve some concrete action plans on CAPs and PAPs. On the eve of the Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Mr. Bosco, teacher in charge of Manresa Club, St. Mary's, addressed our domestic workers on Ignatian heritage. After profound preparation through novena prayers on different themes, and fasting and abstinence on the ninth day, we celebrated a simple, meaningful, and memorable feast of our Holy Father Ignatius. Fr. Stephen, Superior, presided over the Mass and, at noon, during the benediction, Fr. Alex (AND) shared his reflections.

Fr. Provincial doubled our joy through his contact visit on 1 August. He briefed us on the happenings in our Province during the lockdown, especially about the modified programmes for our scholastics of different formation stages.

Fr. Aruldoss, the Correspondent, headed the Independence Day celebration at the Primary School and addressed the teachers. The mothers of our students as well as sanitary workers, Mrs. Packia Lakshmi, James Bastin Mary and Kalishwari, hoisted the national flag. At the Higher Secondary School, Dr. E. Selva Vinothini, M.B.B.S., Primary Health Centre, Kanniwadi, graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour and unfurled the national tricolour flag. Thus, the 74th Independence Day of our nation was celebrated with the staff and a few students with the necessary social distancing measures in place. August 15th is also the titular feast of our Domestic and School Chapels, and Fr. Aruldoss celebrated the feast day Mass for us in a simple manner and Br. Thomas, our Minister, treated us to a sumptuous dinner. While we are finding ways and means to admit students in VI and XI Standards, we have organized online classes for X and XII Standards of both Tamil and English mediums successfully. We are in the process of arranging online classes for the rest of our student population.

Arockia Amalan

Devakottai: De Britto

On 5 August, we were on cloud nine to see Fr. Babu Vincent back in the community after a long time. Earlier, when he tested mildly positive for COVID-19,

we decided not to have Community Mass for a week. Later, we celebrated the feast of St. Ignatius with our co-workers in a simple manner. With the help of our co-workers, Br. Victor Paul took the initiative to clean and prepare the land for organic farming.

When the Tamil Nadu Government announced XII Std public exam results on 16 March, our school set a record: After 13 years, it scored 100% results in



Standard XII exams! The management appreciated and congratulated all who laboured tirelessly to bring success to the school. Most of the rank holders, both in XII and X Standards, were from the Britto Hostel. The school has started issuing textbooks to the students. The management makes sure that we maintain social distance on the campus. Online-classes are in full swing. Our teachers are creative and innovative in their teaching and in sending the e-materials to the students. On 15 August, Br. Victor Paul hoisted the flag in the school. About his bout of illness and hospitalization see above a brief note in the Health Update.

Salamon Joseph Praveen

Karumathur: AAC

The first meeting of the HODs and the Officials was held, in which Fr. Gilbert Camillus, our new Secretary, announced the new Officials of the college and Fr. John Pragasam, Superior, welcomed them. They are: Dr. A. Shanmugaraju (Dean - Academics), Dr. S. Arul Prasad (Controller of Examinations), Dr. A. Duraisingam (Vice Principal - Shift I), Fr. M. Anbarasu (Vice Principal - Shift I and Hostel Director), Fr. Jayaseelan Saminathan (Vice Principal - Shift II), and Dr. Pradeepa (Vice Principal - Shift II), and the new HODs, Dr. I. Jeyaraj (Economics), Dr. P. Veerasamy (English - Shift II) and Mr. M. Karunanidhi (Tamil - Shift II). Fr. Godwin Rufus, our new Principal, discussed in the meeting the college re-opening, examinations, pending evaluation, online-classes, etc., and gathered practical tips and guidelines. The admission process is almost over with the help of the newly established ERP system. Regular classes are

online for non-freshers, and soon to be launched for the freshers. Fr. Secretary and his team were busy recruiting new staff members for the self-financing section.

The feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola was celebrated in a feel-rich manner with a recollection preached by Fr. Ambrose, staying at Christ Hall Seminary; daily novena prayer conducted by senior Jesuits of Arrupe Illam; and thrilling “Jesuit” quiz organized by the scholastics both for the community and the Catholic students of our college. Fr. John Pragasam, Superior, presided over the concelebrated festive Mass, and Fr. Lazar preached the feast day homily. On the eve of the feast, there was a simple and informal gathering of the college staff wherein Dr. A. Duraisingam (Vice Principal for Shift I) and Mr. Raja (Office Superintendent) greeted the Jesuits on behalf of the teaching and non-teaching fraternity, respectively. Fr. Vincent Sekhar gave an Ignatian pep talk to the gathering. Two flower saplings were planted close to the college church. Under the guidance of Fr. M. Anbarasu, 2000 seed-balls were prepared for strewing in *porampok* lands in and around Karumathur to add richness to the greenery around. Under the guidance of Br. S. Kulandairaj, scholastics in Arrupe Illam and a few Sri Lankan hostellers, planted nearly 600 Neem and *Nilavembu* trees in Kannanur farm.

Fr. Vincent Sekhar “virtually” took part in the International Workshop organized by Santa Clara University, Los Angeles, USA, and ESADE Business School, Barcelona, Spain. He made a response to the seven articles related to Secularism and Religious Dialogue in the context of Higher Education from the Indian and South Asian perspectives.

Vincent Sekhar

Madurai: IDEAS and LAAS

Based on a survey study, labour union leaders of Tamilnadu Labourers’ Rights Federation (TLRF) conducted press conferences demanding welfare measures for unorganized workers and insisting on the conduct of Grama Sabha. Kodaimalai and Sattamethai unions held it at Dindigul on 29 July 2020 and Chemmalar union at Srivilliputtur on 3 August 2020.

TLRF was also engaged in getting responses to EIA from local units. From more than 200 villages responses were sent to concerned authorities by email with 6,393 signatures.



Since there was no announcement on conducting Grama Sabha on 15 August, TLRF had organized, through local units of labour unions, parallel Makkal Sabai in 31 villages in Dindigul, Madurai and Virudhunagar districts between 12 and 14 August. The Makkal Sabai discussed the issues of the people and passed resolutions which would be handed over to the district administrations.

On 19 August, LFTN (Lawyers Fraternity Tamil Nadu) of LAAS and LSFSJ (Law Students Forum for Social Justice), a forum floated by Sch. Joseph and some spirited law students, organized a meeting on ‘Right to Expression vis-a-vis Contempt of Court’ in the context of Supreme Court Senior Advocate Prashanth Bhushan being found guilty of contempt. Justice D. Hariparatham, former judge of Madras High Court, speaking on this occasion to the lawyers, law students and members of civil societies, cautioned that it is a warning and an attempt to silence the voices of advocates and civil society. The meeting ended with raising awareness slogans for protecting constitutional and democratic rights by nearly 100 participants.

As a member of LSFSJ, Sch. Joseph had discussed in the law students forum and the IDEAS – LAAS community about the Transgenders’ fight against the widespread Coronavirus. The forum was able to reach out to around 38 Trans people with groceries and other essential food materials.

The LSFSJ forum also organized five Zoom meetings on various pertinent issues with good speakers. A webinar on August 1st titled “National Education Policy – 2019: The Implementation and Implications on Education Systems Today” by Mr. M. A. Britto of *Vaan Muhil* enabled 161 participants to understand the issue better. Another webinar organized on August 15th was பறிக்கப்படும் உரிமைகளும் நசுக்கப்படும் சனநாயகமும் by Advocate George Marks of Dindigul.

Joseph V.

Madurai: Loyola Technical Institute

On 13 July, Fr. Superior celebrated a Thanksgiving Mass in front of the grotto, remembering and thanking God for His providence and protection during these pandemic days. Well prepared reflections on the charism of St. Ignatius for nine days set the community on a spiritual mode for the celebration of the feast of our founder. On the 40th day of Fr. J. L. Pragasam's death, his brother and four of his family members joined the community in thanking God for the gift of Fr. Pragasam and praying for the repose of his soul.

The community orientation was held on 12 and 13 July. Fr. Sahaya Philomin Raj from IDEAS gave inputs on NEP and EIA - 2020. With his proven expertise, he facilitated the community to understand the hidden agenda of the government of which NEP and EIA-2020 are only the tip of the iceberg. He guided the community to connect PAP and the current socio-political situation.

After facing the COVID-19 infection and coming out of it safely, the community still follows strict measures of protection to avoid infection. The apostolic units are active. All those who enter the campus are screened using Non-contact IR thermometer. While entering, all are asked to sanitize their hands and asked to wear a mask for as long as they are inside the campus. Entry is denied to anyone showing COVID symptoms. Each unit head diligently monitors the health of the staff. All are advised to maintain at least three feet distance and avoid all physical contact.

LITI: Admission for the academic year 2020-21 started on 17 July. Two stages of verification have been completed for the Welder trade and an additional unit in Electrician trade. We await the final inspection.

LENS was active even during the lockdown. Three more videos have been uploaded to the Loyola TV Tamil Website. Two videos were part of *Sirar Sillu Karupattigal* Series and one was part of *Ulaga Neethi Sinthanaigal* Series.

July 8 - கான்கீரிட் கூடுகளாய் மாறிய காடுகள்

July 13 - உலக நீதிச்சிந்தனைகள் -பகுதி ஐந்து

August 6- எதை விட்டு வைக்கப்போகிறோம், எதிர்காலச் சந்ததிக்கு?

Fr. Francis Thamburaj has shared a series of 10 videos on St. Ignatius of Loyola in the social media during the days of the novena. The first five videos were on the Power of Determination and St. Ignatius of Loyola. The other five videos were on St. Ignatius

of Loyola - a Mystic. All were well received by Jesuits, religious and laypeople with lots of appreciation.

Amith Shajan

Madurai: St. Mary's

Dr. Jude Rozario Vinoth, the Dean of Apollo Hospital, Madurai, addressed our community members on "The Present COVID-19 and Its Implications for Our Life and Mission" during the Community Orientation on 28 and 29 July.

Our community members and our school staff appealed to the Government of India to withdraw EIA 2020 by enrolling in the online signature campaign. Fr. Stephen Lourdu Pragasam was very active in networking with the NGOs and other social activist groups in and around Madurai.

To strengthen the safety and to enhance the health of the community members adequate steps were taken by Fr. Minister during Unlock Phase 3. We follow the safety measures such as wearing facemasks, hand sanitizing and keeping social distance. Only after checking the temperature of any visitor or guest using Non-contact IR Thermometer, we allow him/her inside the Jesuit residence. We adhere to the Government norms that in a day only 100 people could enter St. Mary's HSS campus for getting the academic materials and certificates.

On 5 August, our teaching as well as non-teaching staff participated in two webinars organized by JCERT clearly explaining the hidden agenda of the Central Government in introducing NEP-2020.

Manuel Savariar

Madurai: DACA

The poor have had to bear the brunt of COVID-19 and the prolonged lockdown that has adversely affected their lives and livelihoods. DACA, in the third phase of its relief efforts, reached out to nearly 200 Dalit families in three different villages of Madurai District. It gave each family 10 kg of rice together with some chilli and turmeric powders, dhal, wheat and ragi flour. All our community members signed the online petition against EIA. As a COVID prevention measure, our domestic staff have been asked to drink *kashayam*, lime juice and take homoeopathy medicine at regular intervals.

Theophine Michael Raja

Nagercoil: Carmel

The traditional way of celebrating the feast of our campus Patroness Our Lady of Mount Carmel, with flag hoisting, novena and feast day Mass with the

religious and priests, was suspended this year due to COVID-19 and only community Mass was celebrated.

On 29 July, Fr. Britto Peter gave an exhortation on the Great Desires of St. Ignatius to both Thozhamai Illam and our community as part of the preparation for the feast of St. Ignatius. With our domestic staff, we celebrated the feast with Holy Eucharist followed by breakfast. The visit of our Bishop Nazarene Soosai, who was kind enough to come in person to greet us and join us for the evening tea, was the highlight of the day.

We continue to discourage visitors and those who enter the campus are asked to wash their hands, use sanitizer and wear the mask compulsorily. We also take regularly different types of *kashayam*, homoeopathy preventive medicines, proper diet and a lot of fruits, to increase our immune power along with physical exercises without fail every day.

Following the directions of the Government, we are admitting students in the school. After giving special training to our staff to conduct online classes, we have started online classes for X and XII Standard students.

All of us individually signed the petition against EIA 2020 and encouraged all our staff, alumni, students and parents coming to the school for admissions or collecting certificates to do the same, making them aware of the potentially disastrous consequences of this government move.

Some of our staff and community members are regularly participating in the webinars on NEP/ EIA 2020 organized by Jesuits and like-minded movements.

Maria Singarayar

Palayamkottai: St. Xavier's

SXC started online classes on 3 August 2020 for senior students and August 20th for the UG first year students; 90% of the students have been attending these classes with enthusiasm.

XIBA is delighted to have Fr. K. Amal as its new Administrator. It organized a series of webinars during the Lockdown to stay connected with its students. Webinars like 'Holistic HR: Post-COVID Phase 2.0', 'Moving towards Excellence: Navigate the New Normal' and 'National E-workshop on Empirical Research: Tools and Techniques' attracted students, scholars, academicians, entrepreneurs and industry professionals from across the world. Regular online classes are also going on.

SXCE organized a national level webinar on 21 August in collaboration with the Province Higher Education Commission to promote awareness among the faculty, students and other stakeholders on the consequences of New Education Policy 2020. It was a revelation for our stakeholders, especially the younger generation, to understand the hidden implications of NEP 2020 when Fr. S. M. John Kennedy, Director of JCERT, brought out the crux and after-effects of the policy in simple words and with concrete examples. "It was satisfying yet stimulating to listen to the sharing by the speaker", commented a student of our college. SXCE has begun admitting the students in the management quota in the first year, while the second years are having online classes and their school internship is postponed to the fourth semester. The outgoing students are awaiting the Government's announcement of dates for their final exams.

SXHSS started online classes for all EMS students. Videos and other related materials of the specified syllabus are sent in the morning by WhatsApp by the respective teachers to the students. They can view them and study them at their convenience and clarify and discuss with the teachers in the evening from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. They have regular assignments or other project works related to the subject matter of that day from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Every day, one class is conducted through Zoom at a convenient time for the students and parents generally in the evening. This system is going on very well and parents are highly satisfied with our efforts during this Lockdown period. Every Monday, a review and planning meeting with the EMS staff members is conducted. Parents' meetings for each class in zoom was organized during the last week of July. As more than 50% of the Tamil Medium students do not have access to smartphones, this has not been attempted for them. Career guidance webinar was conducted for the outgoing students on 13 July and motivation seminar for X and XII Standard students on 17 July.

JCERT in collaboration with St. Xavier's HS School organized two webinars, one on 'Teacher vs Teacher – Revolutionary teachers who made an indelible impact as teachers' by Ayesha Natarajan on 18 July and the other on 'Quality Education, Global Education – in the background of Ignatian maxims' by Fr. James Thamburaj on 20 July for the teachers and administrators of our schools and other schools.

SXC community had a two-day Orientation

Programme on 7 and 8 August. Frs. Martin, Ignacimuthu and Augustine formed the team to meticulously plan and perfectly execute it. Fr. Ignacimuthu and Fr. K. Amal delivered keynote addresses on COVID-19 and Care for the Environment, and Tapping the Inner Resilience to Meet COVID-19, respectively. It was followed by spiritual conversations on various themes like our involvement during COVID and review of the PAP and CAP. The programme culminated with the concluding observations of Fr. Rector.

The community strictly follows the required safety measures to protect its members from the COVID pandemic. We have our daily Eucharistic celebrations and prayers in the college Church maintaining social distance. *Kabasura Kudineer*, prepared by our own Xavier Research Foundation, is made available. Though unavoidable during admissions in the school and the colleges, we try to reduce direct contact with outsiders. Sanitizer is kept where visitors enter. As all admission procedures are done online, there is no crowd gathering at the gates as in previous years.

Y. Baskar

Thoothukudi: Xaveriana

On 13 July, we had a farewell Mass for Fr. Xavier Rajan followed by dinner in his honour as he was leaving Xaveriana to join Arul Kadal community on 14 July. Fr. Ignacy, Br. Arockiasamy and Fr. Victor Desoza accompanied him till the Vagaikulam Airport, Thoothukudi, and saw him off. Later, we confirmed that he was received by Fr. Raj Irudaya, Superior, Arul Kadal, at Chennai Airport.

In the whole month of July 2020, especially during St. Ignatius novena days from 22 to 30 July, we involved ourselves in preparing and conducting the prayers making use of the online and WhatsApp materials. Every one of us participated in the prayer with religious fervour and tried to imbibe the spirit of St. Ignatius more and more.

Though we did not have the usual celebration of the feast of St. Ignatius on 31 July due to COVID-19, we, the Jesuits of Xaveriana, were invited to celebrate the feast day Mass at 6.30 a.m. in the Church of Our Lady of Snows Basilica, Thoothukudi. Fr. Ignacy was the main celebrant and Fr. Sales gave an inspiring sermon on the theme “St. Ignatius and his devotion to Our Lady”. The Mass was telecast live through local channels for our students, staff, and people. As Fr. Kumar Raja, Parish Priest of Our Lady of Snows,



invited us for breakfast, we joined him and greeted Fr. S. Ignatius on his 86th birthday. To mark the feast of our Founder each Jesuit planted one sapling at 9.30 a.m. in the Xaveriana campus. We invited the Parish Priest and the Assistant Parish Priests of Our Lady of Snows Church for lunch at 12.30 p.m. At 7 p.m. we had benediction in our domestic chapel among ourselves and that concluded our very simple and meaningful celebration of the feast of our Founder and Father St. Ignatius.

On 1 August, we, as a community, participated in the Zoom recreation arranged by Fr. POSA and his team. In general, our community members are very busy these days attending various webinars on different topics besides their assigned work.

On 15 August, we gave the honour of hoisting the national flag to Mr. Babu, our school health worker, and Br. Arockiasamy, our AHM, delivered a stimulating and thundering message on the 74th Independence Day of our motherland India. Our school students were not allowed to attend the Independence Day function but a good number of our school staff did participate in it.

Francis Sales

Tiruchi: SJC

Fr. Paulraj Packiam, Administrator of St. Joseph’s Institute of Management, defended his PhD thesis, titled “Employability of the graduates in Higher Education Institutions with special reference to Jesuit colleges in Tamil Nadu” on 16 July. All three Examiners conducting the viva-voce examination commended his work for its relevance. Amid the ongoing nationwide lockdown, SJC called for applications for admission to all the UG and PG courses on 9 July. By the third week of August admissions to all the UG and PG courses have been completed, with the help of the ERP system. The feast of our beloved founder was preceded by nine days of prayerful reflections, well-presented by the members of the community.

Fr. Provincial made his contact visit to the SJC community on 2 and 3 August. The College and School have switched over successfully to online teaching and learning. The new academic year was formally inaugurated by Fr. Leonard Fernando, Rector, on 8 August by offering prayerful and floral homage to the statue of St. Joseph located near the Administrative Block of the College. He was joined by Fr. Arockiasamy Xavier, Principal, Fr. Peter Xavier, Secretary, and the entire Jesuit community at this meaningful ceremony. The II and III year students of UG and II year students of PG began their online classes on 10 August, after a soul-elevating inaugural prayer service led by Fr. Richard Hiruthyaraj, the Campus Minister, and his team. The freshers (I year UG students) began their online classes on 19 August.

Leolin Arockiadass

Vilangudi: VMI

We officially started this academic year with a three-day orientation programme from July 11th – 13th after which Fr. Selvam preached a triduum on the theme “My generous response to God’s call” to the pre-novices and strengthened their desire to serve in and through the Society.

We also had a five-day Tamil course for the pre-novices to brush-up their LSRW skills in our mother tongue. On July 25th, Fr. Irudayaraj, a newly ordained priest of Kumbakonam Diocese, celebrated the Holy Spirit Mass. In his homily, he shared his personal experience as a formee and encouraged the candidates to go ahead by totally relying on the Lord. Fr. Annaraj, the director, was the concelebrant.

In order to imbibe the spirit of our Founder and Father St. Ignatius, the pre-novices had an intensive and in-depth study of his biography written by Fr. Mampra. It was of great help during the novena preparation. The feast of St. Ignatius was celebrated in a simple, yet meaningful way. Fr. Josephraj, the Superior, was the main celebrant, Fr. James Antonymsamy, the Parish Priest of Thirumanur, read the Gospel, Fr. Annaraj preached the homily, and Fr. Selvam conducted the choir and sang the Preface. We had fun games, quiz, speech, creative writing, and drawing competitions, all based on the life of St. Ignatius.

On August 1st, we, as a community, visited our Thirumanur Parish. Pre-novice Thanath was initiated into the Catholic faith through the Sacrament of Baptism and First Holy Communion by Fr. James Antonymsamy. The latter also introduced us to the Parish Council and gave us an official welcome.

We were blessed by the graceful presence of Fr. Provincial on August 4th and 5th. After receiving our manifestations, Fr. Provincial addressed the pre-novices as a group and explained to them about life in the Society. He also spoke to them about the expectations of the Society.

Independence Day 2020 together with the feast of the Assumption of our Lady was celebrated in a special way. Fr. Annaraj celebrated the Holy Mass. Victoria, an ex-employee of VMI, hoisted the National Flag and Pre-novice Paralogam gave an inspiring Independence Day speech.

As mentioned above, Fr. Selvam continues this year to serve VMI, Vilangudi, as a formator and Spiritual Guide. We thank Frs. Richard Hiruthyaraj, Parthasarathi, Jesu Raju, Michael Panimayaraj, Clement Jesudoss, Anthuvan (Kumbakonam Diocese) for sparing their precious time in helping out during the orientation programme. In a special way, we thank Fr. Pugazhendhi, the Vocation Promoter, and Fr. Stephen Lourdu Pragasam, the PCF, for coordinating the recruitment of our candidates. Words cannot suffice if we are to thank Fr. Selvaraj Soosaimanickam for his generous and cheerful picking up and bringing the pre-novices safely to VMI despite the travel restrictions in force during the COVID Lockdown. There are altogether 20 pre-novices from 10 different dioceses here this year.

Joshua Kishanth

Chennai: Arul Kadal

Arul Kadal has become more vibrant with the arrival of eight scholastics for the first year of Theology. Amidst all uncertainties, all of them safely reached Arul Kadal by 8 July. Fr. Xavier Rajan joined the community on 13 July as a Spiritual Guide to all the scholastics at Arul Kadal. *Schola Brevis* and the inauguration of the academic year were held on 10 July. Fr. Jebamalai Raja, Provincial (CEN), presided over the function and during his inaugural address, he highlighted the objectives of Arul Kadal and its role in theological formation to bring about societal transformation. Fr. Antony Robinson, PCF (CEN), encouraged the scholastics re-emphasizing the salient concepts from the Jesuit document for the formees in theology. Fr. Jerry Rosario, too, underscored the aims of Arul Kadal and he motivated all of us to row deep into theology.

This function became a very significant event because Arul Kadal launched a user-friendly web application for the library <inigolibrary.idntica.com> which was created by Sch. Joseph. Arul Kadal also ventured into the digital evangelization through its

first e-magazine, namely *ARULSAARAL* and a new YouTube channel, namely *ARULTHIRAI*. The keynote address on 'COVID-19: Challenges to Christian Faith and Theology' was given by Most Rev V. Devasahayam, former Archbishop of Chennai, CSI. The theologization with the suffering humanity was a very contextual and meaningful one. See **Health-COVID-19 Update** above for an account of how Arul Kadal community members themselves faced the crucible of COVID-related hospitalization and quarantine experience.

We had a two-day orientation programme on 11 and 12 July. Fr. Raj Irudaya set the right tone for the functioning of Arul Kadal. He helped us, through this programme, to closely know each other and travel together as one Jesuit community in theologizing and serving. To instil the social thrust in the first-year students of Theology, as a part of Introduction to Theology, a 3-day Social Analysis course was given to them by Fr. Jebamalai Raja, Provincial (CEN), from 20 to 23 July.

To spread the legacy of St. Ignatius of Loyola, our founder, to the ordinary people and as a contribution of Arul Kadal to the Catholic community in Tamil Nadu, we shared the prepared novena prayers and sermons on various themes in Tamil and made them available in PPTs and video formats through *Arulthirai* and WhatsApp groups. As an Ignatian gesture of love, we distributed on 29 July a noon meal-cum-mask to 200 abandoned, elderly, and sick platform dwellers in Santhome, Triplicane and Adyar. It was a moving and learning experience for us all.

Anto Arputha Raja

FR. JAMES BHARATAPUTRA WRITES FROM INDONESIA

I know you would like to know how I am doing across the Indian Ocean in Medan, Indonesia. Well, by the grace of God and the TLC of Annai Velankanni, I am doing relatively well in my octogenarian life, by staying at our Marian Shrine of Graha Maria Annai Velankanni of *Tanjung Selamat* (Bay of Salvation) and leading almost a hermitical life or that of a "கோயில் பூசாரி", looking after the shrine that has totally been shut down since the middle of March 2020. However, I am celebrating my daily private Mass with just a few religious members of our staff and praying for the Church, for the Society of Jesus and also for the intentions of Marian devotees who are not able to come personally to visit the shrine but had sent requests for my prayers.

It is a real pity that the people around here on the whole seem not to be aware of or bothered about the seriousness of this dangerous situation and go about

their business as usual. Indonesia, like India, imposed a total National Lockdown towards the end of March this year but, unfortunately, its implementation in many parts of its provinces has not been strict and, as a result, Medan, the capital city of North Sumatra Island, where I have been living all these years, is declared one of the Red Zones in Indonesia. My Archbishop, Msgr. Kornelius Sipayung OFM Cap along with his Curia members and his entire household were found Corona Positive and were isolated and undergoing treatment in hospitals, while the archbishop's house has been put under quarantine. It is also sad that a number of clergy and religious priests and nuns of our archdiocese are confined to their residences and are under observation and medication.

I, who turned 83 this year on 3 July 2020, consider this long lockdown to be a God-given time of rest and reminiscing about my entire faith journey to this mission land that I never dreamt of when I began my missionary life in Malaysia of the Hong Kong Mission in May 1966. Definitely, it is a great time to thank God for all His wonderful accompaniment till now and for all the great things He has done in and through me in Indonesia in general and in this archdiocese of Medan in particular during the past 53 years.

Of course, the Indonesian government has relaxed the lockdown a bit and the archdiocese has opened the churches under some strict rules. But I will keep the shrine closed for the public for an indefinite period of time, considering the great risk involved in this shrine apostolate since it is one of the important sites of religious tourism and also an icon of this State. Before the onset of this Corona Pandemic, our shrine used to be visited by more than 6,000 pilgrims and tourists per month from all over Indonesia and from abroad. It will be a herculean task to manage them with such strict protocols.

As there had never been a permanent Jesuit house or a community in this part of Sumatra, I had always been attached to the Indonesian Jesuit Provincialate community in Semarang, in Central Java island some 2,500 km from Medan and I always celebrated the feast of St. Ignatius alone with my lay collaborators except when I happened to visit the Provincialate in the last week of July. This year, I managed to have a simple and meaningful celebration at the shrine with just a few religious and lay staff in accordance with the protocol required by Corona Pandemic.

Assuring you and ours in the province of my prayers, I commend myself to your prayers and those of my friends in the Lord of our Province.

FR. ARRUPE, A LIVING VERSION OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

It was a great blessing for me to attend a course on Ignatian Spirituality in our Generalate, Rome, in 1985, but a greater blessing was to be able to meet Fr. Arrupe almost every day. Fr. Arrupe was then in the Infirmary, paralyzed by a stroke four years earlier that left him speechless. I used to visit him after class and he would always welcome me with a broad smile. In his presence and his smile, I experienced something special, something inexplicably divine. Each time I saw him, I felt that I was encountering a living version of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.

Howard J. Gray S.J., an expert on Ignatian Spirituality and the Constitutions of the Society, remarked: “The Constitutions of the Society retain a privileged place in the heart of every contemporary Jesuit because they are the touchstone for his authenticity. The Spiritual Exercises offer a programme of conversion; discipleship and dedication; the Constitutions offer a specific way for living the values of the Spiritual Exercises.” (“What kind of document?” *The Way Supplement* 61, Spring 1988, pp 21-22).

Arrupe reminded me of the values of the Spiritual Exercises and each encounter with him, though in deep silence, drew me to a deeper realization of how the Constitutions could be lived. I prayed earnestly that I might be endowed with that gift of understanding and living the Constitutions.

Every time I met Arrupe and spent time with him in deep silence, I realized that I was in the presence of a person who was full of the spirit of St. Ignatius and one who continued to live the Constitutions. He was a ‘living constitution’ to me, who in all his closeness to God, was probably saying these words to God....

Faithfully Yours: Faithfulness to God is best shown in one’s consistency in prayer and union with God. “The General should be closely united with God our Lord and have familiarity with him” (Const. 723). Despite his busy schedule Fr. Arrupe spent time in prayer in his private chapel that he called “the little-big Cathedral.” He placed God at the centre of his life and ministry and remained ever attentive to His voice. Those who met him would remark that there was something in him that we could describe as ‘familiarity with God’.

Sincerely Yours: Sincerity is an inner motivation that develops because of deep love. In that love, one seeks not one’s own will, but feels fulfilment in joyfully serving the will of the other. Arrupe was sincere to seek the will of God embedded in the Constitutions that invites each Jesuit to have “the service of God and the more universal good before one’s eyes as the guiding norm” (Const. 622). Reading his biography one will not fail to discover that Arrupe was a man constantly searching for God’s will and his guiding norms were always the ‘universal good, greater good and greater indebtedness.’ He never failed to choose what was conducive to the end for which we are created (SE 23).

Optimistically Yours: A person of God will always be joyful, despite hurdles and setbacks. “Many used to call Fr. Arrupe a man of ‘Incorrigible Optimism’. He himself admitted to being an optimist and said: “I am an optimist because I believe in God and in people”. A short sentence from the Constitutions “Therefore in him alone hope must be placed” (Const. 812) captures this spirit. Even when many Jesuits left the Society between GC 31 and GC 32, Arrupe pinned his hope in the Lord saying “the Lord will preserve and carry forward what he deigned to begin for his service” (Const. 812). This spirit of optimism was also the source of his apostolic audacity.

Totally Yours: To surrender one needs tremendous courage and inner freedom, trusting that it is the Lord whom one is serving. The Society entrusts itself to God in total obedience and urges every member to do so. “All should strongly dispose themselves to observe obedience...they should keep in view God our Creator and Lord for whom such obedience is practiced.” (Const. 547). When Arrupe resigned his office as General at the 33rd General Congregation (1983) his final address was read out as he couldn’t read it himself due to his stroke. As he sat listening to his own speech being read, tears rolled down in the Aula, and he received a thundering applause, as the speech succinctly captured the surrendering spirit of Ignatius. “More than ever, I now find myself in the hands of God. This is what I have wanted all my life, from youth. And this is still the one thing I want. But now there is a difference, the initiative is entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in his hands”.

Today, each time I open the Constitutions, I cannot but remember Arrupe, whose life and death was an encounter with God and His people, and his entire life as a Jesuit was a life of faithfulness to the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.

M. Arul Sivan

New Books



S. Ignacimuthu, S.J. et al
*Nattar Matrum Malaiyaha
Makkalin Anubhava Maruthuva*
Muraihal, B. Rethina Nayahar &
Sons, Chennai 2019



S.M. John Kennedy, S.J.
Education for Empowerment
JCERT
Palayamkottai
2019



S. Basil Xavier, S.J.
*BASIL'S ETHNOPHILOSOPHISING
IN INDIA SERIES – I*
A Study on Arunthathiyars
Authorspress, New Delhi 2020

Abide with the Lord



Fr. George Gispert-Sauch (90/73 BOM) passed away on 29.07.2020 at Andheri, Mumbai.
Fr. Isidore Pinto (78/57 PAT) passed away on 07.08.2020 in Patna.
Fr. Elias Arockiasamy (80/58 AND) passed away on 12.08.2020 at Visakhapatnam.
Fr. Gaudentius Kongari (86/66 HAZ) passed away on 12.08.2020 at Ulahatu, Ranchi.
Fr. Patrick de Melo (78/61 GOA) passed away on 14.08.2020 in Goa.
Fr. Augustine Tigga (72/51 HAZ) passed away on 14.08.2020 at Sitagarha, Hazaribag.
Fr. Gaston Roberge (85/64 CCU) passed away on 26.08.2020 in Kolkata.
Fr. Walter Stephen Andrade (78/53 KAR) passed away on 26.08.2020 at Mangaluru.
Fr. Kabamba Kalimbiro Joseph (53/33 ACE) passed away on 03.09.2020 in Chennai.
Fr. Jayant Kumar Padival (71/54 KAR), passed away on 08.09.2020 in Mangaluru.
Mr. D. Irudayanathan (85), paternal uncle of Fr. Andrew Francis (CEN), died on 18.07. 2020 at Neyveli.
Mr. Arulsamy (77), younger brother of Br. S. Irudayasamy, passed away on 25.07.2020 in Madurai.
Mr. Savarinathan (88), the father of Fr. Sebastian Ravi (AND), passed away on 02.08.2020 at Dindigul.
Mrs. Kulandai Pragasi (65), elder sister of Fr. Stephen L. Pragasam, passed away on 08.08.2020 at Y. Othakadai.
Mr. John (49), cousin of Fr. R. Stanislaus, passed away on 12.08.2020 owing to COVID-19 at Madurai.
Mrs. Pushpa Theres Mary (74), mother of Fr. Antony Inico, passed away on 20.08.2020 at Karayanchavadi, Poonamallee, Chennai.
Mrs. Martha Diraviam (80), aunt of Fr. R. Stanislaus, passed away on 20.08.2020 owing to COVID-19 at Madurai.
Mrs. Dhavamani (66), mother of Fr. Francis Xavier Arockiadass, passed away on 24.08.2020 at Marambadi.
Mrs. Christina (78), mother of Fr. A. Sahaya Philomin Raj, passed away in Madurai on 24.08.2020.
Mr. Francis Xavier (62), younger brother of Fr. Y. S. Yagoo, passed away on 25.08.2020 owing to COVID-19 in Chennai.
Fr. Venio Fernando (70), brother of Fr. Wellington Fernando, passed away on 31.08.2020 at Thoothukudi.

Basil's Ethnophilosophising in India: A Study on Arunthathiyars

Human existence is characterized by suffering. Other animals too experience suffering but they are not conscious of suffering. On the contrary human beings are conscious of suffering. *Sarvam Dhukkam*. Philosophers starting from Gautama Buddha (600 B.C.) to Existentialists (1930-90 A.D.) talk about this phenomenon. Human life is full of agonies, pain, sadness, distress, sorrow and misery. And all the more the life of the subaltern is very pathetic. As they are very poor economically, there is not even adequate food and shelter for them. They are strongly counselled to be content with whatever material possessions they have. They are forced to live a hand to mouth life as their labour is exploited. Construction-workers involved in the erection of big buildings and apartments live only in huts in slums and villages. Workers toiling in textile factories are half-naked and they do not have a decent dress to put on. Road-workers, slogging under the hot sun and even damaging their lungs in the tar-pollution for the rich who commute with cool air-conditioned cars and buses, cannot afford to have even bicycles or bikes. Scavengers who are mostly Arunthathiyars clean the toilets of 'upper' caste people do not have toilets in their huts. This is the economic exploitation of the subaltern.

At the social level the subalterns experience too much suffering. People in India are divided in the name of caste. The so-called 'upper' caste people torture the so-called 'low' caste and Dalits in the name of *Manu dharma*. The Dalits are, still in many parts of India, not permitted to fetch water from the village common well. They cannot walk in the streets with their sandals. There are plenty of human right violations against the Dalits and backward caste communities in the name of caste. Endogamy is another oppressive marriage

system Indians follow in order to protect and preserve the caste system. Inter-caste love and inter-caste marriages are not possible in India or it is a very rare phenomenon here in India. Hence the subalterns and Dalits experience indescribable sufferings and sorrows.



In spite of these sufferings, the subalterns live the life. They do not commit suicide and end their life in order to escape from this life which is full of pains and sorrows. They not only live the life but live it fully. They celebrate life. They sing, dance, feast and enjoy life. From where do they get this impetus to live? From where do they draw the power and energy to go on to get along with life?

The answer is "culture". The poor and the oppressed draw their strength and energy once again from their own culture. Culture is their "treasure house". It is culture which resuscitates them when they are almost dead. If they do not do so, they will die. The survival instinct is drawn from the culture. According to Dr. N. Muthumohan, culture is a trench or bunker (பதுங்குகுழி) where the Dalits and the oppressed hide themselves in order to protect themselves from the sufferings and agonies of life. They go to these trenches and bunkers to safeguard themselves from the bombarding of the caste discrimination and economic exploitation. The subalterns not only hide but also take weapons from their culture to fight against caste and so on. (From Pages 132-133)

Basil Xavier