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JESUS THE FARMER

Fr. P.R John SJ (Principal)



Dear Staff, students, well-wishers, benefactors, readers of Vidyajyoti Today, wishes of the season and Happy New Year 2021. In and around Delhi, since 26 November 2020, tens of thousands of farmers are protesting against the three draconian laws passed in September 2020 by the NDA government. Farmers are demanding that the government to repeal FPTC Act - Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation), and FEPA Act – Farmers' Empowerment and Protection Agreement (Price Assurance and Farm Services), which are a bone of contention. These three 'Acts' rob of the fundamental respect and dignity of an Indian farmer who tills the land, sows the seed and cultivates the produce. "The farmer governs the sprouting of the field," says St. Thomas Aguinas (Disputed Questions on Truth I, q. 5, art. 8). A farmer is entitled to the fruit of his labor and he/she ought not to surrender his/her hard labor to the mercy of private (politico-corporate) forces.

In a context like this, how are we to draw the significance of Christmas? Who is Jesus? Where is He? Is He somewhere hiding in the midst of the protesting farmers? Can we identify ourselves with him at the Tikri, Singhu, Gazipur, Chilla and Noida borders of Delhi? Did Jesus ever speak in agrarian language, when confronted with the "savage" political and corporate powers? What should be our response, the response of the Church at the plight of the farmers? What is the meaning of the celebration of the Eucharist?

The New Testament narrates that Jesus spoke the divine language of the Kingdom of God expressed in agrarian language: vine and vineyard, fig tree, sycamore tree, fruit and root, digging and pruning, seed, sowing, generation, barn, chaff, winnowing fan, the plough and the bramble are the agrarian images of the people. Camel, the sheep, the bird, the dog, the viper, the wolf, the dove, the fish and the moth are images of the animal world. Stones, caves, sand and wilderness, the river, the sea, grass, reeds, foxholes, flowers, nest-

grass, reeds, foxholes, flowers, nesting, watering, sun, moon, stars, the clouds, the wind, the lighting and the rain are the images of the cosmic and natural world. He sought to share with them his vision of a New Humanity and issued the call to struggle for a New Earth. His stories and manner upset the existing social order, questioned



the moral basis of all systems then held sacred and provoked angry reactions. At the end, he was caught and killed. Therefore, he has become a song of revolt (Samuel Rayan, "Prophet and Poet in One").

In the daily eucharist, we pray the words: "Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation, through your goodness, we have this bread/wine to offer; which earth has given and human hands have made; it will become the bread of life". 'Bread' and 'wine' symbolize the Lord's blessings and human hard work. Lord's blessings and hard work have to be respected and shared by all in an atmosphere of 'justice'. Justice has to be exercised at all levels: the farmer who produces the wheat/rice, the science and technology involved in transporting and making the bread, the business people who bought it from the farmer to market.

To conclude, until the 'justice' is realized and shared, the right to dissent – 'protests' - will continue as envisaged by Jesus the Farmer:

Come Holy Spirit, show us your beauty, reflected in all the peoples of the earth, So that we may discover a new that all are different faces of the one humanity That God so loves" Amen.

(Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti)

A New Hope in Corona Times

BABY JESUS A SIGNOF HOPE IN CORONA TIMES

Amul Jacob SJ (I B.Th)



The present year has been a year of diffrent experiences, feelings, and emotions for human beings. The year 2020 stands apart from the recent pastyears for its own reasons beginning with the corona pandemic. There has been a sudden pause and up-side-down life experiences. The effect of corona has shattered humans and left us handicapped with our usual life activities. Life has been through a lot of dark and grave faith shaking experiential events. The continual corona pandemic effect has left an unusual void in people's life. We are currently people of sorrow, fear, anger, pain, hopelessness, and emptiness. We need a reason to overcome these struggles and sufferings to rejoice life to the fullest. Life needs a break

from these severe excruciating moments. Life needs someone or something to be the beacon of hope and joyfulness. Watching supernatural movies reminds me of superheroes playing the role of saving the poor from the evil doers. The superheroes are the saviours and redeemers of the sufferers who are unjustly wounded, inflicted, and broken by the evil. To us the Christians and the human beings



The birth

Christ is nothing

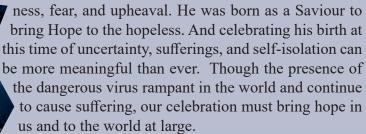
at this corona pandemic situation, the saviour is Jesus Christ who is born as a child into the world. We are broken, wounded, and struggling existential beings due to the corona effect. However, the coming of the Baby Jesus assures the sign of a new hope for a new dawn. The birth of Baby Jesus is a revelation of God's unconditional love for us. He is the way to a hope-filled future. Owing to corona, we are distanced not only from one another but also from all religious gatherings. We have become virtual mass attenders. Here is born a new Baby Jesus inviting us to be hopeful and joyful. Let us light the candles of hope, joy and peace in our hearts and surroundings to dispel our doubts, fears, sorrows, and emptiness. Belief in God is life in abundance. Life in abundance is a sign of God's active presence in us.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST THE BIRTH OF HOPE

John Paul SJ (I B.Th)

"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savoir, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

but the birth of Hope. Jesus was born in the times of dark-



Desmond Tutu says, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness. "Hope is such a powerful tool at this Pandemic to undergo the hardship of today to live a better life of tomorrow. And Christmas brings that Hope: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who be-

lieves in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (John 3:16). Though the earth has seen millions and millions of tears and bloodsheds, it still gives life to a plant and helps blooming a beautiful flower. Similarly, in spite of the hardship and despair, God's love for the world in and through Jesus' teachings and healing ministry enable us to follow him and make the world a better place.

As we are celebrating the birth of Hope, we, the followers of Christ, must be a torch-bearer of that Hope to others by our actions: Feeding the hungry stomachs on the roads, lending our ears to the troubled hearts, supporting the unjustly punished ones, recognising the unnoticed hard works, and being a Hope to the hopeless.

I would like to conclude with the words of St. Paul, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15:13). Wishing you a Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus, the Hope.

LET THE HEARTS THAT SEEK THE LORD REJOICE

Mallavalli Srinu ADL (Christu) (I B.Th)

"The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being". (Gen: 2:7). God gives life to the mortal human who is merely a breath nothing else. Furthermore, God put this human being in the garden of Eden to till

it and keep it. God respected the free will and liberty of His own creation that is who are in their own image and likeness. God wished that the human should physical strength and mind to unlock the nature's secrets and master to world dictator but a compassionate steward. The purpose of human intellect is to adarts and sciences to help the fellow human beings to be happy without damthe nature. This is the way God wanted humans to treat the nature and the felhuman beings.

Contrary to the purpose of God, who wanted human to be a faithful guardian to look after the creation, human used their intelligence for one's own selfish growth and greed. Human intellect has set the earth on fire and human being's unconditional authority and jealousy damaged the nature and as a result the consequences are terrific. It is the time for the human beings to prick up his conscience and mend his ways and turn to the Lord God who

created the heaven and earth. As the so-called human intellect is in vain to find a remedy to the ongoing pandemic. In this regard, I would like to recall the gracious words spoken by St. Ignatius of Loyola, "The more desperate things seem, the more we must hope in God. When man's aid falls. God's is close at hand". It is the time for us to look at the coming of Immanuel into the world as Mother Mary who obeyed to the plan of God to bring the Child Jesus for the salvation of the human. With full hope, let our hearts seek the coming of infant Jesus and rejoice.

A LIGHT IN DARKNESS

George Victor SJ (I B.Th)

We are attuned to live amidst mask, sanitizer and social distance yet we are awaiting for the birth of our saviour to kiss him, to touch him, and to embrace him in this COVID-19. Are we ready to unmask our-



selves to welcome our Lord with a kiss and embrace in this ambiance? In this present scenario, we are masked because of not only corona but also politically, religiously, and socially. Freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom to practice any religion have come to a stand-still. The fundamental rights have frozen or made to freeze. Few bills are passed in the Parliament without the consent of the people and the representative of the people. We are forced to mask and to distance ourselves from one another. At this juncture, we await our saviour who can redeem us from this pandemic to unmask and break away the endless social distance of caste, race, linguistic, nationality from us, and from all clutches of our lives. Mask and social distance have made us aloof and left us with mobile, laptop and cassettes alone. Jesus was born 2000 years ago to redeem and save the people. Today, we are awaiting for that saviour amidst

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us to strengthen us, raise voice against injustice; and assist the poor, marginalized, and downtrodden. Nevertheless, this pandemic has opened many Churches at our homes and now it is bringing Jesus to our homes. However, are we ready to accept him in our hearts? How are we preparing ourselves to receive Him in our hearts? It is time to unmask our inhumanness, to sanitize ourselves with forgiveness and to fill the social distance with love. Through this, we may break away from the notion of social distance of discrimination and stand for justice and peace. May the birth of our Lord lead us from this chaos to peaceful life and make us united in one mind and heart and make us God's children.

EMMANUEL GOD IS WITH US

Jenitta FMM (I B.Th)

The Nativity of our Lord is not just a day to recall a historical event. However, it is a day celebrating one's faith and conviction that the creator God comes to the Earth born as a human being to live

among humankind with the aim to guide and save humanity.

God created the humanity and became one among them to express his love for them, God sac-



rificed his only Son to save them from sin. When the corona virus first arrived on the scene, infecting and killing people, people started saying that it is God's way to punish the wrong doers. When it spreads all over the world, as God punishing the humanity. Why would the One who loves you so much punish

you? God is supposed to be the most merciful, the most forgiving, then why is this pandemic? These are some of the questions among people. With these questions, how would the Birth of Jesus be celebrated this year? This year the Nativity celebration will

be unique and extraordinary because the world is shaken and shattered by the Covid-19 Pandemic. It has brought fear, anxiety, uncertainty, loneliness, hopelessness, despair and fear of death. Nevertheless, the Nativity of our Lord invites the humanity to a greater hope. A hope that is nothing less than the "Emmanuel- God is with us." He comes to guide, encourage, love, heal and save.

So, while the pandemic rages on in the world, the message of the New-born Baby calls us to a new courage to trust in the Lord who walks with us. In him there is assurance of joy and tranquillity even in the midst of suffering and despair. In him is the promise of life. In addition, it could be the experience of everyone. "In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:4-5).

At present, though because of the experiences of the pandemic, joy may seem implausible, joy is intimately linked with the Nativity of our Lord. Therefore, let Christ be born in the hearts of every one so that the love, peace and joy may abound. May the New-born Baby accomplish what was said in the Bible, "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. Behold I make all things new" (Rev 21:4).

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD JESUS IN CORONA TIMES

Cyril Lakra, S.J (II B.Th)

The whole world was alarmed and in pandemonium; shaken with the pandemic caused by COVID-19. All international and national news channels kept us updating about deaths caused by the virus. India was not untouched by such fear and fatality of the time. And what added misery to the vast number of people of our nation was the Lockdown. It gave rise to the suffering and distress of the migrant labourers. The numerous migrant workers' hustle and bustle for moving back towards their home town from metropolitan cities was much agonising scene. Many reached home safely and others faced death on different accidents and hunger on the way.



How about the birth of Jesus in such a chaotic situation? Let us try to visualize, Roman emperor Caesar Augustus would have been the present government in power. All those women resemble Mother Mary, who were expecting a baby during the return to their home due to the lockdown. Many people with the

sense of humanitarian attitude came out to help and support the needy were the images of foster father Joseph. The best analogy for the donkey that carried mother Mary and Joseph is the bicycle on which a 15-year-old girl with her wounded father, cycled for a week from Delhi to Darbhanga, Bihar. Innkeepers are all those who remained comfortably at home and ignored the adversity of people. Angles are all those who served food, gave shelter and assured safety on their destinations. Shepherds

are the healthcare professionals who took care of the Corona patients and all those who provided security to the migrant labourers and guarded them on their journey. All the donors are Kings (Magi) who contributed huge sum for the pandemic relief from around the world. Now, where was baby Jesus? Baby Jesus was laid on the trolley bag, dragged by a mother. He was walking barefoot with a mother on the highway. He was in the bus, on the trucks, cement mixer truck, on rickshaw, bicycle, sleeping on the railway tracks. He was whispering in the ears of all of us saying, "I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine you did it for me." (Mt. 26:40)

NATIVITY IN CORONA

Sunil Gaikwad SJ (II B. Th)



The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ is a joy of new life, the hope of a new world and the beginning of new creation that ever grows to the fulness and perfection which God promised in His only Son. God became man so that we may again rejoice in His presence, live in His Holiness and grow in His love and peace. The most beautiful and creative action of God comes to our aid to free us from all that separates us from becoming His children.



Though there has been increased suffering, uncertainty and fear in the world due to COVID -19, but the growth in our faith of God's providence is undeniable. Can this pandemic of COVID-19 hinder our growth in coming more closer to God? It can't. Because the Saviour is born. His birth brings us 'life in fulness' (John10:10), and 'in Him, we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28).

COVID-19 cannot halt the 'Kingdom of God' from its spreading but it enables us to be strong 'to fight the good fight' by uniting ourselves with our New-born King. As we prepare

ourselves to receive Child Jesus in our hearts, be sure of His transforming love that would lead us to the Father. We believe that the pandemic is not as great as God's love for us in Jesus Christ. Therefore, it can't separate us from His unconditional love. St. Paul reminds us, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39). Our world and our life belong to God. God shows His solidarity with us by becoming human. His 'humanness' gives us the energy to stand firm in faith and face all the challenges of life knowing that 'God is with us'. The purpose of 'Word becoming flesh' is profoundly visible in Jesus' life and mission. By believing in the 'Good News' we participate in God's mission of salvation for all humanity. This salvific mission of Christ our Lord should disturb us inwardly so that we can be active and authentic in our 'love and service'. The Christmas brings us closer to the mystery of salvation and helps us to see, feel and touch the world with the eyes, heart and hands of Jesus. The Nativity this year in the period of COVID - 19, brings us the same experience, as the experience of old, where all were waiting in hope for the coming of the Saviour.

Mother Mary is that symbol of hope and courage, on receiving the baby Jesus in her womb reached out to Elizabeth with joy and gladness. May this joy of Christmas fill us with the same spirit of hope, courage, love, compassion and mercy to meet Baby Jesus, in all who are in need of our kindness, generosity and support.

BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN CORONA TIMES

Nirmal Kullu SJ (II B.Th)

Corona is a pandemic. It has affected the whole world. Lakhs of people have lost their lives. Many are infected and affected. It has simply shut down everything and made everything remain inside. In this time of helplessness, hopelessness, fear, anxiety, uncertainty we have a great message in the Nativity. Two thousand twenty years ago God sent his Son in human history. The birth of Jesus in the poor family gives us message that God is with us to save us from our debaucheries. It was the message of great joy for all the people, given to the shepherds during the birth of Jesus. A saviour is born to you is the message of the angel to the shepherd. In this corona time the message of the



of our Lord Jesus remains active – that is a message of great joy because the saviour is born to us to be with us and to save us from wickedness. We Christians live by faith. Our faith is in God who created everything, and who gave his Son for us, for our salvation and for the salvation of whole creation. This saviour, Jesus Christ who is born saves all human beings. His way of saving is not the way the world expected, through his mighty

power and victory over people, nations, tribes but his way of saving is through his passion, death and resurrection and through this, victory over sin and death. Therefore, in today's suffering humanity, Christ is suffering, and the suffering is not the end of everything, it is not the final word of life but the resurrection is the final word, which is the great hope for us. Our God is the God who suffers with the suffering humanity. Through this corona a transformation is taking place in human history. The transformation is the transformation in human relationship, human outlook to the reality, in terms of love, service, compassion, sensitivity, availability and selfless giving of oneself for others and these aspects of human life have really captivated majority of people. The birth of Jesus communicates to us the same thing that is giving oneself to others for service, which is centered in and around Jesus. It is also the time for us all to surrender oneself totally into the hands of God.

REFLECTION ON THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD JESUS IN THE CORONA TIMES

Jayanthi SJ (II B.Th)

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us".

This prophecy was fulfilled in the historical Jesus two thousand years ago, but the Christ who died on the cross is being born every day. Therefore, the Nativity of Jesus is happening in all the circumstances, whether it is corona time or wartime. Jesus continues to be born amid corona time also. Jesus came to redeem the whole of humanity from sinful nature. But today, when we all are faced with a pandemic the question arises in our minds and hearts whether the Nativity of our Lord Jesus will take place in times of corona. Is it possible to give an intellectual answer to people when the whole world seems to be in blink



and dark? Certainly not, we may not give scientific answers to today's situation that will suffice to people. But definitely, the Nativity of Jesus has answers in times of corona also.

The Nativity of Jesus took place at a definite time and place for a particular purpose two thousand years ago. He was born in the dualistic world, light and darkness, death and life, sickness and health-

iness, and so on. Today the Nativity of our Lord Jesus takes place in the same situation, but the world is already redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Then how can is it possible? Here we need to assume a question, how will it be if the Nativity of our Lord takes place in times of corona? Will He heal the world of COVID-19 as if an emergency of a doctor or will He take His own time to heal the world? As we know that He did not heal the Israelites in one day by lifting His hand, but He healed at a definite time and place for a few people. In the same manner, Lord is with us in every moment of our lives, though we are surrounded by fear and uncertainty. He will take birth in times of corona to strengthen our faith in the lockdown of our hearts and mind. It is the assurance of the Nativity of our Lord that He will remain with us in times of suffering.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE NATIVITY IN CORONA TIMES

Cajetan SJ (II B.Th)



"Does God exist?", "Is our God sleeping?" have been the questions of many people as the whole world has been brought down to its knees by Covid-19 pandemic and made people to grapple with fear. This pandemic, unlike the other pandemics, has been terrifying, because it is so contagious. It has spread all over the world within no time. As a result countless people have died, others lost their jobs and liveli-

hood, some others dropped out of schools and colleges because of their family's inability to meet expenses for them to go for online classes many others were in sheer despair in attempting to meet the staggering medical bills of their near and dear ones, many could not afford even to go for a check up to find out whether they were infected by the Corona virus or not. Due to this there has been a lot of gloom, an atmosphere marked by weeping and untold suffering. Many people have lost hope. Many others have lost



their faith in God. People have begun to ask whether God exists!

This kind of suffering and pain had already been the experience of the Israelites, God's chosen people. They suffered, mourned, wept for three centuries plus under Egyptian captivity. God heard the cry of His people. He delivered them from their bondage. Thus, we know that God has been with His people in their times of joy and suffering. He loves His people as His very own children. His love is immeasurable. It is so very well expressed in the hymn "God's love is so wonderful, so high, you can't get over it, so wide you can't get around it, so deep you can't get under it".

Celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus reminds us of God's love for us. From the Gospel according to Matthew, we come to know that the Son of God is called Emmanuel (cf Mt 1:23b). Emmanuel means 'God is with us.' When we observe carefully, we realize that it is in the present tense. It is neither in the past tense nor in the future tense. Emmanuel did not mean 'God was with us' or 'God will be with us', rather it is 'God is with us'. This indicates that God is always with us in whatever may the situation be. God is not only for us, but also with us always. Therefore, we can be sure that God is with us even during this Covid-19 pandemic. He is there in the form of scientists, doctors, health workers, helpers, social activists, the people of good will, and us. He will be with us till the end of the age. "Behold, I am with you till end of time" (Mt. 28:20b). Now, it is our responsibility to do God's will in our daily lives by following His love commandment, Love one another as I have loved you. All the pain and suffering would look smaller and be insignificant when we follow Him, the One who is with us - the Emmanuel, by helping, serving, and loving one another.

THE NATIVITY OF LORD JESUS

The background to the Nativity of Babe Jesus at this time of Covid-19 resembles the real event



happened two thousand years ago. Millions of deaths owing to the pandemic replicates the holocaust of innocent babes by King Herod. Uncertainty of life seems to be mysterious at this situation. People are fraught with struggles for their daily living. However, Christmas is synonymous with joy, peace and love. But, can we sing the songs of joys amidst cries? It would be tough to sing "Joy to the World" against the backdrop of lamentations as people have lost many of their loved ones in a short span of time.

The Nativity invites us to seek out joy and hope amidst prickles of intricacy at this difficult time. The Magi expected the Lord with hope. When they found the babe in the manger, the prism of their life was radiated by the glorious divine light refracting a rainbow of transcendent emotions of joy and peace. Let us also expect with hope that the birth of babe Jesus is in the form of vaccine for the pandemic. May our Baby Jesus become the resplendent star of hope to all the people.

CONTEXTUAL INCARNATION AT THE TIME OF CORONA

Jayaraj Selvaraj (III B.Th)

The world has become the god of its own destiny by standing on its developments. It dictates terms and conditions to gods of diverse religions and categorically wishes to lord over the nature according to its whims and fancies.

The crony capitalism builds contemporary babel towers of pride and the leaders of the world work in favour of the rich by wilfully neglecting the interests of the poor, marginalized, migrants, Adivasis and Dalits. The gap between the rich and poor continue to widen up. On the contrary, demonstrations, rallies and protests have occurred throughout world initiated and spearheaded by the prophets of this time in view of fighting for justice, peace and good governance.



Corona has brought out the transitory nature and vulnerability of human community. The world is locked down indefinitely for renovation and purification of its ideologies, affirmations and approaches and governance structures. At this period of uncertainty, the commemoration of the incarnation of Jesus stands meaningful and relevant. The kings and rulers of Jewish community were expecting the Messiah to be born in their family. But God who is all powerful sent his Son Jesus to be born as a poor, vulnerable, feeble child in a cowshed. It is a sheer humiliation on the part of the migrant parents who are not able to provide a dignified, decent place for the new born baby Jesus. This is what God has willed as a plan

to redeem the world. The bodily incarnation of Jesus was for only once, but his incarnation continues in the life events of poor who long for decent and dignified life.

Corona is one of the incarnations that exposed the hue cry of poor, migrants, women, children, and unemployed youth by disclosing the vested interest of the politicians, policy makers and corporates. Jesus as a weak and feeble child who cries for milk represents, and reciprocates the cry of the poor. This incarnation

of Jesus challenges the world to become humble, simple and work for the liberation of the poor marginalized sections of the people all over the world. The world should enter into the experience of humiliation for neglecting the oppressed. The victims of corona are like innocent children who sacrificed their precious life for the sake of saving Jesus and have warned world leaders to take the side of justice than working for rich. The victims of corona, through their suffering and death have taken

part in the redemptive work of Jesus. God speaks through corona to the world to mend its ways. The world is incarnated into the world of the periphery. People suddenly realize the importance and necessity of the scavengers, as opposed to the people who constantly entertained us through sports and movies. The world is going through a kenotic moment at this juncture. All glories have come to stare at their vanity. All its mighty strengths have come to confront their frailty. The world should work not only to overcome epidemics and pandemics rather strive to empower the poor in all walks of their life. This would help them to fight against any situations in life, be it disease, drought and any natural calamity.

THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS IN THE TIME OF COVID

Noble Baby CST (III B.Th)



Every Christmas reminds us of the love of God that continuously flows towards His children. It reminds us of that great day when the Invisible became Visible. It is the day when the Word became Flesh to make us "partakers of the divine nature" (CCC 460). It is the day of fulfilment of all prophesies and promises of God. It is the day that, the promise of God about the Messiah, who would be the saviour of the world, got



fulfilled. Thus, Christmas becomes a day of great joy. The angels announced that joy to the shepherds on the first Christmas night is to be ours not only on every Christmas night but every day of our lives.

The angels announced "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a saviour, who is Christ the lord (Lk. 21:10,11). During this pandemic this proclamation becomes very relevant to all of us, lighting in us a beacon of Hope.

My childhood memories always strike a chord to me taking me back to the gracious fact that it is a

day of joy and happiness. I celebrated Christmas with my family and friends, used to wear new dress and enjoy agape meal even with my non-Christian friends. The experience of carol singing, crib making competition, mid-night mass and visit to relatives' houses are some memories evergreen within me. In this time of pandemic Covid-19, all kinds of celebrations are discouraged. But the message of Christmas is not merely an outward celebration. Jesus is taking birth within us every day. Christmas is an occasion to pray to Jesus earnestly for his intervention in the world of today to heal and renew it again. So, in a way, the Covid-19, invites us to realize the real hidden meaning and the joy of Christmas. The real joy of Christmas is inherent in bearing in mind that it is the day that God is still interested in us and ready to heal and save us. When we remember the birth of Christ, it is an event where the powerful becomes powerless, to save the world. Therefore, let us be instrumental in showing our faith in the face of this pandemic. While experiencing the inner joy of Christmas amidst Covid-19, let us welcome Jesus, the healer to heal and restore the world. Wish you all Merry Christmas.

OUR RESPONSE TO CORONA

TINY CORONA VIRUS! - THE DOOR TO ENTER THE PATH OF NEW LIFE

Jenitta Mary F.M.M (I B.Th)



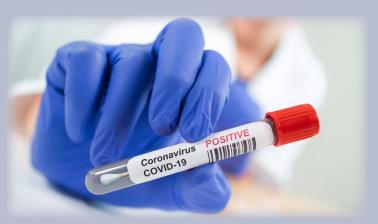
"The whole world is our homeland" said Blessed Mary of the Passion foundress of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. These words echo our vocation as we are Sent, like the disciples to proclaim the gospel and respond to the needs of universal mission. Our greatest joy is to live fully what we hold at heart: to serve God and our neighbour even in difficult moments like Covid-19 Pandemic.

The actual crisis makes us more aware of the values of life, of our interdependence and of the importance of relationship with others and the environment. With the Covid-19 pandemic and its restrictions, the sisters of Ootacamund, Province, Tamil Nadu entered into a journey of transformation through prayers and reflection. This enabled us to reach out to the poor, the less privileged who suffer mostly due to lack of food and other resources for survival.

Sr. Stella Balthazar FMM, our Provincial and many young sisters got involved into swift action taking relief measures. Our community decided to reach out to the marginalized like sanitary workers, poor students of our schools and widows and single women who were struggling to cope up with this pandemic situation. As I studied the context of present situation, I got inspired to help a group which is hardly recognized by the society namely the Transgenders. With the help of the sisters in

my community we reached out to some transwomen who live in the northern suburbs of Coimbatore.

Transgenders are generally abandoned by their family and society. They are considered as social stigma and are deprived from living a normal family life (but it is slowly changing now). Some of the transgenders have no education and so in order to survive they beg or enter into sex work. This pandemic situation has made things very difficult for them to survive. Sr. Stella Balthazar, with the help of provincial

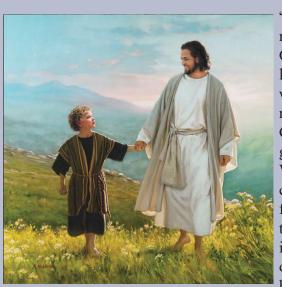


along with some of our community sisters made the necessary arrangements. We visited the housing area of the Transgender and distributed some basic provisions to them.

We organized a webinar on psychological care for Transgender during covid-19. We also had online meetings with transgenders, which helped us to know their expectations from us and they expressed freely that they want an alternative life-style that will give them dignity and find livelihood in society. We've realized that the need is more, and what we are doing is just a small tiny fragment. The times of reflection and retrospection has raised deep questions and has stirred us from within. The God of Love still awaits to share the jar of meal and the horn of oil of solidarity, peace and justice, ecological wellness, freedom, Inter-faith communion and safe future for those who live at the margins. This painful reality calls us to a "renewed sensing of our context" for converting crisis into an opportunity.

RESPOND TO REVEAL THE FACE OF GOD'S LOVE

Angela Mary FMM (I B.Th)



"Just as you did it to one of least of these who are members of my family you did it to me" (Mt 25: 40).

Covid-19 pandemic has brought about a drastic change in the lives of people. Unimaginable things are happening in society which has changed the normal life of most human beings. The new normal has enabled us to take an inner journey to touch God's presence and to sense the needs of the poor and marginalized around us.

We, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (Immaculate Conception convent, Coimbatore) live in solidarity with the suffering humanity with our prayers especially offering everyone

to the merciful Lord. We got involved in outreach activities, by reaching out to the sanitary workers, transgenders, pavement dwellers, poor families in our neighbourhood and the widows by providing them with groceries

and basic meals. It was amazing to see generous people in the silence of the night coming out to feed

the hungry and cloth them. It reminds us words of St. Paul, "God loves the cheerful giver."

The bright side of this current situation is that it has united people in an emotional and spiritual sense by providing opportunities to show concern for one another. Pope Francis in his encyclical says, "We must develop 'love' that recognizes Christ in the face of every excluded person." When we are in service of our fellow beings, we are in the service of the Lord. Let the abundance of God's merciful love strengthen our sense of responsibility wherever we are, in order to make known the merciful face of Jesus.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AN OPPORTUNITY TO AWAKEN OUR SPIRITUAL NATURE

Rose Usha Kujur OSU (III B.Th)

Covid-19 Pandemic has affected the life of each one of us. Vidyajyoti College was forced to shut down abruptly. It has been eight months, since the corona virus has started its vengeful attack on humanity. As soon as I reached my place from Delhi, I was quarantined for 14 days. There was a mixed feeling of joy and sadness. Joy, because it was like a retreat. I had time to be alone with God and myself. It helped me to



go deeper into myself to ponder over my thoughts, my feelings, and my positive and negative aspects of life. I came in touch with my inner world.

These fourteen days helped me make some significant decisions in my life. I read a few insightful books. For two months, I was in the provincial house, where I spent my valuable time with sisters, praying specially for the entire world, which was going through the pandemic crisis. We were around 45 members inside the wall with fear, uncertainty, anxiety, and doubt. What is going to be next? The atmosphere (people, nature, creatures) became sud-

denly quiet. It was an anguishing experience. We were strictly forbidden to go out or meet anyone, for the good of each one's life. However, it also had caused some inconvenient repercussions. We occasionally began to look at each other with disdain. But we thank God for bestowing on us grace to reconcile with each other.

Unexpectedly the crisis of migrants, from big cities shook the whole nation. My community members cried out to the Lord for aid. My congregation sisters came forward to help the migrants in various ways. Our Sisters went to the villages to distribute rice, oil, and other essential materials. We prayed before the Blessed Sacrament in turns for the whole day. Before the pandemic, when daily mass was available, I made petty excuses for not attending the Eucharist. However, during the lockdown, there was earnest desire to attend Holy mass and receive Holy Communion.

These crisis moments (Covid-19 pandemic) gave me an opportunity to connect with the Divine. I have realized that when we are connected with God, we can hear the wisdom of our spirit through the noise and commotion of our daily lives. If we wish to experience a more harmonious and happy existence, it is our job to remember to connect with the Divine, so that we may choose our actions based on love, kindness, and cooperation with one another.

IN THE SHOES OF OUR FOUNDER FR. BODEWIG

Cecilia Bilung S.R.A (I B.Th)



"Go into all the world and proclaim the Good news to the whole creation." (Mk 16:15) The Vision and dream of our founder Fr. Bodewig draws inspiration from the above scripture quotation. "Go out into the whole world and teach all nations the Good news of Jesus Christ. Do not remain seated in your houses in India, but go to the huts of the natives into streets and lanes, and

proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to all creatures. Pay special attention to the schools and orphan-

As Missionary Sisters of the Queen of the Apostles, we have received this command of the Lord to go and proclaim. The proclamation of the Good news is our principal task. Our charism is drawn into the life and mission of Jesus, by sharing with mankind the Good News, that God's compassionate love has been manifested in His life, death and resurrection. The witness of our life involves around our presence, sharing and solidarity with people, radiating in a simple and unaffected way. Our faith is in values that go beyond the current values and hope in something that is not seen. Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good news and indeed a very powerful and effective one. (Evangelii Nuntiandi 21)



Christian love extends to all people, irrespective of caste, colour, race, social status, and creed. Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, healing every disease and every infirmity (Mt. 9: 35). In the spirit of St. Paul who became "All things to all men" in order to proclaim the Good News, we identify ourselves with the people whom we work with.

As chosen ones of God and set apart for his mission we visit the families, listen to their problems and council them for their wellbeing. We also try to help them financially if required for education and medical purpose. We are involved in different ministries like direct and indirect Evangelization, Education, socio-pastoral Apostolate, youth and women in distress and prison ministry.

According to Pope Francis, Education is a dynamic reality; it is a movement that brings people to the light. It is a peculiar kind of movement, with characteristics that make it dynamism of growth aimed at the full development of the person in their individual and social dimension. We assume the responsibility for the education of the poor and the marginalized in our institutions, as an essential part of our contribution to build an inclusive and just society.

In the socio-economic sector we try to reach out to the down trodden and the marginalized especially women and children. Efforts are being made to help women in distress. Opportunity is provided for rural women in self-help programs to raise economic support; women are educated to recognize their abilities and talents. With this support they find courage and confidence to demand justice for their rights. As years have passed by, we can see the results produced by our ministries. Standard of life of these people has been changed for better. The voice of Fr. Bodewig continues to resound in our hearts as we courageously continue to strive to revive the missionary society.

Reflection on Fratelli Tutti

A REFLECTION ON FRATELLI TUTTI

Stella PR, CHF(III B.Th)



We, who Share light from the one and same Sun, irrespective of distance and boundaries; we, who have one and same dwelling, origin and destination regardless cast, creed, gender; yet look at one's own image in other with suspicion and as threat. Reflections on the recent Encyclical of Pope Francis "FRATELLI TUTTI" challenges the spirit of humanity and invites one to look at realities with renewed HOPE; is a radical choice if we want to create fraternity and social friendship. Covid-19 pandemic is one of many poignant moments in human history that uncovered our vulnerability and those false beliefs we had constructed around our lives and blessed us with awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another."

The image of walls used in the encyclical warns us with prophetic courage that if we continue to be confined within the walls of exclusion; that which prevent encounters with other cultures, with those who are different to us; make us slave within our own narrow compounds and reduces out horizons and we can't see beyond ourselves. We have to choose between isolation and indifference or closeness and encounter.

We have lost the TASTE of FRATERNITY. Fraternity requires us to examine the meaning of our existence and to dream together as a single family living in a common home about how we should live together. We need one another if we are to rebirth the human family. Our differences instead of being a cause of division become a richness to be accepted encouraged and celebrated. We need everyone to participate – every face, every hand, and every voice from beyond the walls that we



POPE FRANCIS



have constructed. The document focuses on contemporary social and economic problems, and proposes an ideal world of fraternity in which all countries can be part of a "larger human family.



INCARNATING FRATERNITY

(Arun Philip Simon SJ (BOM)) collected by Louis Lobo SJ I B. Th



"Pope Francis' new addition to the corpus of Social Teaching of the Church called Fratelli Tutti (Dear brothers) can be read in continuation with the Laudato Si. When Laudato Si speaks of the intrinsic value of all the creation, Fratelli Tutti speaks of fraternity and interconnectedness. It is an invitation to service looking at faces, touching the flesh and sensing the closeness with the other even in their suffering (Cf. FT, 115).



Pope Francis points to the economic depression of 2008 as one of the warning signals to the humanity, we didn't heed to it. The throw away culture exposed by COVID -19 especially for the poor, the elderly, migrants and refugees give another warning signal. Francis demands a concrete response: a conversion from the technocratic paradigm to a paradigm of integral ecology in Laudato Si, and a conversion from neo-liberal or narrow nationalistic paradigms to one of fraternity. This fraternity alone forms the basis of equality and liberty.

"Let us admit that, for all the progress we have made, we are still "illiterate" when it comes to accompanying, caring for, and supporting the frailest and vulnerable members of our developed societies" (FT, 64). If the only commandment by Jesus was to love God through the love of neighbour, the above-mentioned conviction of Pope Francis becomes a troubling one. This love or accompaniment needs to fight racist, fascist, casteist, fundamentalist, communalist, xenophobic and patriarchal tendencies for establishing the paradigms of fraternity.

"For when the good of others is at stake, good intentions are not enough. Concrete efforts must be made to bring about whatever they and their nations need for the sake of their development" (FT, 185). This invitation was incarnated in the lives of many of the human right activists who are fighting to bring a radical change in the lives of the poor.

Rajkumar Sahu made a 1,000-km journey from Chhattisgarh to Pune for a fleeting meeting with Sudha Bharadwaj (one of the arrested activists), as the police brought her to court for a hearing, and he said "She is not just our lawyer or union colleague. For us, Sudha Didi (elder sister) is family". Activist Dayamani Barla said in a Hindu article, "Father Stan Swamy had been fighting for protection of water, forest and land. Following his footsteps, hundreds of grassroot level workers and activists

have been doing the same work in villages. Activists of different people's movements are standing solidly behind Fr. Stan Swamy." These quotes reveal that people like Fr. Stan and Sudha incarnated the ideals of Fratelli Tutti in their lives, which is nothing more than incarnations of gospel. A few incarnations are not enough; we need the mighty Church along with all people of goodwill to be incarnated in the paradigm of fraternity."

(Arun Philip Simon SJ, is a Jesuit belonging to Bombay Province. He is a second year B.Th. student at Centre Sèvres, Paris. He is a proficient writer, interested in philosophy, theology, scripture, politics, and well-being of creation.)

STANDING BY STAN

REPORT ON THE PROTEST IN JAMSHEDPUR – STANDING WITH FR STAN

Cajetan Anthony SJ (II B.Th)



On 10th October, we, the scholastics of Jamshedpur province along with our novices, conducted a prayer service at the Novitiate Chapel, Jamshedpur. This prayer service

was conducted to pray in a special way for Fr Stan Swamy who has been falsely accused and arrested by NIA. Fr. Stan has been working for the welfare of the Tribals in the Chotanagpur belt of Jharkhand for a few decades. We recalled his missionary spirit and

his enthusiasm in his mission during the prayer service.

On the 11th October, in Sakchi Golchakkar, Jamshedpur there was 'Citizen's call to protest' against the arbitrary arrest of Fr. Stan Swamy. This protest was organized by the citizens of good will from the city. The presence of our Jesuit priests and scholastics made the protest a meaningful one. There were also some dioce-



san priests and religious. The main focus of the protest was 'forcing the Central Government to release Fr. Stan Swamy and other social workers who have been falsely accused and arrested'. Besides, the protest also hit the nail straight at the Central Government telling it clearly not to harass the Social Workers of our country who are working for the welfare of our nation.

A DAY OF PROTEST AGAINST THE ARREST OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Ajay Bara, S.J (II B.Th)



12th October 2020 was observed as solidarity day to protest the falsely accused arrested Human Right De-



fenders by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and to oppose the move, to condemn the baseless act and thereby the release of Fr. Stan Swami (the Tribal/Adivasi's Right Activist) and other Human Right Defenders/ Activists who are falsely accused and arrested. This protest was organized under the banner of ST, SC, OBC (minorities) Manch, Pathalgaon (C.G.) simultaneously at three different places: Indira Chowk, Kerakchhar (Bulcan) Chawk and Pakargaon Chowk. During whole through pro-

Pakargaon Chowk. During whole through protest, we abided by the protocol of the ongoing

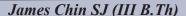
pandemic corona virus by putting on masks and maintaining the social distance. There was lot of excitement among the participants for the same cause. This protest included religious as well as the laity. There were also interviews conducted by the media personnel where we got a golden opportu-

nity and platform to voice out and put weightage on the same cause. All the participants at Indira Chowk, Pathalgaon stood silently all-around holding banners and placards mentioning the following urgent and burning issues and demands of the time:

- i) Release of Fr. Stan Swamy, the Tribal Right Activist, Sudha Bhardwaj human right activist and 14 others
- ii) Demand of justice for human right activists
- iii) Stop harassment of journalists
- iv) Withdrawal of the Acts passed against the farmers
- v) Respect girls and women
- vi) "Beti Padhao, Beti Badhao Nahin Pahle Bachao"
- vii) Punish the rapists
- viii) Stop privatization and communalization
- ix) "Hanthi Bhagao, Aadmi Bachao"
- x) "Jati Praman ptra me dhandhali band karo"
- xi) Stop unsustainable use of natural resources
- xii) Declare minimum support price to all agricultural produce

All these demands were included for the cause to give a wider perspective to this day. Indeed, it was a wonderful experience of boldly stepping out of my comfort zone to witness and voice out against the arrest of falsely accused arrested Human Right Defenders. Thanks to those who stepped out to be the part of the issue and to the local administration for granting permission and the media for giving wide coverage.

SHILLONG STANDS WITH FR. STAN





The slogan "Shillong Stands with Father Stan", was one of the heart touching phrases of the people here in Shillong, Meghalaya, on 12th Oct, 2020 by the friends of the Jesuits. Dr. Moses Kharbihthai and Mr. Richard Syiemiong were the main organizers. Despite the gentle drizzle, many people took part in the procession. There was participation from across denominations. The Religious and clergy from Shillong, although not in large numbers, made their presence felt. In spite of the Lockdown and Pandemic we carried out the Solidarity with Fr. Stan who was accused wrongly by the authority because he was working for the upliftment of the poor in Jharkhand. Jesuits from the Khasi-Jaintia Hills districts actively took part

in this event. There were four main speakers on that day. As the programme was going on people started entering to the programme one by one by seeing us giving talk in the street. I was touched by one of the speakers as he was expressing that he was not a Christian. He addressed us saying, "I don't know who Fr. Stan is, but I know that he is an activist. As I am also an activist, I know how much he might have been suffering. If you and I don't stand for justice in our country the problems of injustices will not be solved". One of the Baptist Pastor came forwards and gave a beautiful speech which touched the heart of the audience. He was saying, "Brothers and sisters if you and I



are not joining our hands where there is injustice, then we will not be able to come together as one family. We will never overcome this evil. We have to work and fight together and we would see the result". As Fr. Stan SJ stands for the poor people in the mainland India, in Jharkhand, fighting for the Rights of the poor, who were exploited by the rich and powerful we also need to join hands in fight-

ing for the cause. One of the main points repeated by all the speakers was that, why the authority has to arrest the old-man, whose age is 83. The Jesuits are not much known in the main city as we are mostly working with the poor people in the villages. This protest also became one of the works of evangelization about the Jesuits who the Jesuits are. On that day on, the news spread far and wide in and around the Shillong town about the Jesuits. What I have learnt from this candle light vigil was that you may not know the language of the people but if you are able to stand with the people, they will support you. The importance of collaboration with the people in our mission places is crucial. Through collaboration many people come to know the Jesuits, our congregation and our way of life. The GC 32 spoke about option for the poor and the downtrodden. Though you may not be able to do much but being with and among people and listening to and observing the people is very essential. This sort of solidarity plays a very important role in society. The more you are close to the people and listen to them, the more you understand the feelings of the people.

NEW WAY OF LIVING NORMAL: #STANDWITHSTAN

Wellington Patil SJ (III B.Th)



Many of us in our Jesuit communities and in the provinces were exploring the NEW WAY OF LIVING THE NORMAL: - new ways of doing different ministries that we have been doing till now. Yet, none of us had thought that even before we could adjust to this new normal, we would have to strive to events that are not NORMAL. The arrest of Fr. Stan Swamy and greater awareness about those who are already arrested shook us all. The Society of Jesus all over the world realized that living the new normal today means moving beyond the "charity model" that we normally try to operate on. The new normal today is standing for the rights of poor, marginalized, deprived of justice and victims of discrimination. And in the process of doing so, being branded as 'anti-national' or 'Urban Naxal' because they stood for the fundamental human rights. It is surely a wake-up call to all but, especially so, to the Indian Jesuits to Stand

फादर स्टॅन यांना तुरुंगातून तत्काळ सोडण्याची मागणी



फादर स्टॅन् यांचा पुणे येथे झालेल्या एल्गार परिषदेशी आणि भीमा कोरेगाव दंगली संबंध नाही. फादर स्टॅन गेली पन्नास वर्ष झारखंडमधील आदिवासी जनतेसाठी कार्य करीत आहेत. कोरोनाच्या काळात वय ८३ असलेल्या एखाद्या वृद्धाला तुरुंगात डांबून ठेवणे म्हणजे अमानवीय कृत्य आहे. या निवेदनाद्वारे फादर स्टॅन् आणि यांच्यासोबतच आनंद तेलतुंबड, गौतम नवलखा, हनी बाबू सागर, गोरखे रमेश गायचोर, ज्योती जगताप, मिलिंद तेलतुंबडे, सुधीर ढवळे, सुरेंद्र गडलिंग, शोभा सेन, वर्णन गोन्साल्विस, सुधा भारद्वाज, वरवरा राव, महेश राऊत, रोना विल्सन इत्यादी मानवतावादी समाजसेवकांना कायदेशीर प्रक्रियेद्वारे मुक्त करावे मागणी नाशिक जिल्ह्यातील मानवी हक्क कार्यकर्त्यांनी केली आहे.

Under the Banner of the Cross. It is the time to answer the question "what I ought to do for Christ?"

> Our brother Stan is put behind the bars because he fought Under the Banner of the Cross and questioned the government policies that alienate the Adivasi brothers and sisters from their land, water and forest. He questioned the laws that falsely implicate the poor Adivasi youth and imprison them only because they demand for their constitutional rights. Today, Fr. Stan is under arrest by NIA because he showed fidelity to the Constitution of India. He practices the gospel values and used the Indian Constitution as his only means to fight the fascist ruling structures and even spoke against capitalist commu-

nity that violate human rights, destroy environment to fill their treasures.

I wonder, what motivated Stan to do this knowing the consequences of it? Obviously, it was the call of the Eternal King and the dynamic word of God. Jesus begins his ministry by reading and living this same word of God and we are quite sure that Fr. Stan too might have been gripped by these words, "The

Spirit of the Lord is upon me..." (Lk 4:18)." The testimonies that have come in support of Stan and the people who have highly spoken about Stan testify that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. Therefore, he accompanied the poor in their struggle, he united the Adivasis in Jharkhand to fight the oppression and fought the legal battles to let the Adivasi youth be freed from prisons. As Moses

was sent to the Israelites so was Fr. Stan to people in Jharkhand. Before Moses could challenge the mighty Egypt, he had to convince the people about their right to live with dignity. Fr. Stan focused on making people aware of their fundamental rights and the rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution. He slowly empowered these masses so that they could fight for their land, forest resources and identity. The biblical books talk about leaders and prophets who changed the face of the history of Israel. Fr. Stan combines all of those biblical leadership and prophetic qualities and he is on his way to change the legacy of living the priesthood or religious life in India.

For, Fr. Stan living the new normal is to oppose that which is not normal, to raise your voice against oppressive structure that the society has normalized; to show your dissent for discriminatory practices which the society has normalized; to take an unambiguous stand so that we do not normalize all the evil that happens around us.

The current movement #standwithstan gives each one of us and especially to the Jesuits a call from the Eternal King to stand under the banner of the cross. A call to challenge the world for all the discriminatory practices, injustice, fanaticism and unhealthy capitalism. There are several passages in the gospels where Jesus opposed several laws and practices which were thought to be "normal" and by doing that, he generated a new movement or a 'new normal way of living.' In St. Paul's words "Be imitators of Christ" (1Cor. 11:1). We become imitators of Christ by becoming immersed in His movement as many good and generous souls have done as Fr. Stan and other activists are doing. So, friends, let us live the new normal by opposing that which is not normal!

WE STAND BY YOU, STAN

Rajeev Ranjan (III B.Th)



The arrest of Fr. Stan baffled several people and organizations. The unlawful usage of UAPA has victimized many innocent human right activists. Some of the puppet institutions like NIA have been using the UAPA as per the government's wish. The present government feels that the intellectuals and human right



activists are thereat to the New India. Therefore, it arrested more than a dozen of activists and intellectuals including Fr. Stan. Hence, Patna Jesuits participated in a peaceful protest on 10 October, 2020 at Dak Bungalow Chowraha, Patna to show solidarity and demanding immediate release of Fr. Stan and other human right activists. Many laities and our collaborators joined hands in this protest. There was another protest on 12 October, 2020 at Buddha Smriti Park organized by Mahila Vikas Munch. Many people came in support of this protest. Sever-

al religious women and men participated in this protest to raise their voice against the arrest of Fr. Stan and others. People from different social organizations could be seen in the protest. On 18 October, 2020 there was one more protest at Buddha Smriti Park called by PUCL. This protest gave a strong message to the government for arresting the people who speak against the unlawful activities of the government. The students of St. Xavier's College, Patna performed a nukkad to bring awareness among people as how the government is misusing the institutions like NIA, CBI, ED and judiciary. Nagarik Adhikar Munch, Bihar called for a candle light protest on 16 November, 2020 at Kargil Chawk, Patna. These protests helped us be open to the reality of the present situation and act according to it relevantly and adequately.

A VOICE IN THE STREET

KP Saji George SJ (III B.Th)



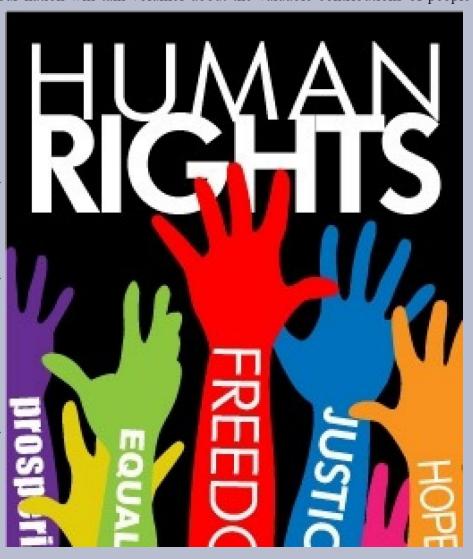
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Fr. Stan Swamy is a voice for the voiceless. He is a hope for the hopeless. He has always been standing for the basic human rights (fundamental right) of the neglected people of our nation. Fr. Stan is

not only known to ordinary people for his action but also people of all sorts such as human right activists, writers, thinkers know him well. But it has now taken on a new emphasis and a fabricated poignancy in recent times, approaching him from diverging perspectives: historical, existential, political as well as secular. It is precisely in this context that we have to look at this problem (his arrest). It is important to call to mind the fact that all we hear about Fr. Stan is coupled with political motive and contemporary social ethics. As a prophet of cosmic involvement, he has to give his voices to the unjust life of the Adivasis. The overall picture of this mission of Fr. Stan I would very well call FREEDOM. And so, thinking that the arrest of Fr. Stan and other human rights activists will curtail this freedom, the government is wrong.

However, it is unjust that NIA has arrested an octogenarian. I wish to know from the higher authority of India (Prime Minister), what wrong had my brother Stan done to our nation in the past? Sir, some gentlemen accuse him that he is anti-national who does not abide by the law of the land. When did he become anti-national? The history of our nation will talk volumes about the valuable contributions of people

like this. Is arrest going to help at all? I don't think that fleets and armies are necessary for the work of love and reconciliation. Are we so unwilling to be reconciled? Do you need to use force to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves. May I ask those gentlemen, what is the use of brute force if it does not create harmony in our country? He does not have an internal enemy. It is some handful people who create internal animosity on the basis of caste and creed to secure political power. The gentlemen are trying to shackle him and others with the same chains, which the Nazis used not so long ago. They have been trying that for the last several years. We, the supporters of Stan have petitioned; we have taken out demonstrations; we have made supplications; we have even prostrated ourselves before the throne to arrest the tyranny by the government



and the Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our supplications have been disregarded; we have been spurned at the foot of the throne. Many may consider that every effort has been in vain and it is foolish to indulge any longer the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. But I don't think so. There is always room for hope. Fr. Stan is that hope in deep hopelessness. He is that hope which encourages us to struggle against the injustice meted out to our people. His arrest has not discouraged us but it has revitalized our struggle to stand by the downtrodden. Millions of people have sacrificed their lives for justice. They will not keep quiet as long as the people of this nation are not respected. Fr. Stan is the best example for all of us. Even in his advanced age, he stands tall amidst your tyrannical policies.

His way was the way of peace. When you feel that the way of peace is disastrous, you have lost your sense of morality. In history war never created peace or harmony. It always destroys peace and creates fear. People like Fr. Stan Swamy are prophetic voice who prophesy peace to the whole world. The repercussions of their prophecy will be sacrificing of their lives, imprisonment and all kinds of persecutions. God always takes the side of those who work for peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5: 9-10).

I am certain that Stan will get a hundredfold reward for his noble task. His arrest is not the end in establishing the Kingdom of God but it will facilitate us to work for the Kingdom. God is standing by him. Dear Stan we stand by you.

SOLIDARITY WITH FR. STAN SWAMY

Sandeep Kujur SJ (III B.Th)

More than 5,000 people formed a 4km human chain in Ranchi, starting from St. Mary's Church to Main Road, on Friday, 16 October, 2020 to express solidarity with octogenarian Jesuit priest and tribal rights activist Fr. Stan Swamy SJ, for his false arrest and alleged Maoist links, in Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Pari-



shad case. Members of Civil Society, Catholics and senior Catholic priests, Catholic Nuns held a silent candle light vigil and protest terming it a symbol of hope against the attempts to silence intellectuals and human rights activists. Friday's congregation, part of ongoing protests by various groups, was led by Archbishop of Ranchi Felix Toppo and auxiliary bishop Theodore Mascarenhas. We, the students and staff from RTC, also participated actively in the protest.

Archbishop of Ranchi Felix Toppo's banner read: "We

demand justice". Among the other slogans printed on posters were "Stop terrorizing activists", "Stan is a worker for Dalit and Adivasi rights and not a terrorist", "Everyone has human rights, stop branding them as terrorists" and "Release Stan Swamy the voice of the oppressed".

All major non-BJP political parties and social activists on Saturday 17 October, 2020 took the march on the streets in Ranchi, demanding the immediate release of Fr. Stan Swamy. Here also some students and staff from RTC took part. The march titled Nyay March started from the Zilla School and culminated with a dharna in front of Raj Bhawan. Political parties including the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, CPI and CPI (ML) and organisations such as Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha, Jan Mukti Sangharsh Vahini, Manaveey Ekta, National Domestic Workers Movement, Right to Food Campaign, Vishapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan, and Singhbhum Adivasi Samaj, Sajha Kadam participated in the protest rally. Through a

memorandum addressed to Governor Draupadi Murmu, they demanded immediate release of Fr. Stan Swamy and all political prisoners, closure of Bhima-Koregaon case and withdrawal of false cases related to Delhi riot cases and repeal sections 124A (sedition) and 499 (Criminal defamation) of the Indian Penal Code, Unlawful Activities Preventions Act (UAPA) and National Security Act (NSA).

FR. STAN - THE VOICE OF PERIPHERY TO PRIMARY



Manickam SJ (III B.Th)

On 14 October, 2020, Theologians belonging to both Madurai and Chennai Jesuit provinces participated in the protest condemning the arrest of Fr. Stan Swamy SJ and demanding his release and other activists. It was well-organized by Christava Nallina Iyyakam (CNI) at Santhome Higher secondary school, Chennai. Though the pandemic is engulfed all over the world, still people from different religious orders, religions, Social activists, political parties, and movements converged together to express their solidarity in humanity in releasing Fr. Stan and his colleagues.

Mr. Peter Alphonse, the former congress member of parliament, addressed the spectators and shared the ardent, committed, and unceasing spirit of missionary Fathers who transformed, empowered and conscientized the poor people in India. Followed by, Kanimozhi Karunanithi, the member of parliament, strongly opposed the arrest of Fr. Stan and promised to take up the issue to the Parliament. Besides them, a few prominent leaders



from different fields have extended their fullest support through social media and have been standing in solidarity throughout.

"When I feed the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a Communist" says, Archbishop. Helder Camara, the great Liberation Theologian. The powerful words of Helder Camara fitting aptly to the present situation of Fr. Stan. When Fr. Stan asked why the poor Adivasis and Dalits are falsely charged and jailed, they jailed him as an anti-national activitivist. He stood up for the rights of the deprived and spoke against the exploitation of Adivasis is seen today as terrorist activity. In the recent past, we have witnessed how human Social activists are being cornered and tortured by the repressive and power-mongering government, joining hands with greedy businessmen. But Fr. Stan, following the footsteps of his master, Jesus Christ, determined to bring the periphery to the primary and ever ready to march with the marginalized that led Fr. Stan to witness the reign of God amidst struggles.

Being an elder brother of the society of Jesus, full of exuberance, he lives out the Jesuit hall-mark-faith that does Justice. His prophetic responsibility for the poor and the down-trodden challenges all of us to care for the poor brethren in need. As Mother Teresa said, "Hands which help are holier than lips that pray." He, at the age of 83, never confined himself rather extended his helping hand to reach out to the unreachable at large. He sets an exemplary life as a beacon of hope for the hopeless and dawn to the downtrodden of the modern prophet. Let us wish and pray the voice of virtue is a spark that kindles the fire of others to stand for Justice with Fr. Stan SJ.

IN SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE UNJUSTLY ACCUSED AT NASHIK AND MUMBAI



Wesley D'Costa SJ (III B.Th)

On 16 October, 2020, we the students of Vidyajyoti College of Theology belonging to the Bombay province of the Society of Jesus, participated in a silent protest organised in solidarity with Fr. Stan Lourduswamy SJ and other defenders of human rights who have been detained under the UAPA law.

The Jesuit communities of Nashik [Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal (MPSM), Holy Cross Church, Shrine of the Infant Jesus, Manmad, Ambatha] in collaboration with National Alliance of People's Movement, people of good will, lay faithful, Assumption Sisters Tilloli, Daughters of the

Cross Sisters, Nashik and Vincentian Sisters, Manmad were all part of this solidarity movement.

The group stood in front of the District Collectors office at Nashik. All social distancing norms were followed. Each one was holding a placard or poster stating the concerns about the present situation and the demands for the release of Fr. Stan and the other human rights activist. A delegation of members representing the various organisa-



tions participating in the protest met the honourable collector Mr. Suraj Mandhare (IAS) and handed him the memorandum for the release of Fr. Stan.

On 1 November, the day the Church celebrated the feast of all Saints, we the students of Vidyajyoti College of Theology belonging to the Bombay province of the Society of Jesus organised and participated in a Solidarity movement for Stan and the Other Human rights activist. This was held at different locations in Mumbai. There were four major areas in which the movement was organised. One group stood outside St. Xavier's School at Fort, another group was at St. Anne's Church, Mazgaon, one group was stationed at St. Peters Church, Bandra and another group was at Andheri Station. The respective groups stood in silent solidarity displaying placards and posters that had the relevant information expressing our concerns. Pamphlets giving relevant information was distributed. Many people from parishes also collaborated and stood in support.

Our Experiences of Theological Classes

MUTED IN FAITH

Amul Jacob SJ (I B.Th)

Virtual classes are one of the fascinating trends of the corona pandemic situation. A few months ago,



students were busy carrying the books for classes and now they are using the mobiles and laptops for online classes. The medium of study at present, has become mobiles and laptops which were once prohibited at schools. So also, is the situation of the Theologians doing Theology from different places of provinces and religious houses. Theology is equivalent to faith. 'Theology is guided by faith'. This very faith experience is experienced by us all during the online classes. There is a faith sharing experience between the Professor and the student

that the student though behind the muted video is listening to the professor attentively and patiently. This faith is further confirmed and strengthened by both party during the process of questions and answers. The online classes are new adventures for us to adapt to the demands of the time. The Theology classes are teaching me to look at things positively and with the Christian view of being

hopeful even at difficult times. The daily mass attenders in the church have become online mass attenders having and cherishing the same level of faith. The tragedy of migrant workers is more horrific and terrific than the actual corona pandemic effects. Their faith in God and human beings has been shaken and torn apart but not ended. The victims surely had a thin degree of faith in God and in His providence during their tragic walk for thousands of miles. Therefore, despite all difficulties and hardships, they could reach their hometowns safe and alive. As failures are the steppingstones of success so also are sufferings and tragedies the pillars of human's faith. Faith is a response to God by human beings at different situations of life.

WE NEED GOD NOW MORE THAN EVER

Cecilia Bilung SRA (I B.Th)



If our memory has not failed us, I am sure we can count them one by one, the marvelous works of the Lord in our life. Sometimes it is very painful and other times it is indescribable. Both are the works of the one who believes in the presence and power of a living God in our life.



In the midst of great silence all over the world, where people are suffocated by the extreme fear of death caused by the pandemic, we the people of Hope and of strong Faith in the Lord, still see a ray of light peeping through. Therefore, we wait for a better tomorrow. We hope for a better life where the reign of peace and prosperity is experienced all over. This hope forces us to reach out to be agents of Hope and life givers.

In the present situation each of us need to make a U turn in life. No more isolated but connected. No more selfish but reaching out to others. No more

only humans but searching the Divine within. No more finding God in happiness but finding Him in struggle and in the suffering. More than ever, now we are challenged to find the Divine deep within and others as well. Finding Him in the Sacred Scriptures we turn towards Him for our safety and security. In all sensitivity, we are invited to see Him in all his creatures in whom we find the touch of the Divine because everything is created in the image and likeness of God.

STUDYING GOD VIRTUALLY

Rajesh Katru, SJ (I B. Th)



I have come a long way up to here. Just a few more years away from reaching the milestone. Saying yes to the Lord and voyaging in the sea of troubled waters yet walking closely and indefatigably in his path

as a religious and now more precisely as a theology student fills me with an abundance of joy. Theology is a stage where I come into a close encounter with the Lord and thus, I get to Know Him more, Love Him more and follow Him more. As I step into this unfathomable omniscience of Theology, the Study of God, all that I want to say is that my heart is thriving and striving for more and accelerating my soul to get deeper into mysterious and insightful knowledge and a personal experience of God. My journey at Vidyajyothi, the temple of the Knowledge of God, begins with my other 25 classmates coming from different congregations, dioceses including



my Jesuit companions from various provinces. When we are open to God and surrender ourselves to

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his Will, I am sure He will be there always in extending his hand in leading and guiding us. This is my so far personal experience as I travel ahead in my formation as a Jesuit Scholastic. Now, despite the fact that the Covid-19 has pushed us into a bizarre situation of isolating ourselves in our own respective provinces, God continues to guide us and inspire us. The virtual classes that we attend today are quite challenging due to the fact that there are no first-hand classroom experiences, not many theological discussions among us the students and we still feel strange and shy in facing camera and interacting with each other. However, I am really inspired by the way VJ and our professors coming out of their ways to help and guide us in imparting the knowledge of the Theological studies. I know, even for them too it's a never before experience of engaging us through virtual format

in teaching and my experience so far is that they are open and understanding making the classes a good exercise of learning. We are in the realm we recalled our experiential knowledge of God through Faith and Revelation and at the threshold of acquiring a deeper sense of exploring and assimilating more of the Almighty through Church and the Scripture. As St. Augustine says, 'Grace is a gratuitous gift of God" and I am hopeful that this pandemic too will pass and take us to the new horizon of great and immense learning of God, VJ, Delhi. Distant or close, all of us eagerly waiting to join the VJ family.

MY EXPERIENCES OF THEOLOGY CLASSES

Cyprian Soreng SJ (IB.Th)



Initially, I was astonished and surprised when I joined online classes at Vidyajyoti. I was curious and unsure of what I would learn next. As the days passed and classes began, I felt that the challenge was



to understand various important aspects of the theological phenomenon. Now, for me it is an eye-opening experience to understand, learn and assimilate various religious concepts. Right from my childhood I was bombarded with various teachings about the Bible, Jesus Christ and the church at large. Gradually, I am now able to understand and reflect on a deeper level to become a good theologian. While addressing the students, the rector of Vidyajyoti insisted on the phrase "not half-baked ones" to become a full-fledged theologian. This particular phrase has challenged me to ponder and reflect on my upcoming studies. I

hope that I can do my best to gain more and more from different classes in order to strengthen my faith and vocation in the Society of Jesus. Now I am completely into the classes with great enthusiasm and interest.



FORGET NOT "IMMANUEL" - "GOD IS WITH US"

Hitesh Parmar SJ (I B.Th)



Pope Francis signed yet another encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti'- Fraternity and Social Friendship on 3 October 2020. The concept 'inclusiveness' which Pope Francis very well describes in the encyclical echoes in Indian Sanskrit text *Hitopadesha*-

अयं नजिः परो वेति गण्ना लघु चेतसाम् ।

उदारचरतिनां तु वस्थैव कुटुम्बकम्।| This is my own and that a stranger' – is the calculation of the narrow-minded. For the magnanimous-hearts however, the entire earth is but a family.

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German theologian Johann Baptist Metz coins the term-'mysticism of the open eye.' He elucidates it as a proper Christian response to a suffering world. He utilizes the parable of the good Samaritan as the example of the mysticism of the open eyes- making God not only of transcendence but also of immanence.

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preserving the dignity of the human person who is created in the image and likeness of God. This is what Pope in his encyclical calls us to be- the good Samaritans- the heralds of hope- recognizing Christ in the suffering face of humanity. Ignatian mysticism is primarily a mysticism of open eyes; finding God in all things, in creation, in the suffering face of humanity.

The after-effects of corona, still better say the side effects of corona have drastically af-

fected the people including we religious. We know not the way out. The pandemic has alienated us from one another. During corona pandemic many villages here in Gujarat bore a sign barring entry of any outsider into the village. In cities, many times the neighbours complained to police of any new foreign arrivals to the neighbourhood. A Jesuit is not allowed to enter the residence with the suspicion of being a corona virus carrier. Such alienation may add up to depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies etc. put it in a religious realm- the dark night of the soul, the desolation, the faith or vocation crisis etc. A really challenging time indeed!

The theme for this academic year in Vidyajyoti is Pilgrimaging Theologically in Corona Times. Do I still find meaning, find fulfilment in studying theology in this time of crisis? How will my doing theology contribute to develop this mysticism of open eyes?

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem help us open our eyes, develop the vision of inclusiveness and find God still labouring and working for us. Forget not 'Emmanuel'- God is with us always (Mt 28:20). Let's keep our eyes open to see him as advent is approaching.

Earth's crammed with heaven,

And every common bush afire with God,

But only he who sees takes off his shoes;

The rest sit round and pluck blackberries."

FAITH, AS MY RESPONSE TO THE REVELATIONS OF GOD

Prerna Dhurwey HCM (I B.Th)



As a beginner it is my profound joy to share my experiences and insights on Faith and Revelation. In spite of the new methods of teaching, I enjoy the classes and there is a lot more to learn from the professors who share from their astute experiences and knowledge. The theological classes give us a new awareness and perspective to encounter God in faith and personal relationship. The teachings help us to quest more for the word of God and taste the Divine within.

Faith is a human response to what God communicates. It is a direct and inter-personal contact. Faith makes



a bond between God and me, and it needs to be sustained by continuous contact. This happens through personal prayer.

Revelation: God communicates who God is and reveals to us who we are. He communicates all the time and when I am disposed to it, I receive it. I can grasp that revelation only through experience. It is this experience that discloses life and

tells me 'who or what I am'. Life is shaped by experiences. Experience involves the whole being and it unifies them. I experi-

ence God and transmit it to others.

The three dimensions of faith: confession, commitment and confidence. On reflecting on the three

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ence in my life.

dimensions of faith, it dawns to me that, it is my confession of faith that helps me to commit myself in reaching out to others and practice what I confess. I am able to relate and reflect of which I was not aware or never reflected upon and I find meaning in my commitment to the needs of the community. It is my faith that drives me to be a loving person. In this pandemic which has now become a new normal, I have confidence of my faith which instils in me a new hope that I can rely on God. I have come to acknowledge that through faith I respond to God's revelation. My response makes me grow in confidence in my faith. The deeper I dwell in it, the more intimate I grow in my personal relationship with God. This faith is manifested through my commitment and relationship with my fellow beings. As I journey in my faith experience, I become more and more aware of God's pres-

HOPE AND BEYOND THE CONTEXT

Praveen Polanki SJ (II B.Th)

The present situation is extremely painstaking. The COVID-19 global pandemic has had profound effects on all aspects of life for families and communities. In the upheaval wrought by the novel corona virus, loved ones' lives are lost and livelihoods are threatened, ways of living are upended, and the 'new normal'

ahead is unclear and precarious. People are losing jobs and their hope seems to be deteriorating day by day. People are eagerly waiting for a way out of this pandemic. News regarding vaccine is heard from many corners. We see many signs of economic breakdown. Plans and schemes of people keep changing. Education system received a severe beating at various levels. People started posing different questions like, "Why has this pandemic come?" and "How to get rid of this?" and "When does this come to an end?" In no way is religious life an exception to this.



Some people express the opinion that the attitude of human exuberance is the cause of this outrageous infection.

On the other hand, fanatic and fundamentalist forces gain their upper hand by winning people's mandate. Innocent and marginalized people continue to suffer in the hands of dominant category. Politicians refuse to concede their defeat. Abuse of aspects related to religion prop up disturbances at many places. The present context seems to be bringing in lots of worries, anxieties and fear.

Yet, God is calling us for a hope that is beyond this context. The course on John's gospel sprung hope in all of us indicating the ever-abiding presence of God and his guiding hand throughout the evolution of human beings. It assured us to trust in the fullness of life found in Jesus. Pauline letters enabled us to have a renewal of our minds and hearts. Missionary journeys of Paul equipped us with inner strength to face hardships and emerge as victorious. It is on the cross Christians find their identity and strength. History of the Church taught us lessons from its downfalls and revival that we should raise from the current situation to carry forward the mission of the Church. The concept of the Kingdom of heaven in Mathew's gospel instilled within us a deep hope to operate from a greater level and consciousness. Though it is difficult to predict the end of this pandemic, there is a rejuvenating hope that is beyond the context guiding us to pursue in our life journey.



LISTEN TO WHAT THE SPIRIT IS TELLING HUMANS IN THIS CORONA CRISIS

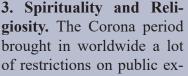
By Sebastian Painadath SJ, Sameeksha, Kalady (collected by Nikhil George SJ, II B. Th.)



sage. As Christians we need to "listen to what the Spirit is telling the community" (Rev. 2:29). For this one has to look deeper with the mystical eye of nous and discern the movements of the divine Spirit. Five reflections in this regard:

- 1. Global Solidarity. The Corona-virus has brought people of all nations together irrespective of religion and culture, language and ethnicity. Never before has the entire humanity found itself united against a common enemy as at this time of pandemic. This has promoted a sense of global solidarity and concern for the wellbeing of the entire humanity. Whatever be the source of this pandemic, it has broken our blind trust in three assumptions: (i) science will give answers to all problems, (ii) wealth makes life secure, and (iii) religion leads to final liberation. The third factor points to the limitations of religions in guiding spiritual seekers.
- **2. Return to Nature.** There is a tendency in humans to think that they are the crown of creation. The consequence is an unbridled exploitation of the earth. The way humans exploited in recent decades the natural

resources without a concern for the future of humanity (and of the earth) has led to a global ecological crisis. In the outbreak of the Corona virus, one could detect the protest of nature, and discern the call to experience the "interconnectedness of all things in creation" (Laudato si). All religious communities are forced to reflect the sacredness of material nature.





pressions of faith in Churches and temples. It was a time to discover the dynamics of spirituality. Spirituality is the experience of the Divine as Spirit, as vibration, as movement. Religion is the articulation of that experience in creed, cult, code and community. Spirituality is the awakening to the vibrant immanence of the Divine in creation. Religion helps believers to encounter God in personified symbols. Spirituality has a universal dynamism; religion addresses a particular community. Mystics of all religious traditions make a consistent distinction between the Divine and God. As human persons with body and social relations we do need religious symbols representing God. But we should be open to the call of the mystics to go beyond all names and forms in pursuit of the Divine as incomprehensible mystery: Deus semper major. Augustine warns all theologians: "If you know God it is not God" (Si comprehendis, nonest Deus, Sermo 117). In this spiritual search for the Beyond followers of different religions are "Spiritual co-pilgrims" (John Paul II). Restricted to home situation in this Corona period, believers of all religions have an opportunity to discover the transforming dynamics of spirituality.

- **4. The Domestic Church.** People worldwide got confined to their homes. Parents, grandparents and children enjoyed time and leisure to speak and listen to one another in an unprecedented way. They realised how much one is loved and cared for. It was a time to perceive home as the "domestic Church" (Vat II. LG. 11) and family as the living cell of a nation. The Corona period forced believers of all religions to realise the sacredness of family relations and experience the abiding presence of the divine Spirit in them.
- **5. Simplicity of Life.** A consumerist culture was rampant in the world causing a global divide between the rich and the poor. On the other hand, all religious Scriptures advocate a life of simplicity in

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tune with nature: the less one possesses the more free one becomes. Consumerism and spirituality do not go together. Jesus warned us: "You cannot serve two masters, money and God" (Lk. 16:13). The Corona period teaches us to experiment with a simpler way of life compassionately sharing with the needy what we have.

Obituary

THE THEOLOGIAN OF ARUL-ANBU (GRACE AND LOVE)

GYAN BHARATI GURUKUL, VARANASI

It was absolutely devastating and uprooting to experience the unexpected demise of our dean Fr. Jerome Sylvester IMS on 27-10-2020. The inadequacy of my language fails me in present time of sorrow to express our anguish and the state of our life in the absence of Fr. Jerome. It was a sort of nightmare, everything is consummated and we have buried Fr. Jerome, who gave lecturers a day before not knowing it is his last lecture that we are attending and now leaving us shattered as he is laid in the grave. As one of my companions told me, "He taught the greatest theology through his unexpected departure to where he belonged, without conducting any exams, perhaps each one has to answer personally as we journey ahead". It was a challenge for all to accept his death.

He was a great thinker, who instilled the love for the North Indian Churches into the veins of seminarians by his proficiency and experiences of Kristhabhakta Movement and Religious Cosmopolitanism. When our small community of fifteen brothers and two formators along with few IMS fathers gathered to acknowledge Fr. Jerome's significance in our life and to console each other, everyone had treasures of nostalgia, specifically all of us had many cherished memories to comment on his dedication in teaching, genuine interest in brothers'



growth. On the eve of succumbing into the hands of heart attack, he had distributed study materials to the students for the seminar preparation, on his way to the hospital (which ultimately became the way to the hands of Heavenly Father) despite his deteriorated health issues and breathless coughing, he explained to them the modern technology and their functions in the cars, those two brothers feel blessed for giving water when he was about to collapse and in whose shoulder he breathed his last (we pray that Fr. Jerome may become their intercessor in His beatific vision). Besides, his responsibilities and unstable health conditions he was a good companion to brothers. I often found him in the company of brothers, cracking jokes, and playing cards, which made our life more alive and vibrant, he was a man who took utmost care and concern in the growth of brothers, even if he corrected anyone, he would call personally to talk friendly even at times gently asked sorry to teach us humility. He was passionate for Hindustani Music and Classical languages, it was more evident in his ways of explaining theology and cultural heritage and the last song which he taught and sung with all of us (just six days before he departed to his loving God" the song was "God still loves the world", which continues to resonates in our hearts.

As Fr. P.R. John S.J expressed in his condolence speech during the funeral Mass of Fr. Jerome, he was always living "gazing at the Word made Flesh", he was on a journey with the Kristbhaktas, searching for a Christ, through his writings, teachings and constant interaction with ordinary folks and Kristbhaktas and pastoral care, to bring meaning, emancipation and dignity deploring all forms of victimhood and exclusion in their lives and ultimately to cleanse them by the light of Gospel and He found him as "Arul Anbu – Grace and Love", as he often emphasized in the classes and printed

in his priestly ordination invitation card (Shared in the class), also showed him to Kristbhaktas as 'Ishtadevata'- Personal deity, Baba, gradually moving into higher realms to experience him as Messiah. He had a deep respect for people of other religions, he used to strongly admonish us when we made impetus comments on the other religious practices and belief systems. We pray that the seed he sowed in faith may sprout Christ in everybody's life and history.

GBG family in particular and the IMS congregation in general will be indebted to Fr. Jerome Sylvester IMS for all his contribution and significance in the life of seminarians and to the people of North India and to the Church at large. It will be difficult to GBG family in whose life he became a significant part, and very especially to the people in whose life he brought Christ, to accept the fact that Fr. Jerome is No More, but the legacy of theologizing in different contexts will bear much fruits as it already began the sprouting. We pray that the aim of his theology to share the Arul Anbu and the faith with which he walked in the path of gospel may find the reward in the bosom of our loving Father. May his soul rest in peace.

Om Shanthi!

NEW CHRISTOLOGICAL HYMNS

(Lyrics and Composition by the Second Year Theologians, Gyan Bharati Gurukul, Varanasi)

Hymn 1

स्वर्ग से उतरा ईष्वर का बेटा, करने सबका उधार जन्मा कुंवारी मिरयम से वो पढ़ाने प्रेम का सार 9. रोगी थी दुनिया, पापी थी दुनिया हम सबको बचाया उसने —२ गरीबों को दिलासा दिया, रोगी का उत्थान किया स्वर्ग से उतरा ३ २. कोरोना आये महामारी आयं उसके नाम से सब मिट जाये —२ आंधी को वो करता षाँत तुफानो को वो देता विराम स्वर्ग से उतरा ३

Translation of the hymn 1

The son of God came down from heaven To save everyone

He was born of a Virgin Mary to teach the lesson of love.

1. The world was sick, world was sinful He came to restore everything.

He comforted the poor, and delivered the sick

2. Whether corona or any pandemic comes
But in His name, everything is restored (healing)
He calms the storm (of life)
And gives rest to winds (of life)

Hymn 2

मुझे पता न चला मेरा येस् मसीह मेरे बीच आ गया । १.में गली गली घूमता रहा उसे क्रूस पर टँगाया गया वह जिन्दा हुआ, मुझे पता न चला 2 मेरा येसू मसीह.... २. दुनिया ने उसे ठुकराया, येस् ने हमे अपनाया .2 येसू नाम में मृक्ति, मुझे पता न चला 2 मेरा येसु मसीह ३. येस पुनर्जीवित हो गया मुझको जीना सिखा गया -वह आज भी जीवित है, मुझे पता न चला मेरा येस् मसीह....

Translation of the hymn 2

I did not know my Jesus the Messiah dwells in me

- 1. I was wandering in the streets
 And found Him crucified on the cross
 He is resurrected but I did not know that he dwells
 in me.
- 2. We rejected Him but he accepted us In His name is the salvation but I did not know that he dwells in me.
- 3. Jesus was risen and he taught me to live He is alive even today but I did not know that he dwells in me.



First Year, Gyan Barathi Gurukul, Varanasi

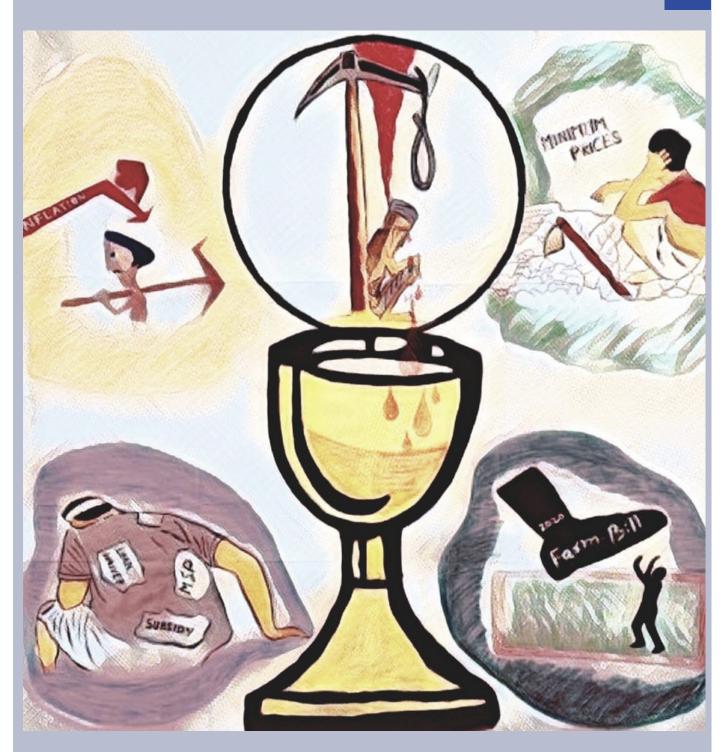


Second Year, Gyan Barathi Gurukul, Varanasi

Dear Brothers, Vidyajyoti welcomes you.....



Art by Bala Praveen Pasupuleti SJ, I B. Th



PRINCIPAL INFORMS

Dear Staff and Students,

Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus appointed Rev. Fr. Jerome Stanislaus D'SOUZA, SJ (KAR) as the new President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia on 10 October, 2020. He is also the new Vice- Chancellor of Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi. VJ Family congratulates and welcomes our new President and Vice- Chancellor Rev. Fr. Jerome Stanislaus D'Souza, SJ. We assure of our prayerful support and cooperation to him. We thank Fr. George Pattery SJ for his guidance and support to VJ.



The Congregation for Catholic Education (Vatican, Rome) has confirmed me for a second term of office as Principal of Vidyajyoti College of Theology. I thank Fr. J. Stanislaus D'Souza SJ, President JCSA and Vice-chancellor of Vidyajyoti College of Theology for his prayerful support and best wishes.

VJ Family congratulates Fr. P. R. John SJ for being confirmed as the Principal of Vidyajyoti College of Theology for a second term of office. We assure of our prayerful support and cooperation to him.



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