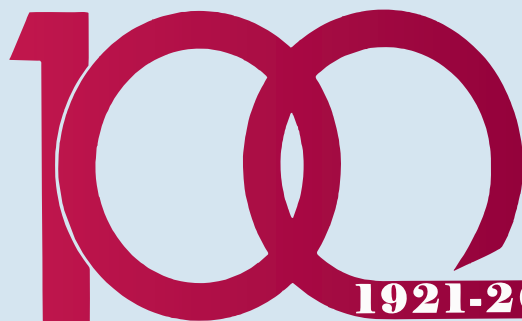


# JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA



1921-2021



## A Century of Patna Jesuit Mission

# Death is Resurrection

Each day grace unfolding  
Dying to night's sleep  
Waking to a new dawn  
Mind with ambitions deep  
Remain only in Being, new born.

Broken self that learnt to give fully  
Receiving in turn love overflowing  
Sword piercing thro' the heart of Mary  
Beneath the cross silent understanding  
Proud life bows her head daily.

Everything passes, all is vanity  
But not that my brother  
Dying is most sweet consolation  
Remaining in Him, as He in the Father  
Death is Resurrection!

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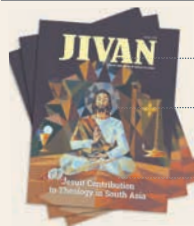
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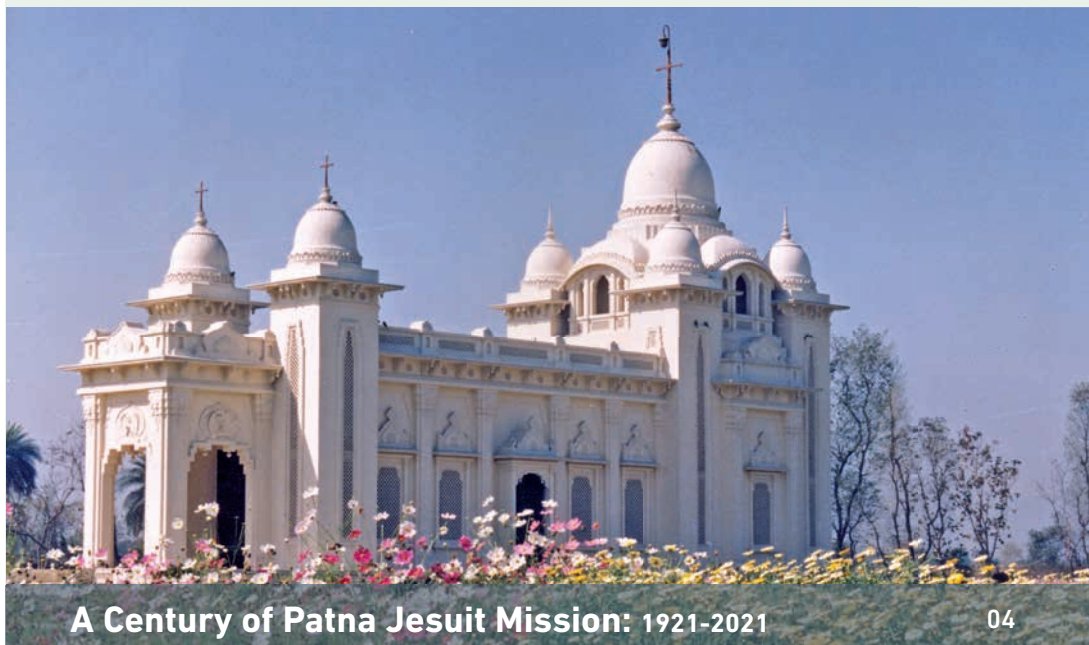
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JIVAN thanks **Benny Moolan, SJ** and the team of Patna Jesuits for planning and procuring the articles for this special issue on the Centenary of Patna Jesuit Mission.

As a service of information for the South Asian Jesuit Conference, Jivan is sent to Jesuits and their colleagues, collaborators and friends. Articles appearing in Jivan express the views of the authors and not of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. All material sent for publication may be edited for reasons of space, clarity or policy. Readers are requested to donate generously towards Jesuit ministries.

## Awaiting 'the Ides of March'

Pardon me for clubbing all of you together, as I have one and the same message to give to you all. Practically everyone writing to me expresses the wish that I be released from prison 'at the earliest/ immediately/without any further delay' or some such wish.

Apart from the fact that the wheels of justice turn very slow, all 16 of us are implicated in serious cases such as sedition and UAPA, where it is very difficult to get bail. Still our lawyers are trying their very best. So, we await 'the Ides of March'.

Whereas arrests under sedition are increasing, conviction is just 3 per cent. As for UAPA, 5,922 arrests were made during 2016-2019, and only 132 were convicted. (Source: Times of India 11-02-2021). Our prisons are bursting at the seams. Consequently, we have a scenario of deprivation of even the basic amenities to prisoners. So much for now.

Ever in solidarity,

Fr. Stan Swamy, SJ

## The Bengal contribution missed out

JIVAN is something I always look forward to reading. I relish the variety and incisiveness of the content. This latest issue focusing mainly, but not entirely on tribal beliefs and practices, ranges a bit more widely when it mentions Hindu-Christian dialogue, and refers to Fr Gisbert-Sauch who undoubtedly merits mention. I would have expected mention of the Bengali translation, and music contribution to Liturgy and life of Fr. Robert Antoine, Sanskrit scholar and a pioneer in liturgical renewal during and after Vatican II. He was ably assisted by Fr. Pierre Fallon's work on translations of the Psalms and the New Testament, as well as commentary, followed and assisted by Frs Pierre Detienne and Christian Mignon. The latter translated the New Testament and their work on the Bengali translation of the Bible - both leading up to and following Vatican II.

Perhaps you may find a place for them in future issues of JIVAN.

Maeve Hughes, IBVM | Ranchi

Robert Athickal, SJ | robertathickal@gmail.com

## JESWITS



Dear Snakeling, I am happy for us that they decided to Preserve the Original Jesuit Novitiate as a Monument!



Secretary Babu, I asked for a Jesuit Economist for our University and not a Jesuit Exorcist!



Fr. Provincial, I don't know the time zone the Indians follow! After a dozen trunk calls, all I heard was loud snoring from the Jesuit house!



These American Missionaries have brought this new YogaAsan called "Ritual Siestal"



## POSA Speaks

STANY D' SOUZA, SJ

### The Easter outlook

“...However, since the past few years, I have been increasingly involved in people’s movements for justice and rights; in struggles that seek to safeguard civil liberties, democratic traditions and secularism. To me, it was an imperative call deeply rooted in the politics of the Gospel... a sacred task... a must to live out our God given dignity and the “abundant life” that Jesus came to give...” This was part of the introduction to the keynote address given by Dr Brinelle D’Souza to the JCSA.

Dr Brinelle did paint a pathetic picture while speaking on the theme: MUSCULAR RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM & CORPORATISATION (SHRINKING SPACE FOR PLURALISM, DISSENT & JUSTICE). “...Many contemporary democracies including our own, are facing a legitimacy crisis...The Democracy Report, 2020, states that for the first time since 2001, autocracies are in the majority – 92 countries – home to 54% of the global population... The Freedom House Report, 2019, speaks of diffused attacks on democratic values, and the rise of ‘emboldened’ autocrats in all regions of the world. They have gone on to erode democracy gradually by gaining control of the media, restricting civil society and undermining the autonomy of election management bodies... Civil society and human rights defenders are being severely repressed and academic freedom curtailed...This trend doesn’t bode well for the future...”

When one of the alarmed Provincials asked: is there hope? She said: ‘It is true that we have difficulties. But it is also true that it is the ripe time, a time to take a position... We are here because someone has paid the price. Moreover, we are Easter people. We need to be the messages and messengers of Good News.’

Easter is an important feast in the Christian Calendar. It celebrates an event and an experience, and propagates an attitude and an outlook. The empty tomb is a witness to a great event, the resurrection of Christ. Easter is also an experience. The meeting with the risen Jesus was a memorable experience to the disciples. Easter is an attitude, an attitude of hope. Finally, Easter is a Christian outlook, which makes a Christian an optimist. The thought of Easter led me to the celebration of the Centenary of Patna Province, which took place recently.

Patna Province was a tiny mustard seed sown on the banks of the Holy Ganga ten decades ago by the first five zealous pioneers from the then Missouri Province, subsequently watered and nurtured by Chicago and Detroit Provinces, as also by many young, vibrant and enthusiastic sons of the soil. It has now grown into a mighty banyan tree, having spawned a myriad mission stations, parishes, institutions, innovative frontier ministries, several dioceses, a full-fledged Province of Delhi, and an Independent Nepal Region. The characteristic feature of the Province has been the pronounced emphasis on reaching out to the unreached. Be it education or evangelization, pastoral or social work, the focus has always been on being the voice of the voiceless.

Here, I believe, we have a call and a model to celebrate Easter by making a difference. Happy Easter.



## Editor’s Desk

VINAYAK JADAV, SJ

### Letting the Spirit triumph over Intelligence

One of the standard Gospels during Sundays in Lent is about the temptations of Jesus. Here the Spirit of Jesus faces the satanic temptations posed by the mind or intellect. The response of the Spirit finally prevails over the machinations of the intellect.

This tug of war between our mind and the Spirit is fairly common, especially among those intensely engaged in intellectual activities. Our heavily cerebral formation naturally leads us to reason things out, and miss what lies beyond reason. Reason dwells in the realm of logic, but “the heart has its reasons which reason does not know!” (Blaise Pascal).

The Jesuit vocation emphasizes intellectual leadership and so runs the risk of stopping at intellectual discourse. That may be the reason why St. Ignatius wanted us to carry our decisions to prayer, so that spirit can prevail over reason. That’s the wisdom behind the art of spiritual conversations. Jesus allowed the Spirit to reign over his reason in all the temptations: “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.”

Passion Week is a time to ponder on how Jesus sifts the chaff of the intellect, to fill the barn of the soul with the Spirit.

Intellectual responses are often linear and unidimensional, whereas the spiritual are multi-dimensional and integral. Much of the dryness of religious life stems from dwelling in the realm of intellect and reason, where merely ideas are dished out; whereas the Spirit offers truth laced with emotions. In fact, intellect often camouflages truth. How often excuses are found for daily prayer in the name of “Contemplation in action”! Intellect encourages verbose discourses while the Spirit guides us to enlightening silence.

Intellect is also a slippery ground with the power to deceive. St. Ignatius warns us in the rules for discernment about how the evil one brings out smart arguments. Evil not only enters through your weakness but uses your perceived strength. Intellect makes you run ahead of grace whereas the Spirit lets you receive grace in patience and humility.

Intelligence is the buzzword today, what with artificial intelligence, human intelligence, multiple intelligence, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, community intelligence etc. Howard Gardner, the theoretician of ‘multiple intelligences’ distinguished the logical or mathematical intelligence from the intra-personal and inter-personal intelligences among his seven types.

Often our discourses are superficial because they tend not to go beyond the level of logical intelligence. The Spirit has the power to expose the shrewd and shallow intellect. The intellect can incarcerate truth, as we well see in the political world around us, whereas the Spirit can liberate human freedom and lead us beyond the invisible.

The Spirit turns theological intelligence into profound faith, and intelligent professors into inspiring formators. Let the Spirit guide intelligence!

Intellectual activity can fatigue the mind and exhaust the body, but the spirit refreshes our being. Jesus acknowledged that “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” Meditation therefore does not substitute for contemplation. It is the SQ that often answers the questions of IQ. Even science has come closer to religion and faith. There is more to life’s mysteries than mere rationalizations. Mysticism dwells in the spirit, intellectualism in ideas. Close your mind and open your heart, says the Spirit. Intelligence can stop at the painful passions of life, spirit will lead us beyond them to the joy of Resurrection.

One final question: Where are we on the scale from Intelligence to Spirit?



Mokama Shrine in Bihar

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ

# A Century of **Patna** **Jesuit Mission: 1921-2021**

Christian mission in Bihar is 400 years old, first begun by Jesuit missionaries in 1620, a short-lived mission, later by Capuchins from 1706-1919. In 1919, Patna Diocese was created and entrusted to the management of the American Jesuits of Missouri Province. This second Jesuit Mission is completing 100 years in 2021. This article is an overview of the centenary mission of Patna Jesuits in Bihar, Delhi, and Nepal.



With Jesuit bishops heading the Patna diocese for 100 years and with the wholehearted support of Patna Jesuits, the diocese expanded, creating two new Christian communities (Dalits and Santal tribals). Four dioceses (Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, Bettiah and Buxar) have emerged from the Patna diocese. Through pastoral, educational, social, health care, and humanitarian service, the Church has made significant contributions to the overall development of the Catholic community as well as the wider Bihar society.

The Patna Jesuit Mission began creating history when the first pioneer American Jesuits Frs. Eline (52), Troy (51), Anderson (48), Milet (46), T. Kelly (37), arrived at Patna, March 16, 1921, six days after the arrival (March 10, 1921) of its newly appointed Bishop Louis Van Hoeck, a Belgian Jesuit of Ranchi Mission. These pioneers were supported by many others in the mother Province and lay supporters of the mission. In 1928, Missouri Province was bifurcated and the responsibility of the Patna Mission was entrusted to the daughter Province of Chicago.

Patna diocese began with 5 Jesuit priests, 7 diocesan priests and three Capuchin priests, posted in 21 mission centers inherited from the Capuchins. Together with the succeeding missionaries, they shouldered the pastoral care of the Catholics, Europeans and Indians, especially the Bettiah Christians (Bihar's oldest Christian community, founded in 1745 in Bettiah town, north Bihar, by the Capuchins), established churches, institutions, and did wonderful work of evangelizing the marginalized sections of society - the Dalits and Tribals in Patna Mission area. Among the well-known missionaries of the early phase were Henry Westropp, Peter Sontag, Francis Xavier Ory, Aloysius Pettit, John Kilian, Carl Miller, Marion Batson, James Creane, et al. Westropp, who had worked in India under the Bombay Mission (1914-22), is credited with having made many pioneering ventures such as conversion of the Doms (Dalits) in north Bihar, starting an industrial mission center at Ghyree, north Bihar, marshalling funds for mission through a stamp industry of recycling used stamps, conversion of Santal tribals in Bhagalpur, and finally, evangelization of the Dalits in central Bihar where he pioneered many mission centers. Patna Mission's foundational policy was given by Bishop Van Hoeck (1921-1928): "Establish schools in all centers." He also founded (1926) a new congregation for women, Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Patna Jesuits' work of evangelization of the Santals in Bhagalpur was a huge success. Unfortunately, due to want of personnel, the flourishing Santal Mission was handed over to American Franciscans (Third Order Regular) in 1938 and focused on the evangelization among Dalits of central Bihar. The Bhagalpur Diocese (1965) which emerged from this, consists of Santals and other tribal Catholics, is presently the most well-established diocese in Bihar. Historically, the Patna Jesuits were responding to the then movement of the Depressed Classes, founded by the national Dalit leader B.R. Ambedkar.

Under the leadership of Patna Jesuit Bishop Bernard Sullivan and the succeeding Jesuit Superiors, the Dalit mission (1936-1970) flourished in central Bihar, where the Jesuits established some 40 mission centers. Bishop Sullivan's policy had been a successful blending of evangelization and education which had been faithfully carried out with the help of the Jesuit superiors and an increasing group of Jesuits, diocesan clergy

and religious sisters. The 17 years of Bishop Bernard Sullivan's work of evangelization (1929-1946) in Patna Diocese, were years of development and consolidation, notwithstanding the calamities, deaths of young missionaries, persecutions of converts, earthquake (1934), etc.

Besides churches and schools in rural areas, a few prestigious educational institutions were founded in the Patna Mission: Khrist Raja High School, at Bettiah, St. Xavier's School, Patna (1940), St. Xavier's School, Jaipur (1942), St. Xavier's School, Godavari (1951), St. Xavier's School, Kathmandu (1954), and St. Xavier's School, Delhi (1960). Thanks to the efforts of Fr. Frank Loesch, the Mission Superior, and Father Marshall Moran, a great educator. Loesch was also a builder who helped build Patna's Holy Family Hospital for Medical Mission Sisters, and Patna Women's College for Apostolic Carmel Sisters in mid-1950.

Patna Diocese made steady progress under the third Jesuit Bishop Augustine Wildermuth (1947-80), adding 1000 Catholics per year, creating new mission centers, adding improvements in older ones, and implementing Vatican II policies in the Church.

The year 1962 marked the end of a 40-year era of pioneers, stalwart missionaries, of growing and expanding pastoral centers, and mighty increase in personnel and institutions. In 1956, Patna Mission was made a Vice-province and in 1962, a Province - a new milestone in the history of the Patna Mission. A new generation of Indian Jesuits volunteered to carry forward the spirit and zeal of the old missionaries, but with a new and modern approach according to the changing times, to reach new horizons. Indian Jesuits were given greater responsibilities in administration. In 1968, an Indian was selected as the Provincial (Fr. Zacharias Varickamakil). In hierarchy, two local Patna Jesuits from Bihar were appointed (1980) bishops (Bishop Benedict J. Osta (Patna) and Bishop John B. Thakur (Muzaffarpur).

From 1921 till 1967, some 149 foreign missionaries (Americans and Europeans) volunteered for the Patna Mission. Patna Mission had been recruiting Indians right from 1922, the very next year after the arrival of American Jesuits, unlike other Jesuit Missions or religious societies in pre-Independence India. This was also facilitated by a Patna Jesuit Fr. Ignatius Vellingatt (joined in 1932), through his older priest-brother, Msgr. Jacob Vellingatt, of Palai Diocese, who had founded (1937) an all-mission minor seminary, St. Joseph's Mission Home, Palai, and channelized many vocations to Patna Jesuit Mission and Patna diocese, besides sending missionaries to 10 other Jesuit Provinces, 26 religious congregations and 48 dioceses in India. In 1988, the number of Patna Jesuits peaked around 347 including 43 each in Delhi and Nepal Regions, with members from ten ethnic communities from India.

A significant contribution of Patna Jesuits to the Church was establishing a regional pastoral center, Navjyoti Niketan (1971), as envisioned by Bishop Augustine Wildermuth, to serve the Hindi-speaking dioceses of north India and to implement Vatican II, through Spirituality, Catechetics, and Communication. In 1977, the Communication Department was christened as Ravi Bharati.

There was greater emphasis on inculturation in many other areas: liturgy, Indian music, methods of evangelization, mission management, religious training, life style of clergy and religious, adopting Indian way of life, rituals, local languages, etc. Inculturation was pursued in Jesuit training programs, to be enriched with village exposure, lived experience with the people, selection of Hindi in studies, and theologizing in the local context in a Regional Theology Centre (Gyanodaya, founded in 1980).

Creating Christian Hindi literature was another contribution of Patna Jesuits such as *Jesu Katha* (life of Christ in Santali), *Isaayan* (Life of Christ, poetic rendition) by layman Stephen Marceline of Bettiah, translations into Hindi by Ignatius Vellaringatt, *New Testament in Hindi* by Fr. R. P. Sah, books under *Prabhat Sahitya Mala* series, *Catholic monthly Sandesh* by Prabhat Prakashan and *Vachan Dhaara* by the charismatic center run by Patna Jesuits.

Since the 1980s, Patna missionaries, after much reflection, decided to forego a) old methods of evangelization which had used huge intuitional establishments and b) traditional social service, to social action among the poor in the wider society to make them more self-sufficient, more aware of their rights and enabling them to fight for their rights, to create a better social order. Thus, emerged eight social action centers including Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti, which networked with civil society organizations.

Three major ministries of Patna Jesuits since the 1990s are: education (9 schools, 4 schools for dioceses, and two colleges), pastoral work (10 centers) and social action (8 centers).

What has been the impact of the Jesuit work in Bihar? To answer this question, one must examine what the Jesuits were engaged in. Besides preaching the Gospel and conversion work, they were engaged in social, cultural and economic development of the people through education, health care, vocational/technical/professional training, social work, especially for the poor, relief and rehabilitation work for those affected by natural calamities like famine, floods, earthquakes, etc. Of all these means, it was education and financial assistance which gave an effective crutch to the people, to make significant upward mobility in the socio-economic realm. The depth of impact can be gauged, for instance, in two Christian communities in Bihar: Bettiah Christians and Dalit Christians.

Among the Bettiah Christians, the change is reflected in high level of literacy. Till the 1940s, the Bettiah Christians were

engaged in three traditional occupations: carpentry, work of blacksmith, and carting of goods through bullock-carts. However, by the 1990s, most Bettiah Christians were holding blue and white-collar jobs, especially teaching profession and government jobs.



The first five American Jesuits were welcomed by Christian Brothers at Kurji



The Patna Jesuit Mission began creating history when the first pioneer American Jesuits Frs. Eline (52), Troy (51), Anderson (48), Milet (46), T. Kelly (37), arrived at Patna, March 16, 1921, six days after the arrival (March 10, 1921) of its newly appointed Bishop Louis Van Hoeck, a Belgian Jesuit of Ranchi Mission.”

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ

Similarly, among the Dalit Christians, multi-dimensional programs covering preaching, educational service, medical service, humanitarian works and the like, effected much change. Most of the working population until 1970s was engaged in agriculture labor under the caste-based or jajmani-system (semi-bonded labour), and leather work. However, by the 1990s, a good number of them liberated themselves, and were holding blue and white-collar jobs, indicating significant change in their socio-economic life.

The Patna Jesuit Society is proud of two daughter missions: Delhi Region and Nepal Region. The former began as a project (North-West Project) of the Provincial of India who initiated Jesuit service in north-west India requesting Jesuit volunteers from various Provinces. When this project was created into Delhi Region (1988), with a visionary Patna Jesuit, Fr. Varkey Perekatt as Superior, Patna's two existing Jesuit communities and institutions in the region, St. Xavier's School, Jaipur (1942) and St. Xavier's School, Delhi (1960), were assimilated into the Region, and the Region became a Province in 2005. Thus, Patna Jesuits facilitated the emergence of Delhi Region, sharing their personnel and finances.

The Patna Jesuit mission in Nepal began in 1951 with Fr. Moran founding a school at Godavari which was the beginning of several ministries by succeeding Jesuits in Nepal. Nepal Mission became a dependent

Region under Patna in 1985, and in 2017 it was attached to the Darjeeling Province.

Lastly, as the two Regions were sliced off from Patna Province, it was given the responsibility for a large area (UP-Extension) within five dioceses in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Already old, having increasing number of older Jesuits and decreasing number of young Jesuits, Patna Province is now challenged to take up this new mandate as it enters the second century of mission work.

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# Christian Faith as a Co-pilgrim in Bihar

## A Pastoral Perspective



Fr. Jim Creane in Santal mission

Photo Courtesy: Benny Meelan, SJ

During his apostolic journey to India in 1964, the first ever by a Pope, addressing the representatives of different religions on December 3, 1964, Paul VI had said “Yours is a land of ancient culture, the cradle of great religions, the home of a nation that has sought God with a relentless desire, ...” This description is fully true of the land and people of Bihar, amidst whom, particularly through the Pastoral Ministry, Christian Faith has been expressed as a co-pilgrim in the faith-journey of the people of Bihar.

### Faith journey of the People of Bihar

The name of the State, ‘Bihar’, is a modified version of ‘Vihar’ from ‘Vihara’, meaning Buddhist monastery. Gautam Buddha (563-483 BC) obtained Enlightenment in Bodhgaya and when he began preaching, Buddhism originated here.

In Valmiki’s Ramayana, Sita is said to have been discovered in a furrow in a ploughed field, in what is believed to be Sitamarhi in Mithila region of present-day north Bihar. Lord Mahavira (599-527 BC), the founder of Jainism was born in Vaishali (north Bihar) and died at Pawapuri (central Bihar). The well-

known Sufi saint Sharaffudin Maneri (724-782 AD) of Islam was a native of Maner, a small town on the outskirts of Patna, capital of Bihar. The tenth and last Guru of Sikhism, Guru Gobind Singh (1667-1708 AD) was born in Patna City; his place of birth is now Takht Sri Harmandir Sahib.

Besides the above-mentioned classical religions, popular religions of the Panthic variety of Bhakti Movement has been popular among the Dalits and other poor sections of people in rural areas in the form of Kabir Panth, Ravidas Panth, Dariya Panth, Nanak Panth, etc. Sarna religion of the Adivasis (Tribals) also has its roots in Bihar, in the Kaimur hills of Rohtas.



Archbishop William D'Souza, SJ speaking to the faithful in Mokama

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ

With the arrival of Capuchin missionaries in Patna in 1706, Christianity joined as a co-pilgrim in the faith-journey of the people of Bihar.

## Christian Faith as a co-pilgrim

The Congregation of the Propagation of Faith erected the Prefecture of Tibet – Hindustan in 1703 and entrusted it to the Capuchins. A hospice was established in Patna City in 1706 as a transit centre for Lhasa, capital of Tibet, and also began pastoral care for the European Christians in the economic and political administration, in military cantonments and railways, including education and health sectors.

Saintly Capuchin Father Joseph Mary, who was in the Patna centre, was practicing medicine and his fame had spread far and wide. In 1740, the king of Bettiah (north-west corner of the State) Dhruv Singh, invited the Priest to treat the queen, as she was not able to be cured by all the local medical practitioners. In gratitude to the cure of the queen, the king offered anything that the priest would ask for, and the latter asked for i) permission to preach in his kingdom and ii) land to settle the people who would become Christians. The king granted these and more, and thus began the Bettiah Mission in 1745.

At the risk of over-simplification, it may be stated that if Bettiah Mission can be considered as the beautiful legacy of Capuchins, the mission among the Dalits of central Bihar can be considered as the singular grace of the Lord, in the Jesuit centenary in Bihar (1921-2021) that we celebrate. This Mission among the Dalits emerged as part of the independence struggle of our country.

We recall the two layers of our freedom struggle: i) political freedom from the colonial British rule; and, ii) the aspirations of the hitherto marginalized and oppressed sections of the

Indian society, from the socio-economic and politico-religious oppression.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, the All-India Depressed Classes Conference, Lucknow Session, on 22-24 May 1936, was planned to decide as to which religion they would adopt, to get out of the shackles of caste oppression. While religious leaders of all religions, including Protestant Christianity, were part of the Conference, the Catholic Church declined to participate. But, Fr. Michael Lyons, SJ and Fr. James Creane, SJ of Patna Mission participated unofficially, got in touch with the Delegates from Bihar and followed it up on returning to the State.

Though the Lucknow session failed to arrive at a consensus, mass conversions took place in many parts of the country based on local decisions; depressed classes in large numbers converted to Sikhism, Christianity and Islam. There was a massive spread of Catholic faith in rural and interior regions of central Bihar, primarily among the Dalits, in a span of about three-and-a-half decades (1930-65). This could be considered as the first wave of mass conversions, in central Bihar, to Christianity.

## The drought of 1965-67

Bihar became famine stricken, which once again (like the 1934 earthquake) was responded to, by the Church with compassion, expressed in the form of relief work, especially in interior villages. But this selfless service had one unintended consequence due to the perception of some of the Dalits, that if they converted to Christianity, they would get additional or more benefits; hence there was a second wave of conversion - material benefits being their motive. A section of the converts of the first wave (of 1935-65) also came under the influence of this mentality.

In 1975, in many forums of the missionaries, the relief operations came under evaluation and review. The decision to stop the relief work led to the creation of a category of 'drop-out' or non-practicing Christians in dozens of villages!

## Jesuit contribution to the Christian Faith-journey in Bihar

As in any missionary context, in Bihar also, being a co-pilgrim in the journey of faith of the people of Bihar through pastoral ministry, has had two phases: i) conversion (evangelization) and ii) faith-formation (as 'People of God' or as a Church community).

During the first wave of conversion, Dalit converts to Christianity had to face many forms of threat before their conversion and much persecution after receiving baptism. There is a heroic witness to faith which has not found being recorded in history. The Church of central Bihar, which is rural and primarily Dalit, near-literally emerged from mud houses and from under the shades of trees.

Illiteracy and superstition were identified to be major hindrances in the emancipation of Dalits. Hence, even with minimum resources, primary schools and health centres were established in all the parishes and mission centres, and women religious became an integral part of the mission. Role of women in general and of women religious in particular, has been crucial in the success of the Mission.

The growth of Christianity in central Bihar was not at the neglect of pastoral care for the already established Christian communities of north Bihar, or possible expansion to new areas. This is evidenced by the quality of pastoral care given to the faithful in the already established parishes, and in the formation of new parishes and mission stations.

The vision and hard labour of the first three Jesuit bishops, with the collaboration of all the stakeholders of Patna Mission, prepared the ground or paved the way for a new era of consolidation and expansion of local churches, beginning from 1980. It was symbolized and actualized in the bifurcation of the erstwhile Patna diocese, to form Muzaffarpur diocese in north Bihar, as well as the appointment of two 'sons-of-the-soil', Most Rev. Benedict J. Osta, SJ and Most Rev. John B. Thakur, SJ as bishops of Patna and Muzaffarpur dioceses respectively.

Since 1980, conscious efforts have been made to promote and facilitate the consolidation and expansion of local Churches. Today, there are 87 parishes and mission centres in the 4 dioceses with 142 diocesan priests along with 105 Jesuits and over a dozen priests of other religious congregations, hundreds of religious sisters and many lay religious men and women

leaders of these Churches, witnessing and proclaiming the gospel. In 1999, Patna was elevated as an Archdiocese, bringing Bhagalpur and Purnea as its suffragans.

Thus 'Patna Mission' is indeed the small mustard seed that has grown to be the greatest of all shrubs that has put forth "large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade" (Mk 4:30-32). Christian Faith, as a co-pilgrim in the faith journey of the people of Bihar, particularly through the pastoral ministry, has done yeomen services.

The most noteworthy feature of the Jesuit centenary is the sea-change in the lives of Dalits of Bihar, in the areas where Jesuits are involved. Another sign of vitality of this co-pilgrim in the faith-journey of the people of Bihar, is the many priests and religious men and women who are sons and daughters of the soil.



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### Conclusion:

'Miles to go before I sleep'. Reflections on the occasion of the centenary would not be complete without taking note of the mission that the Lord is entrusting to this pilgrim for the centenary ahead.

Among the many challenges of the Church, particularly from the point of view of Dalit Christians, is how to address the dilemma regarding their dual identity, as Dalits and as Christians, in the context of denial of social justice to them. Their struggle needs to be brought to a conclusion by ensuring benefits of reservation for them.

At the beginning of the centenary we celebrate, 'Patna Mission' facilitated the formation of a beautiful 'partnership for the gospel' (Phil 1:5),

among priests and religious and laity in one of the legendary gospel ventures of history; 'Patna Mission' was a brand name within the country and abroad, that enthused mobilization of fellowship, prayer, personnel and funds. There is an urgent need to re-invent the spirit of joyful camaraderie among the men and women Gospel partners/workers.

The poem "Stopping by Woods" by Robert Frost, could provide a fitting conclusion to the centenary reflections of this co-pilgrim:

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep."

The author is a veteran pastor and formator, currently the Socius to the Provincial of Patna province.

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# Dreaming into the Future:

## Interview with Fr. Provincial, Donald Miranda, SJ

*Father Provincial, how do you feel as Patna province celebrates its centenary year?*

The fact that Patna Jesuit Mission is celebrating One Hundred Years is a joyful experience. This is a grace-filled moment for the entire Patna Jesuit Mission, which includes Delhi Province and Nepal Region. Hence, they too are included in this centenary. Although, due to the COVID pandemic, the celebration has been muted, yet the spiritual dimension of being connected to the entire human family during this difficult moment, has made the experience of the centenary very profound and moving. In the midst of so many local, national and global tragedies, the centenary has reminded me to be always grateful for “the great things God has done for us” during these hundred years. So, there is a deep sense of gratitude to God, as the Provincial of Patna Province, for these hundred years!

*How will the Province celebrate this momentous event, especially during this pandemic?*

Many Jesuits, and others, have been saying: “But, we haven’t even inaugurated the Jubilee as planned in May 2020, why are we closing it?” The lockdown of March 2020 surprised us all. The consequent events of migration and large-scale deaths within the country and especially the condition of migrants in Bihar, UP and parts of North India, did not allow us for “celebrations” of any kind. Hence, as mentioned above, the celebrations have been “muted”. Within the prevailing situation, the perspective has been largely spiritual and prayer-oriented. We hope to release a book on the memoirs of Jesuits, who have seen most part of the one hundred years; and the history of the Patna Jesuit Mission, at least one volume, on March 3rd, 2021, when we will officially close the Centenary.

*This centenary celebration is focusing on relishing the past and taking the baton to the future. How would you foresee this happening?*

When the first five Jesuits from the Missouri Province, USA, arrived in India, in 1921, they perhaps, would not have foreseen these hundred years. We stand on the shoulders of those giants. They have built this Mission into what it is today. Recently, I had attended the memorial of Fr. Nicholas Pollard, SJ, founder

of the Shahpur parish in Buxar Diocese. He had worked there for nearly 30 years. The parish was later built-up by Fr. Jack Kenealy, SJ. The memories the Christian community recalls about these pioneers, are legendary. If there is one thing, I would desire for the future, is to keep the missionary spirit alive, and to keep exploring the “more”, the “greater”, which are characteristic traits of the Jesuit and Ignatian traditions. In the past one hundred years, our forefathers have given us a template to proceed into the future. In the spirit of GC 35, we have to become a “Fire that kindles other fires.” The inspiration of GC 36 invites us “To row into deeper waters.” Enthusiasm for the mission, love for the people and Church we serve, above our own self-will, self-love and self-interest, will be the hallmark of Patna Jesuits.

*Clearly, an institution prospers by the size of the human resources. Presently, the number of vocations for the Province is dwindling alarmingly. How do you see this situation? What could we do to improve this state?*

Patna Province has appointed a young and energetic Jesuit as the full-time vocation promoter and youth coordinator from the beginning of 2021. However, this in itself is not enough, as every Jesuit in the Province and our communities, have to exercise this role of vocation promoter and youth animator. Furthermore, we, as Patna Jesuits, have to model ourselves as

men for others, who attract and sustain young men in the Jesuit way of life. The Patna Jesuit Mission was started by 5 Jesuits and in hundred years has grown 60-fold. The Society of Jesus itself started with 10 Jesuits and over 500 years has grown in numbers and expanse. Ignatius had deep trust in Providence, which motivated his every plan and action. In line with that vision, GC 36 gives us the triptych of Discernment-Networking-Collaboration. Dwindling numbers is a phenomenon affecting the entire Church. Hence, discernment about our ministries is a very important aspect for the mission of the Society of Jesus. Also, active networking and collaborations with other stakeholders is a humble reminder for us that we can’t do it all by ourselves, we need to depend on people of good-will.

*A good leader is a visionary. And you definitely are one. How would you like to see Patna province grow by the time it completes another centenary?*



Donald Miranda, SJ

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ

The Province Apostolic Plan is a pointer towards the next 5 years, at the most 10 years. However, this does not prevent us from making “Leaps of faith.” Despite our declining numbers, my predecessor took the bold initiative of moving into Eastern UP, into 5 dioceses. We need to support “Bold apostolic initiatives” to meet newer challenges. The world of the 21st century is very different from the 20th century. The Holy Father has said: “We live not in an era of change, rather a change of eras.” Communications have undergone phenomenal, radical and dramatic changes; practically everything is electronic and digital. We no longer talk only of literacy; it is now computer, electronic and digital literacy. The pandemic has only speedened this up, to levels we least expected. Smart phones and laptops are essentials for online classes. Recently, JCSA asked all Provinces to provide laptops for scholastics. Jesuits are known to be men “who read the signs of the times”. While

we take “wings” to fly into this digital era, we need to be firmly “rooted and grounded” in our spiritual traditions to be relevant as “men of God” and “men of the Church.” Blessed Pedro Arrupe reminds us about “Falling in Love with Christ.” This experience of “Falling in Love” will determine all our plans and visions for the future: whether awake or asleep, celebrating or grieving, conversing or in silence. This, I believe, will be the bench-mark for Patna Jesuits for the next hundred years. This is the legacy our pioneers have left us. This banner of Love, I believe, is what we need to carry forward into the next hundred years. AMDG!

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## NEW APPOINTMENT



Father General has appointed **Fr. Stephen C. Koitharayil**, born on 15th August 1964, as the next Provincial of the Dumka-Raiganj Province. After two years of pastoral ministry at Shantimata parish, Nichamari, in Raiganj diocese, West Bengal, he was appointed Rector of St. Leo Minor Seminary, Raiganj. He then completed his post-graduate studies in Human Development Counselling from St. Louis University, St. Louis, USA.

After his tertianship at Raia, Goa, he was appointed Rector and Novice Master at Jisu Jaher, Dumka. He was then missioned as the director of Jeevan Dhara Spirituality Centre at Raiganj. Since 2015, he has been serving as the Tertian Instructor at St. Stanislaus College, Sitagarha, Hazaribag. He will take office on 27th April 2021.

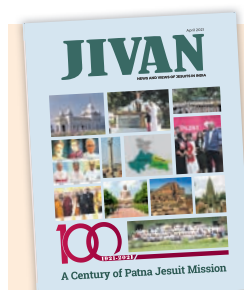
By JIVAN Staff



JIVAN wishes one and all, the Hope and New Life of the Risen Lord, amidst the continued trials and threats of Covid-19.

May this Eater restore the humanity to a renewed life, ending the pandemic.

**Happy Easter!**



### Cover Photo Captions (left to right):

**1st Row:** Mokama Shrine, Bihar | Archbishop Most Rev. Sebastian Kallupura unveiling a plaque in the cemetery in honour of Jesuit pioneers, companions, and benefactors | Students gather to celebrate Earth Day at Tarumitra Ashram

**2nd Row:** Bishops of Patna 1921-2021 | Ashoka Pillar in Patna | Map of Patna Jesuit Mission | Talent Hunt at St. Xavier's College, Patna

**3rd Row:** Fr. Lawrence Eucharist with Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya | The Great Buddha statue at Bodh Gaya | Ruins of Nalanda University | Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya

**4th Row:** Patna Province men gathered during one of the province days



# Social Action

## Glorious Past yet Searching for a New Beginning

The development of social action in the Patna Jesuit Province was spectacular. The beginnings qualify as a case study for understanding the meaning of three terms which Jesuits consider as defining characteristics of their mission: apostolic aggressivity, depth (intellectual, emotional and spiritual), and solidarity with the poor. Even a cursory view of the growth, spread, scope, impact and contributions of the social action ministry would make one realize that it has not been just an apostolic sector developed in the Province and in Bihar Church but it has been, on the one hand, a re-establishment of Christian faith in the state by expanding, integrating, and deepening its presence and, on the other, shaping a major stream of empowerment action in the state by the poor, distinct in its content and pedagogy. The impact of social action within the Church and the state qualifies it to be marked as one of the most remarkable landmarks in the life and mission of the Church in Bihar.

### The Pioneers and the Founding of Social Action

Social Action Ministry in the Patna Jesuit Province was a response to the call of the Society of Jesus for service of 'Faith that does Justice' as well as a product of the socio-economic and political milieu of Bihar in the 1970s. Slogans envisioning a more egalitarian and just socio-economic order were heard from every corner. While, the St. Xavier's School, Gandhi Maidan was established by the Jesuits, to form leaders to strengthen the freedom movement, the eruption of aspiration among the poor for a more egalitarian society, took the Jesuits out of the walls of this school, to the streets and the mud houses of the poor.



Learning through activities- residential training at Gaunaha

Fr. Gonsalves led students of Champaran to protest the Emergency. Fr. Philip Manthara led scholastics, religious men and women, and civil society volunteers for the first summer village camp in 1976. In his intellectual churning with the Musahars, MANTHAN, was born as a symbol of solidarity with and as a voice of the community. Fr. Thomas Chakkalackal dared to address the exploitation of the labourers by the Champaran landlords, legally and socially. He is remembered as the 'Gandhi of Champaran' after his death. Fr. Joseph Srampickal was a man on bicycle visiting all the villages in Gaunaha to reflect with the poor to trace out their 'pedagogy' to claim dignity, freedom, rights and wellbeing. In the 1990s, READ emerged as the voice of the poor in Champaran. Fr. Jose Kananakil, adopted caste-centric social analysis as central to his empowerment action. His call to the dalit youth (a call that parallels that of Lok Nayak Jay Prakash Narayan to the youth!) to break the shackles of caste oppression, caught the imagination of the educated dalit youth, feeling suffocated under caste oppression. His has been

the first experiment in using 'Ambedkarism' as spring-board for dalit empowerment in Bihar. Dalit identity, unity, organisation and development, constituted four pillars of his empowerment action. PRABHAT too had a revolutionary start, centred on 'the land question' and political empowerment of the Musahars.

## Integration, New Energy and Apostolic Innovation

The momentum of Jesuits moving into the mud houses of the poor was supported by well-integrated reflection lead by Jesuit activists, theologians, social scientists and province leadership. The social centres soon developed social analysis for a cross-section of the people. This process led to the spread of values of freedom, human dignity, equality and justice to thousands of villages, youths, and, above all, women who stood out as the first ones to internalize these values and become reliable agents of social transformation. A new brand of leaders emerged from the grassroots as social action spread from village to village in many districts. We the Jesuits, women religious, and civil society members worked in cohesion.

Social action played a catalyst's role in transforming all aspects of the Province's life and mission, including formation. The new thinking brought new enthusiasm and openness to the world and its concerns. New initiatives like, Tarumitra, Solar Alternatives, and Xavier Institute of Social research are fruits of the new energy in the Province, brought by the growing social consciousness. With the help of Regional Theology Centre, a new spirituality of 'identification and solidarity' with the poor, found articulation in the Province in myriad forms.

## Spread of Education among the Non-Christian Dalits

Mass educational programs of social action contributed to expansion of the educational base of the dalits. Functioning as District Resource Units under the Adult Education Program of the central government, MANTHAN, READ, and REAP played pivotal role in one of the biggest mass educational programs to spread literacy and education in the state. MANTHAN played an instrumental role in the formation of Bihar Education Project (BEP) that spearheads primary education in the state today. From the mass educational interventions of Social Action, three formal schools sprang up imparting quality education to four thousand students in rural Bihar. Education would have been a distant dream for girls of Tharu community, if not for the pioneering intervention of Seva Sadan, Ratanpurwa. The Social Action today covers roughly 10,000 dalit and tribal students through innovative educational models developed by it, over the years.

## The Musahars: 'Noble People', 'Resilient Culture' and 'Our Friends'

The Musahars have come to occupy a special place in our life and social action. The insertion experiences of most members of the Province in Musahar hamlets, have brought us closer to them. They constitute the third largest scheduled caste

community in Bihar and occupy the bottom-most position in all indicators of development. The social action has made many contributions to the development of their leadership, education, social mobility and freedom from bondages. Fr. Sumit Edwin, of his happy memories, had been an authority on their rich and resilient culture. The anthropological study of Fr. Nishant Joseph is a resource book for the emerging movement among them for tribal status. Fr. Joseph Velam's writings are a journey into the socio-emotional world of the Musahars. The advocacy of Fr. Philip Manthara with the government and civil society on the Musahars, as a case for focused attention, contributed to the community coming to occupy a pivotal place in planning and policy formulations of the state.

## Formation of Leaders, Intellectual Debate and Civil Society Network

The contribution of social action towards formation of dalit leadership, intellectual discourse, and vibrancy of civil society network in the state is very significant. In fact, these are not mere contributions but defining characteristics of Jesuit Social Action. A majority of dalit leaders and dalit organizations fostering visibility to the dalit leadership at the grassroots and at the state level are formed, trained or inspired or motivated by the Patna Jesuits' Social Action. From being pioneers in the growth of voluntary organizations in the state, members of social action cultivated deep presence in Civil Society Network of various ideological streams in the state. Fr. Manthara, Fr. Irudaya Raj, Fr. Prakash Louis, Fr. Jose Kariakatt, and Fr. Prashant Pius, have made significant presence in these networks and democratic movements for freedom, equality and communal harmony. Fr. Prakash Louis' book on Peoples' power and other publications, XISR's research volumes on various dalit communities and social concerns, and documentation on human rights violations in the state, are contributions to the intellectual discourse in the state.



Fr. Thomas Chakkalackal

Photo Courtesy: Benny Noolan, SJ

## A Moment of Reckoning for Social Action

The present Patna Social Action is not as glorious and inspiring as its past. Social Action, while striving to measure up to its inspiring past and challenges of today and tomorrow, is groping in the dark, largely as a result of the phenomenal transformation in the world, with a pace that we are failing to catch up with. The dark times, being witnessed all over world, has pushed us to the wall. May the grace of the centenary year of the arrival of Jesuits in Bihar, bless us with that audacity that GC 36 speaks about taking us forward with passion, depth, and courage in the service of the poor! To end this brief sharing of the Patna Province Social Action, I take the freedom to use a simile told to me by a companion: Social Action and the Province, as a whole, at this juncture is like a fallen tree, having small branches shooting up green leaves. But the trunk is dead. In this centenary year, may we have that audacity to plant a healthy new plant!

The author is the community leader of Jeevan Sangam, Bodh Gaya and the director of Bihar Dalit Vikas Samiti (BDVS).

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# Patna Jesuits on the National Frontiers

Patna Mission, later to become the Patna Jesuit Mission, was entrusted to the Society of Jesus by Pope Benedict XV in 1919. The then General Vladimir Ledochowski commissioned the Missouri Province of the USA in 1920. In 1921, Jesuits from Missouri Province came to Patna and Bihar, to begin their mission here under the banner of 'Patna Mission'. Historical data amplifies the fact that missionary activities were in full swing in North India in general, and Bihar in particular, as early as the 15th century. But with the anvil of the Jesuits, the preaching of the Good News became a reality.

There are three important milestones in the history of the Patna Mission or what has come to be called Dalit mission. The year 1921 marks this milestone. As stated above, in 1921, with the commissioning of the Patna Mission to the American Jesuits, new avenues for missionary activities opened up in this region. Secondly, the Communist Party of India (CPI) was established that very year, which also affected the social structure of Bihar and the Patna Mission. During this period, the Dalits came to stake their claim in the political arena of Bihar. Jagjivan Ram, a Dalit leader from Bihar represented this upsurge in the most potent and powerful way. He had started the Bihar Provincial Depressed Classes League for the welfare of the Dalits of Bihar. It is to this marginalised community; the Patna Jesuits brought the Good News.

From 1921 till 2021 when Patna Mission celebrates 100 years of innumerable blessings from the Lord, from the people of Bihar and India, and those who became part of this mission, it is expedient to remember some initiatives, events, years and persons, among the Patna Jesuits who took the missionary activities to higher realms.

Though a small group of Jesuits, the Patna Mission realised the need to spread the Good News in Patna, Bihar and also in India. On 5th February, 1938 the Jesuit Mission Band was started, to preach retreats in India. From 1943 onwards, the Patna Jesuit Mission Band conducted missions in India and Sri Lanka. Frs. Sloan, Welfle, Chamberlain, Charles Fox, Victor Lambert, Edward Scott, James Tong, John Mahoney, James Nolan and McGowan teamed up to respond to the spiritual needs of

people. In 1938, two Patna Jesuits, namely Frs. James Creane and Michael Lyons attended the Lucknow Conference of the Depressed Classes, since the Patna Jesuits were working mainly among the Dalits of Bihar.

In 1944, Fr. Westropp along with other Patna Jesuits, started the Catholic Book Crusade to feed the hunger of those who seek spiritual solace. Patna Jesuits were also instrumental in setting up the Patna Women's College to be run by the Apostolic Carmel Sisters. This was the first institution set up in Bihar exclusively for the higher education of women. Frs. Loesch and Moran were involved in the architecture and technical aspect of the building.

Being initiated by Fr. Lombardi of Italy, Fr. Austin Reinboth of Patna Mission directed the Movement for a Better World from 1968 to 1979 through spiritual animation and helping priests, religious and lay faithful to become aware of and live the spirit of Vatican II.

The Patna Jesuits along with Mother Anna Dengel of the Medical Mission Sisters dreamt of a poor persons' hospital in Bihar. For this, the Patna Jesuits contributed over 23 acres of land and also oversaw the construction of the Holy Family Hospital, Patna. They got the patronage of the then Governor of Bihar, Dr. Zakir Hussain and Papal Internuncio Archbishop James Knox, and got to inaugurate the hospital on 19th November, 1958. Fr. Loesch's contribution in the construction of this hospital and also of the Holy Family Hospital, Delhi, and St. John's Medical College Hospital, Bangalore, is recognised even today.

Ten years, down the line, in 1968, they were also instrumental in setting up Navjyoti Niketan (New Light Institute) in Patna as a National Pastoral Centre next to NBCLC, Bangalore, at the request of the North India Bishops' Council. This centre was envisaged to train priests, religious and lay faithful in catechism, liturgy and evangelisation. In 1971, the Patna Jesuits also founded the Regional Audio Visual Institute (RAVI) to provide training in mass media and communication. Frs. Ed Daly, Joe Knecht and Sebastian Kanekattil were instrumental in setting up these.

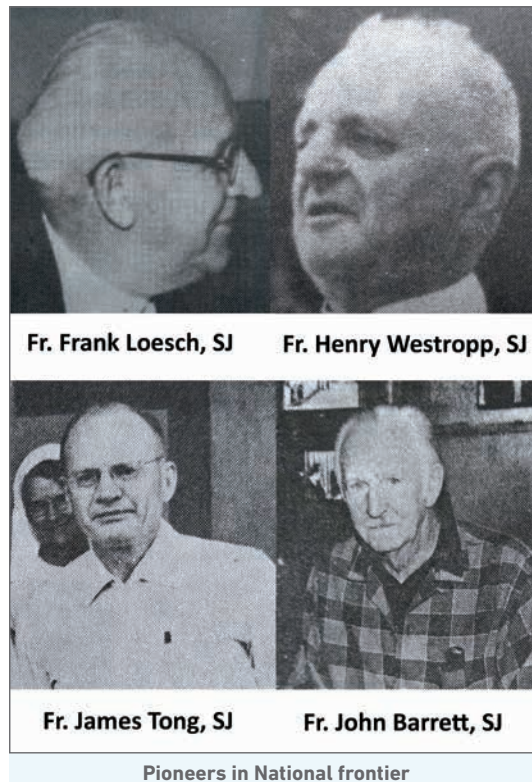


Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ



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In 1960s, Fr. John Barrett residing in Delhi, opened a centre named Catholic News in India, and also founded the De Sales Journalism School. He also started the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) which worked for many decades. Later, Jose Kalapura, a Patna Jesuit, was a member of the board for some years. Now lay faithful have taken the reigns of ICPA.

Around the same time, Fr. Sontag started the IHS Letters or the Institute of Home Studies' tracts with a direct, practical and acceptable manner of presenting Christ to the Indian Intelligentsia. Thus, the Patna Jesuits were trying to preach the Good News, through direct and indirect methods, to the influential and also to the masses of India.

Fr. James Tong too, responding to the call to be always on the frontiers, was instrumental in initiating timely forums and institutions, and also take up leadership at the national level, whenever the need arose. In the 1960s, he became the chaplain of the Catholic Hospital Association of India (CHAI). He along with the Sister Doctors set up the Voluntary Hospital Association of India (VHAI) in Delhi. The objective of this project was to provide affordable health care facilities to the rural masses of India. VHAI was also instrumental in founding the Village Health Workers' Movement. A great visionary like the other Patna Jesuits of his time, even at the age of 70, Jim did not retire. His expertise was needed to set up the Islamic Studies Association headquarters in Lucknow, and Jim did a great job of it.

The Catholic Nurses' Guild was established in 1952 on a national basis in India, largely under the impetus of the Indian Institute of Social Order, Poona, then, and now known as Indian Social Institute, New Delhi. The aim of the Guild was to deepen the spiritual life of the health care personnel, especially the nurses. It had four branches in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Patna. The Patna Jesuits were involved in the works of the Guild from the very beginning. Fr. Ziebert was the chaplain in Bihar.

Indian Jesuits who took over the reigns from the American Jesuits, continued the rich tradition of Patna Jesuits by moving into frontiers, to proclaim the Good News in multiple ways to different segments of the Indian population. Fr. R. P. Sah started publishing Sandesh - a Hindi monthly journal from Prabhat Prakashan, for the entire northern Indian Catholics. Many of them were in the common houses of formation like the Philosophates and Theologates, both as teaching and non-teaching staff. Some were also Assistancy Delegates of Formation and carried forward the thrust of Decree No. 4 of the General Congregation 32.

At the national institutes like the Indian Social Institute Delhi, Fr. Jose Kananaikal set up the Dalit Unit and carried out work among the Dalits in India. Frs. Josey Kunnunkal and

Joy Karayampuram were Vice-Presidents of the Institute. Fr. Prakash Louis was the Executive Director, and it is in his tenure, that the Jesuits of South Asia organised and participated with over 1,800 of their collaborators and co-workers from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh in the World Social Forum held in Mumbai from 16th to 21st January, 2004. He was instrumental in getting the Consultative Status with the Economic Social Council of the United Nations in the year 2004, to represent the issues of the common masses of India at the International Forum. He represented the South Asian Jesuits in the International Jesuit Network for Development (IJND), based at Washington, from 2001 to 2004. This was an offshoot of GC 34. He also functioned as a member of the Task Force on "Marginalisation-Globalisation: Faith-Justice Response" constituted by the General Kolvenbach from 2004 to 2005.

After the devastating Tsunami in 2005, Prakash Louis was asked by the Provincial of Sri Lanka and POSA to assist the Sri Lankan Jesuits to coordinate the relief and rehabilitation works in the war-torn country. Similarly, after the communal violence unleashed by the Hindutva forces in Kandhamal in

Odisha, the Jamshedpur Provincial along with the Cuttack-Bhubaneswar Archbishop, requested the services of Prakash Louis through the POSA and the Provincial of Patna, to coordinate the responses in 2008. After the Nepal Earthquake in 2015, with the request of the Nepal Regional Superior, the POSA assigned Prakash Louis to assist the Nepal Jesuits. With the support of many benefactors, Prakash Louis was instrumental in setting up the Nepal Jesuit Social Institute, which is still continuing the rehabilitation and restoration works.

The Patna Jesuits also contributed to the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). Frs. Armstrong and E.C. Sebastian worked in different capacities in Afghanistan. Prakash Louis as South Asia Regional Director was instrumental in initiating new programs in war-torn Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. He also accomplished

the task given by JRS Rome, to shift the JRS South Asia Office from Bangalore to New Delhi so as to network with United Nations High Commission for Refugees based in New Delhi and other civil society organisations, responding to the refugee and migrant issues in India and in the region.

The Patna Jesuits also contributed in the formation, training, orientation cum motivation programs, diocesan pastoral planning, prospective planning of religious congregations, facilitating province and general chapters and congregations all over India. What is narrated here are only some highlights. Many Jesuits have contributed silently to the preaching of the Good News locally and globally.

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During this period, the Dalits came to stake their claim in the political arena of Bihar. Jagjivan Ram, a Dalit leader from Bihar represented this upsurge in the most potent and powerful way. He had started the Bihar Provincial Depressed Classes League for the welfare of the Dalits of Bihar. It is to this marginalised community; the Patna Jesuits brought the Good News. ”



Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolam, SJ

# Educating for a Stronger Bihar

It was 1921, and history will change for the better in Bihar. Five American Jesuits had arrived in Patna and they would make immense contribution to the life and education of the people of Patna and beyond, in the years that followed. It is a hundred years since magis and gratia are the two words that describe the feelings of anyone who looks at the tireless, enduring and pioneering works of the great Jesuit missionaries and educators who placed their foot on this great land of the Viharas.

## In the beginning

The seeds of the word of God were already sown in the religious lands of Bihar by the Capuchin missionaries before the arrival of the Jesuits. The Jesuit missionaries built on the foundation already laid under the leadership of Bishops Van Hoeck, Sullivan

and Wildermuth and they believed that evangelisation and education needed to go hand in hand for the welfare of those who were accepting the faith. This collaborative work between the diocese and the Jesuits gave birth to a few schools and ensured that each of the parishes had a school, to respond to the need of education for the faithful and the people around.

## Jesuit Schools

The establishing of the first Jesuit school in Bihar, Khrist Raja High School, Bettiah (1927), ushered in a new phase in the missionary activities of the Jesuits. Jesuit education spread to various parts of North India and Nepal during the next two decades, under the leadership of great missionary educators like Frs. Gordon Murphy, Marshall Moran, etc. As a result, we have

the St. Xavier's Schools - Patna (1940), Jaipur (1945), Kathmandu (1951) and Delhi (1960). These schools were established with the purpose of engaging and influencing the decision-makers in society through whom the values of Jesuit education could be shared with people. The departure of Irish Christian Brothers in 1968 paved the way for the Jesuits to share their education legacy through St. Michael's High School, Patna. The Jesuits continued their contribution to the church in its mission of education through the schools in Ara, Latonah and Barbiga. The Jesuits carried on their mission of education at these places, while others at different parishes were handed over to the diocese.

## Reflection and Reorientation

The call of the Second Vatican Council and the challenges of General Congregation 32 encouraged the Patna Jesuits to reorient all their apostolic activities through a process of reflection and discernment. These challenges required genuine and committed responses from the Jesuits in education in the province. They didn't disappoint, and after prolonged thoughts, reflections, debates and at times misunderstandings, responded with the Jesuit Education Policy of 1979. This would go through further churning and evaluations, to make Jesuit education most relevant and in tune with the demands of the Universal Society which gave birth to a renewed phase in the education ministry of the province, during the last two decades of the twentieth century.

## New Initiatives

These two decades of the twentieth century marked significant events in the history of Patna Province. Nepal was raised to the status of an independent region (1985), Delhi became a dependent region (1988) and the geographical area under the care of the Patna province, came to be limited to the state of Bihar. These changes along with a renewed enthusiasm among the Jesuit educators of the province, found fruits in several new initiatives. New schools and upgradation of existing schools were given priority. St. Ignatius School, Aurangabad (1994), St. Thomas School, Ratanpurwa (1995), St. Xavier's School, Bettiah (1998) and St. Xavier's School, Gaunaha (2002) were established, while the schools in Barbiga (1988) and Latonah (1991) were upgraded as high schools.

## Higher Education

The initial focus of the Patna Jesuits in the field of education was in primary and secondary education, but the need to respond to the growing necessity of higher education, was never out of the horizon of the Jesuits. Patna Jesuits responded to the request of the Missouri province to contribute to the administration of Nirmala College, Delhi, by providing Jesuit personnel in the early 1950s. The attempt didn't bear the desired fruits owing to the fluid and uncertain socio-political situations of that time, and so was abandoned. However, the Patna Jesuits never gave up the idea of establishing centres of higher learning in the province. Various studies conducted to ascertain the feasibility of a Jesuit higher education in the province, didn't bring out encouraging

results until the last decade of the twentieth century.

The involvement of Patna Jesuits in higher education for the people of Patna, led to the establishment of St. Xavier's College of Education in 1988. The pioneering works of Fr. Augustine Peedikamala followed by Fr. Thomas Karthanam, established the college on sound footing. The institution stands tall today in the field of education offering up to research facilities. Patna Jesuits took another important step in higher education, by establishing a research centre in 1995. The centre, Xavier Institute of Social Research, is attached to the colleges at Patna, and is engaged in social research and publishing. The continued quest for providing quality higher education for the people, further paved the way for establishing St. Xavier's College at Patna in 2009. The college which began as a graduate college for humanities eventually grew into St. Xavier's College of Arts and St. Xavier's College of Management and Technology. It has truly established a legacy within a decade

and is growing from strength to strength. The college is ardently pursuing the process of making it a private university, with the hope that it will enable Jesuits to contribute significantly to higher education in Bihar.

## New Thrust

The dawn of the 21st century witnessed a renewed vigour in the education apostolate in Patna Province. Upgradation and further development of the existing schools, were the focus of the Jesuits in the first decade of the century. All the Jesuit schools except one, were upgraded to higher secondary schools, focusing on quality education and incorporation of technology into the teaching learning process. The reopening (2001) and upgradation of the school at Sasaram (2007), accepting the administration of the school at Chenari (2013), and the acceptance of the ministries in five dioceses of UP (2015), were important dimensions of this thrust. With new vistas and new opportunities, hopefully these dreams will come true in the near future. The pioneers sowed the seed, the veterans nurtured this mission, and Patna Jesuits of today are shouldering the responsibility to consolidate, develop and create a dream to take this apostolate to greater fruition and relevance.

## Mission Continues

Patna Jesuit educators imbued with the charism of the Society and the thrust of the province, are confidently and courageously responding to the educational challenges of the twenty first century. Every challenge and struggle is an invitation to greater commitment and creativity. The Jesuit educators are innovative and committed not to allow these opportunities slip away. A century done, many more to come and this contribution will be etched in the annals of the history in Bihar and UP.

The author is currently exploring possibilities of starting education ministry at Kaiserganj in Uttar Pradesh.

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Fr. Marshall Moran

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ



Fr. Gordon Murphy

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ



# Our Province, Our Vision



Photo Courtesy: Benny Noolan, SJ

as a Province, need to create a new strategy to transform the hearts and minds of the people among whom we work, the Dalits in particular. This task could be achieved through social outreach programmes and social actions. This vision also includes two of the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus, namely, “Walking with the excluded, and accompanying young people in the creation of a hope-filled future.”

In this line, we would like to make a special emphasis on accompanying the farmers. The Patna Province, being a pioneer in many of the ministries in the Conference, needs to create a platform to show solidarity with them, guide them, walk with them in their struggle for their just rights, and establish research centres or training centres for the farmers.

We Jesuits, motivated by the deep personal love of Jesus, have a strong desire to imitate our Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ as He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The idea which has driven each Patna Jesuit down the years, is the idea of uplifting the people of God - especially the Dalits and the Musahars; integrating the giftedness of all social, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects of Bihar in our holistic formation and ministry; and imparting the merciful love of God to all people of good will. This idea has shaped much of our history. It nourishes our hope and trust for the future. Now, once again, it is time to re-examine our past and present, and set visions for our Province, to make our future better.

First and foremost, God should be our vision because everything emanates from Him. The Lord says, “For surely I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope” (Jer. 29:11). St. Ignatius fully trusted in the plan of God. Even today we are invited to have the vision of God - to establish His Kingdom where there is love, peace, joy, justice and fraternity.

We live in “a period of great social, economic and political changes, sharp ethical, cultural and environmental problems, conflicts of all kinds” (address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to GC 35 of the Society of Jesus), which has been affecting the vast majority of people. To address these challenges we,

Another vision of the Province could be accompanying the struggling migrant labourers. Covid-19 pandemic came as a sudden havoc over these migrant labourers. The Province has already materialized this vision and allotted some funds to cement this cause. To make our efforts more fruitful, the province needs to prepare its men to be capable, efficient, competent, effective and affective to deal with the government authorities at different levels, to address the issues of the migrants. This may look like a pie in the sky in our highly corrupt bureaucratic society, but this is a challenge before us.

Pastoral care of the faithful should be one of our important visions. This necessarily includes “showing the way to God” - one of the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society. It will also foster vocations. As we are facing a vocation crisis, it is a crucial time for us to seriously think about promoting vocations to the Society of Jesus, especially to the Patna Province. Having complete faith and hope in the Lord, as well as in our works, endeavours, and initiatives, we will surely reach the end the Lord has set for us.

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# Patna Jesuits: as I saw them

I am glad to share my experiences and impressions of the Jesuits down the years. I limit my sharing to the Jesuits who came to Patna during or after the 1960s.

They were given a mission. They developed a clear vision of their mission and worked together to achieve it. They preached and taught, and people responded to them.

They studied their people and their needs, both spiritual and temporal. They formulated clear strategic plans. The spiritual needs were attended to through direct evangelization. They promoted education to liberate the people from illiteracy - the root of their poverty.

For actualizing their strategic plan, they selected certain areas of Patna. They observed the poor coming to the markets in these areas either by walking or by trains. So, they located the centers close to the railway lines, to make it easy for people to visit the centers frequently. Barh, Mokama, Biharsharif and Nawada are examples of such centers.

They knew that children must be educated. But it was not possible for children from faraway places to attend daily classes. So, the fathers started hostels to take care of them and provided them intellectual and spiritual formation. To support these hostels, they bought land and began cultivation.

They knew that mothers were key players in the formation of children. So, they patiently motivated women to send their girls to school to insure their all-round development. Barh girls' school and Patna Hartman school are good examples. Fr. Gregory, a great diocesan veteran, used to say "Today's girls are tomorrow's mothers who would be the support and foundation of the church." Initially the parents resisted the idea but the priests insisted that they would educate the boys only if parents sent their daughters along with the sons. During Bp. Sullivan's time, Patna Women's college was established for the higher education of girls.

The missionaries clearly understood that they needed the support of the high caste and the officials in their work. So, they established schools like St. Xavier's Patna, to serve this purpose and to educate the children of high caste and high officials, for the formation of a just society. Fr. Murphy, who was the principal of St. Xavier's school, would always help our fathers in any problem, as he had good contact with the government officials through the school.

Collaboration was key to greater expansion. So, our fathers invited different Religious orders and congregations to come here. Bp. Wildermuth brought the sisters of Notre Dame. The Apostolic Carmel sisters came from Mangalore. The CJ sisters were assigned to various mission stations. Slowly many from other regions came here to learn how to start new missions.

Since health is wealth, they focused their attention on providing medical facilities, especially to women at the time of delivery. Dispensaries were set up in various mission stations. Later on, a few nursing schools (Holy Family and Tripollia in Patna,



Talent Hunt at St. Xavier's College, Patna

Photo Courtesy: Benny Noolan, SJ

and Nazareth in Mokamah) were also established. Nurses and sisters from these schools went to the mission stations and took care of the sick, especially women.

The early missionaries lived like the people of the place and lived for them. They lived among the poor just like one of them - a model of an inspiringly committed life for the greater glory of God. Their only ambition was to venture out to new fields. I am indeed happy to have worked with some of these master missionaries.

The author is a senior diocesan clergy of the Patna archdiocese residing in Prerana, the clergy home of the diocese.

# THOUSAND WORDS

In Commemoration of  
Good Friday- 2<sup>nd</sup> April



**Liberty and democracy become unholy when  
their hands are dyed red with innocent blood.**

**-Mahatma Gandhi**



**Kneeling before them in the dust of a northern Myanmar city, Sister Ann Rose Nu Tawng begged a group of heavily armed police officers to spare "the children" and take her life instead.**



# Collaborating with Jesuits of Patna

As the invitation to share my experience of collaboration with the Jesuits in their varied ministries of Patna Diocese came to me, the image that flashed in my mind was that of the gospel image of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. It is amazing the way how the miracle happened with the collaboration of the apostles present and the assembled people. Trust is basic to a culture of collaboration; trust in God, trust in people and trust in oneself. Miracle happened; abundance was the result. One and one is two; one and one with collaboration could be ten- abundance. This is the synergetic impact of collaboration.

My experiences of collaboration with the Jesuits began with the development of Sasaram mission in the mid-sixties when the Notre Dame Sisters teamed up with the Jesuits. The Jesuit missionaries in Patna worked shoulder to shoulder with the diocesan clergy and religious. There was a cordial atmosphere of freedom and mutual respect, sharing a common vision for the pastoral care of the people. I believe that, power-with rather than power-over, is the formula for effectiveness in any collaboration effort.

Those were the days when Bihar villages were terrorized by the dacoits due to poverty and caste rivalry. The parish became an epicenter booming with activities until tragedy struck; the Sisters were attacked and Fr. Mathew Mannamparmpil, SJ - the parish priest, was murdered by the dacoits. No one knew how to proceed; the sun seemed to have set over the whole mission. But it did not last long, and we could feel that the Spirit was hovering over our brokenness. The core team there, with our superiors and the diocesan administration, went through a process of prayer, sharing, and discernment searching for a way ahead. The answer to the discernment was not easy to accept, "Close down the whole mission."

For six months, silence descended on the mission. How to re-connect ourselves with the people in the villages became the major concern for us. Three Notre Dame Sisters volunteered to revisit the people in the villages with no other plan than to listen to the people and to instill a spark of hope in their hearts. The result was a new approach to mission methodology

based on the resources of the people. Instead of the people coming to the church, the church went out to the people. It was a death-resurrection experience and an unforgettable learning experience. For the core group, it was a transformative experience of fraternity and partnership.

Another very satisfying experience of collaboration I had, was in the social action ministry initiatives of Fr. Philip Mantara, SJ, at Khagaul, on the outskirts of Patna district. There was enthusiasm everywhere, to put the "New wine of Vat. II in new wineskins." The Church once again got connected to the world

outside. The target group was Musahars. Strategies were worked out by the core team with the participation of the villagers. We followed a process of insertion, reflection, discernment, action, evaluation, as a pattern for our involvement. For a win-win experience in collaboration, the group must be committed to a common vision and to a concrete and workable process. For me it will always remain a deep faith experience.

The Atmadarshan retreat center of the Jesuits in Patna began in partnership and progressed in partnership. One of the successes of this

center was witnessing to a healthy partnership of women and men religious. I accepted the invitation with hesitation to collaborate with the Jesuits in conducting retreats and workshops. I must admit that it was a very rewarding experience. There was room for creative collaboration. It was a fulfilling experience of partnership.

My sharing is by no means exhaustive; I have only highlighted a few of my own personal experiences. I believe that there is no other way forward than collaboration and net-working in mission and for mission as the future course for the Church. May the celebration of the Centenary year be filled with blessings and cheers to dream dreams for further collaboration to realize the reign of God in our challenging times!



Paying tribute to Martyre Fr. Mathew Mannamparmpil, SJ

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ

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# Recalling my Jesuit associations

Ever since I gained my senses, I have been associated with the Jesuit missionaries for my upbringing. The first Jesuit priest I had encountered was Fr. Vervaraken, who was from Belgium. Further, I had the privilege of growing under the spiritual care of excellent Jesuit priests, namely, Fr. Donnelly, Fr. Jim Thewest and Fr. Damian. These priests not only took spiritual care but also took care of the marginalized people and specially leprosy patients.

From Mount Carmel (Bokaro), I was sent to Khrist Raja High School, Bettiah - once again a Jesuit school. Here too, all the priests were wonderful people but a few of them made a deep impact on my life. I still vividly remember the face of Fr. Pinto as he taught me a lesson of dutifulness. The very next morning of the day after he had received the message of the death of his mother he was there to take our English class as usual. A great sense of commitment to the mission.

Fr. Norbert Rai, SJ, was our hostel superintendent. His love and care for the Christian students can be understood by an incident that happened with me. During a photo session for the hostel students, just before the photo was clicked, he removed his wrist watch tied it on my wrist and told me to keep it. A small act of love but it left an unforgettable mark on my youthful mind.

Fr. Melville Diamond, SJ, too made a deep impact on my life. It was when four of us, from the apostolic school at Khrist Raja (KR), Bettiah, were sent to St. Xavier's School, Patna, on an experimental basis. However, due to some unavoidable reasons we were sent back. We were really upset and approached Fr. Mel, who was then the Rector of KR. He patiently listened to us and finally, with his intervention, we were regularized in class X with some conditions.

As St. Xavier's Patna students, we were lodged with the candidates at Xavier Hall, where Fr. Jerome Durack was the director, assisted by Br. Sylvester D'Souza. It is here that under the rigorous training given by Fr. Durack that we achieved a lot in the formation of our personality and the ability to read and write some good English. The biggest lesson I learned from him was to lead a simple life with high thoughts and the power of a prayerful life. All this was because of the saintly life style of Rev. Fr. Durack.

In 1979, I came to Patna once again after completing my graduation. Ever since, I have been a member of the Kurji Parish and had the opportunity to work for the parish under the guidance of several parish priests. Working with the Jesuits was adding feathers in my cap year after year. Following of their vows, commitment to the mission and people have been their hallmark.



Fr. Donald Miranda, SJ with Alwyn D'Souza, SJ at the starting of the Novena at Mokama Shrine

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ

Just before I conclude, I would like to say as a well-wisher of the Jesuits, that to strengthen the faith of our rural parishioners, during the formation, the Jesuit candidates should be trained in different regional languages spoken in our mission areas. Besides this, the Jesuits should also focus on understanding the culture and life of our people in the missions here and the Jesuit educational institutions have to be more considerate towards bringing up the Catholics of the area in order to bring up the Christian Community to a better state of life.

The author is an active parishioner of the Queen of the Apostles Parish Kurji, Digha, Patna.



# They have shaped my Life



Prem with children in the village



Prem teaching the participants of residential training at Manthan, Khagaul

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ

I am Prem Manjhi. My father is Mr. Suresh Manjhi and mother is Mrs. Tileshwaridevi. I hail from Jamsaut, a village in the outskirts of Patna. I belong to the Musahar community, the most backward community of Bihar. My journey of education started from the local government school at Jamsaut. I was also connected with Manthan, a Jesuit social institution. Manthan is an institution which specially works for the Musahar community. During my middle-school days, I used to come to Manthan for three-day training programmes. During this training, they used to teach us to complete our school syllabus so that we can perform better in our school exams. They also taught us to develop good behavior, and made us aware about cleanliness, and the importance of education. After finishing my middle school, I was selected for the long-term residential program in Manthan. I was in Manthan for two years and completed my 9th and matriculation. During these two years of residential programme I was helped to think properly and to give my best in my studies.

After completing my matriculation, I went to READ (Rural Education And Development) in Bettiah, for my +2 and degree studies. READ is a Jesuit institution working for the Musahar community. I completed my +2 study in science from NIOS and degree in BSW from Nalanda Open University, Patna. In READ, I got involved in teaching children in the villages. I was very much interested in working with the poor. As a result, I was actively participating in educating the children and mobilizing them, and making people aware of the importance of education. After completing my degree, I pursued my Masters from Mangalore. At present, I am working with the Jesuits at Manthan as a community mobilizer.

One of the qualities I admire in Jesuits is their firm commitment for a cause. It was very inspiring to associate with such committed Jesuits who work tirelessly for the cause of an egalitarian and just society. Their commitment in this regard is very visible when they take a clear stand for the marginalized and the silenced Musahar community. I also find Jesuits a joyous bunch of men. Amidst the struggles, pain, uncertainties and despair, they are able to infuse joy and hope among the people. Their mere presence lifts the morale and spirit of people.

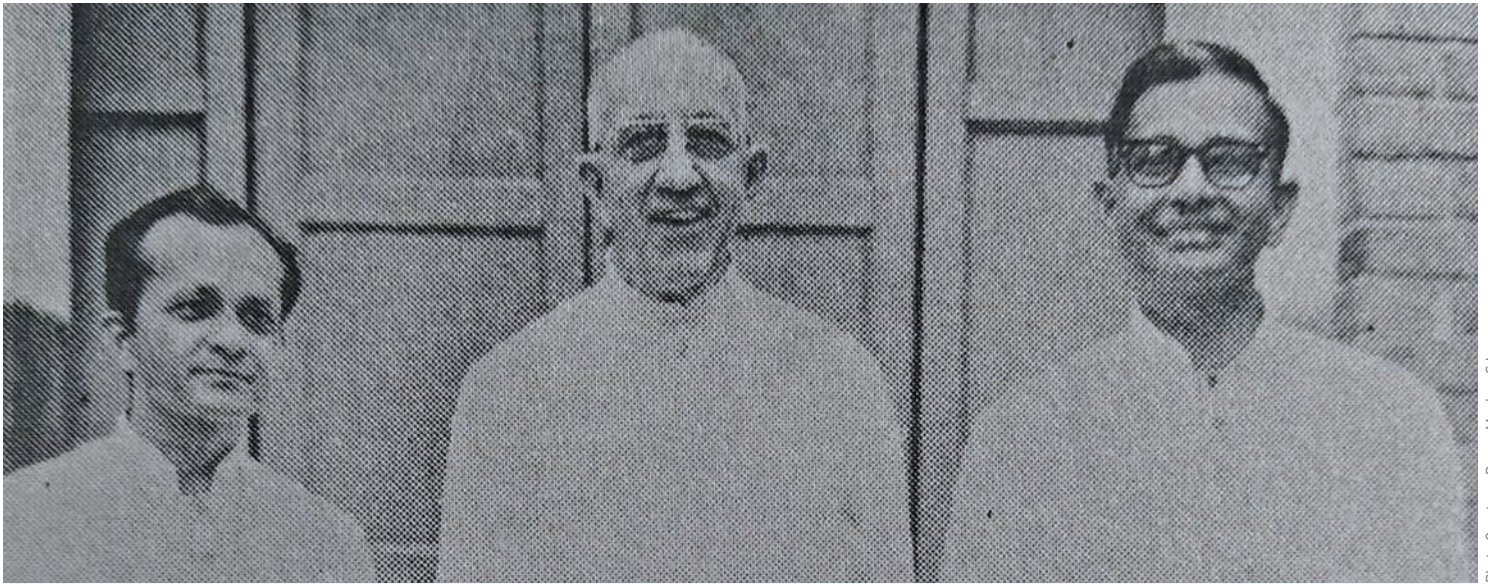
I also find Jesuits very human. They yell, lose their temper, make mistakes, and take bad decisions. They create confusion and chaos with too many ideas and lack of communication. Yet, they are honest about their human emotions and limitedness. Their love for the poor is very genuine and they have a big heart for others.

When I reflect about my life journey, I realize that nothing was easy for me. I had a good share of struggles, challenges, set-backs and failures, yet the Jesuits never gave up on me. They have made me believe that if it is possible for others, it is possible for me too. To have self-confidence and self-belief, is what I have acquired the most from Jesuits. Today, whatever I am is because of the guidance, support and constant accompaniment I have received from the Jesuits. I feel proud that they have helped me to stand on my feet, dream big and support my family and community. I am ever grateful to the Jesuits.

The author works as a community mobilizer at Manthan, Khagaul, a Jesuit Centre for social action.



# In Love with the Mission



Fr. Vincent Mc Glinchy, SJ (C) with Bishop Benedict J Osta, SJ (R) and Bishop John Baptist Thakur, SJ (L)

Photo Courtesy: Benny Meelan, SJ

I can never sum up in such a short article what the entire Patna Mission means to me, nor the incredible growth that has occurred in the past 100 years. Here are a few of my heroes and memories from 1964-1994.

First, the zealous missionary priest who preached the Gospel all over India without leaving Kerala. I never had the honor of meeting the Monsignor, but I “grew up” in Patna surrounded by stories about him. There is no measuring the impact of Monsignor Jacob Vellaringatt on the Church in India. He creatively started “The Mission Home” in Palai, Kerala, and prepared young men to be missionary brothers and priests in the North generally, but he had a particular love for Patna Mission. These men became outstanding missionaries, educators and pastors, including 2020 platinum jubilarian Fr. Thomas Kunnunkal of Delhi province, whose contribution at the level of both Jesuit and All-India schools is legendary.

Meanwhile, others beat the drum too for Patna. Born in Kentucky, Fr. Vince Mc Glinchy came to India in 1932, and

landed in Bettiah after theology and ordination in Kurseong, and served for many years as assistant parish priest and headmaster of the Mission’s Middle School. Fr. Mac directed an active Boy Scout troop and believed in keeping the lads busy. But he was first and foremost a priest and always made room for confessions and visiting the sick. His encouraging words helped young men discern their future. Two examples of many: Benedict J. Osta, SJ, and John Baptist Thakur, SJ, (both of them were made bishops in 1980). They returned to Khrist Raja High School soon after their ordinations to pay tribute to their guru. I was stationed at Khrist Raja in those days and had the privilege of making Fr. Mac my guru too and accompanied him through his final illness. He died on 10th October, 1980.

Then, there was the amazing Fr. Paul Dent, who went to India in 1926, developed a brain tumor and had to return to the US around 1935 for surgery. The success of the surgery was questionable and doctors advised that he remain in Chicago for observation. The observation went on for 30 years, as he petitioned four different

provincials (in vain) to return to India. He wrote a history of the mission and gave Hindi tutorials. I joined a class of five philosophers who came under his spell, on Thursday evenings after dinner. We soon got familiar with the Devanagiri script and the basics of Hindi.

In time, Fr. Dent was allowed to “return” – not to India but to Nepal (July 18th, 1975). For the next five years he served in Nepal, flying south to Patna on a tourist visa for the harsh winter months. I saw him briefly at XTTI, the week he died. Fulfilling his dream, he was buried in Patna on March 25th, 1980. Margaret Roche Macey wrote beautifully in America magazine (Nov 14th, 2005) about her encounter with Fr. Dent in Chicago in 1975. The finest brief profile is by Fr. Jim Cox in We Band of Brothers (vol 2). His name belongs in the Centenary Hall of Fame, by reason of his prayers and life-long devotion to Patna and the people of India.

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Photo: Educate Magis

# Frontier Ministries

## Responding to the Signs of Time

Leaping into the unknown is not anything new to Patna province. Every ministry evolved in the province was a result of a soulful search after reading the signs of the times and responding to it creatively. Individuals and province as a unit were never hesitant to take risks and try new areas of mission for the Greater Glory of God (AMDG).

### Tarumitra: A Unique Movement for Environmental Protection

Taru Mitra, meaning 'Friends of Trees' (a student's forum for environment) was established by the Patna Jesuits under the

leadership of Fr. Robert Athickal, way back in 1988, as a frontier initiative, which has over 3 lakh students as members spread across 21 states in the country. Tarumitra has been networking with students, decision makers, and environmental activists across the country and abroad, on areas such as water, organic farming, vehicular pollution, green belts, eco-spirituality, conservation of biodiversity, conservation of electricity and promotion of renewable energy. Considering the relevance as well as the impact Tarumitra has created across the globe, The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations has granted a Special Consultative Status to it from January 2005.

Many student delegates of Tarumitra have participated in the International Children's conferences in England, USA, Japan, Malaysia Norway, Japan, Indonesia and others. One of the Tarumitra students, Yugratna (class 8 student) addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations on Sept. 22nd, 2009. Tarumitra has been offering internships in environmental education to teachers and administrators. As part of the promotion of sensitivity towards the state's depleting rich biodiversity, Tarumitra started a Bio-reserve in Digha, Patna on a 6-acre plot of land.

## Solar Alternatives and Associated Programmes (SAAP): A Leap in Renewable Energy

Taking the environmental concerns further ahead, the Solar Alternatives and Associated Programmes (SAAP) was established in the year 1996 as a concrete expression to promote renewable energy. The center was initiated by a Jesuit Scientist, Fr. M.M. Mathew, who was trained under a Swiss Physicist Wolfgang Scheffler. Fr. Mathew fabricated the first ever parabolic solar community cooker in Patna. After an initial exhibition in the town, SAAP along with a team of unemployed people, belonging to the most marginalized communities, started fabricating them for those interested. The focus communities for training in solar alternatives have been Dalits, Musahars, Women, Tribals, High School drop-outs and un-employed Youth. The agency has made much progress under the leadership of Fr. Paul Mariadoss and others, in terms of research and promotion of alternative energy with an emphasis on solar energy.

SAAP is one of the very few private organizations (if not the only organization) of this kind in India, for the promotion, research and development of Non-conventional Energy. It has been recognized by the Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources (MNES) of the Government of India, and its vocational training programmes have been recognized by the National Open Schools (NOS).

As of now, the unit manufactures various solar thermal devices, contributes in research training in thermal and photovoltaic technology and organizes exhibitions of various solar devices at various places. It has interns in research and development from Munich and Zurich University. The local university students also make use of the facilities available at the center for their research.

## Justice and Human Rights Forum: An Effort in Social Animation and Liberation

The legal assistance ministry as Justice and Human Rights Forum, with advocacy involving regular court practice and support to social animation/liberation programs through various social centers, began in 1990. The leadership was given by Fr. K.M. Joseph and many priests, religious and lay persons

followed him and serve in the field for promotion of justice and protection of the rights of the poor and marginalized sections of society, at both national and international levels.

Having originated from our struggle against exploitation of the poor and denial of basic human rights and a life of dignity to the marginalized, the Legal Aid Ministry in the province has retained the primary goal of conscientizing the oppressed, marginalized and exploited sections of society with regard to their basic human dignity and their right as citizens of the country in their struggle for liberation.

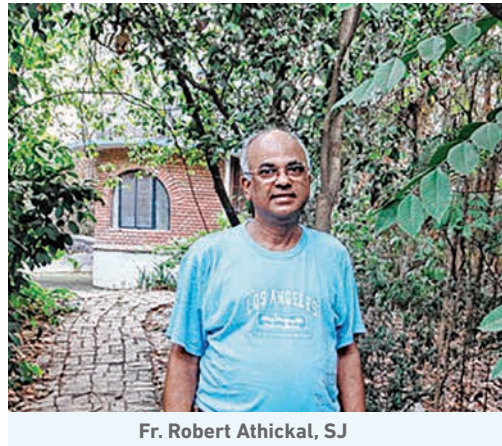
Considering the importance of literacy and elementary education of the masses in the process of liberation, the legal aid ministry has always paid special attention for their promotion as basic tools for liberation. The Forum has taken up and represented, with notable success, the church and its institutions, before the courts and administrative authorities in civil and criminal matters, defending and asserting their rights as civil entities and as minority religious, educational

and/or charitable institutions. The Forum has through the intervention of courts and authorities through appropriate motions been able to obtain due recognition and other fundamental and statutory rights to a large number of minority education institutions.

## Inter-Religious Dialogue: Peace and Reconciliation in Action

Bihar, has been a land of dialogue by its very nature and culture. It is the birthplace of Buddhism and Jainism and has a rich and long history of religious pluralism and harmony. Gautama became Buddha and preached his 'Dhamma' at Bodh Gaya. It is in Vaishali that Mahavira, the great Tirthankara of Jainism, was born and he attained nirvana at Pawapuri. Earliest myths and legends of Hinduism enshrined in the Ramayana, are associated with Bihar. Sita, the consort of Lord Rama, daughter of King Janak, was born in Sitamarhi. The ancient kingdom of Janak called Videha, consisted of the present day Mithilanchal districts of Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Samastipur, Madhubani, Sheohar and Darbhanga. The original author of Ramayana – Maharishi Valmiki - lived in Valmikinager, a small town in West Champaran.

The Vatican Council II (Nostra Aetate, 2) affirmed and invited Christians to promote a culture of dialogue "in order to build the future of the human family on the solid ground of respect for each person's inalienable dignity, equality, justice for all, tolerance and solidarity in human relations" (Pope John Paul II). The Patna Jesuits, who shouldered the responsibility of the Church in Bihar from the Capuchins in 1919, carried on dialogue mainly through their pastoral work which involved catering to the existing Christian communities, establishing new mission centers which involved much interaction with people of other religions. Fr. Westropp, along with Fr. Brennan and Fr. Bernard founded the Catholic Information Centre at



Fr. Robert Athickal, SJ

Photo: Telegraph India



Fr. Lawrence Eucharist with Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya

Photo Courtesy: Benny Moolan, SJ

inter-faith dialogue. Jeevan Sangham also initiated an inter-faith social organization called 'Pragatisheel Vicharmanch', the aim of which is to promote secular values. Inter-Faith Forum, Bodh Gaya, has been able to join hands with Buddhists monks, Muslims and Hindus, especially with the leadership of Fr. Lawrence Eucharist, SJ. Navjyoti Niketan, Ravi Bharati, Xavier Institute of Social Research (XISR), Tarumitra, and Masihi Satsang, has also been making laudable efforts towards dialogue.

'Harmony Inter-Faith Forum' at Patna, initiated by the Jesuit Commission for Dialogue in 2005, has been a major initiative in the direction of inter-religious dialogue in Patna. The Forum envisions building close relationships between people of different religions, with a view to combating communalism, jointly fighting

Patna, and through this center they were able to reach out to people of other religions in the 1950s. Fr. Kappamootil initiated dialogue with non-Christians at Siwan in the 1950s. Fr. Perumalil as 'Mukhya' of Morpa village was able to reach out to people of other religions.

Though inter-religious dialogue as a distinct ministry, with full time or part-time personnel and institutional set up, did not evolve in the province till the 1980s, there have been notable contributions by individuals in promoting inter-faith dialogue and harmony through their study of other religions. The specialized studies on Hinduism by Fr. T. K. John, Fr. Joseph Vellaringatt and Fr. Thomas Chillikulam, on Hinduism, are notable contributions in this line. Fr. Paul Jackson has been engaged in scholarly research and translation of the works of the Sufi saint Sharafuddin Maneri from Persian to English and has been engaged in Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Manthan, a social action center at Khagaul, founded in 1979 under the pioneering initiative of Fr. Philip Manthara has done much to promote justice through inter-religious action. Manthan's association with movements such as Insaani Ekta Muhim, Hum Log and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) helped it to join hands with inter-religious groups in fighting communalism, fundamentalism and other social evils. The involvement of the center in peace-building activities during communal riots in Biharshariff (1981), Patna City (1989) and Sitamarhi (1992) are commendable.

Jeevan Sangham, a center for dialogue at Bodh Gaya, established in 1994, has been making attempts to combine social action and

against social evils and building a just and more humane society in Bihar. As G.C.34 reminds us, "as Companions of Jesus sent into a world that is marked by religious pluralism, we have a special responsibility to promote interreligious dialogue."

## Massihi Satsangh Mandali: Village Evangelization through Folklore

Massihi Satsangh Mandali (MSM) was started with a vision of the proclamation of the Gospel in and through the culture of Bihar, with special focus on enabling the laity for proclamation under the leadership of Bro. Shilanand (known as Sadhu Shilanand). The group composed Old Testament and New Testament Kirtan in local languages of Bhojpuri and Maghi. In the prayer sessions, they integrated the prevalent social context, charismatic prayer methods and composed history of Christian villages through folklore. They also conducted Akhand-kirtans, national integration tours, and help 'Families for Christ' movement. Similar groups were also formed in various parishes.

The spirit of delving into the unknown continues, as the pioneers have inspired many young members of the province.

The author is the Conference Development Director of JCSA, Coordinator of Conference Secretaries Commission, and Coordinator of Conference Communications.

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## Intention For April 2021

## Universal intention - Fundamental rights

We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.



**Pope's Worldwide  
Prayer Network**





# Easter: from Despair to Hope

**E**aster is the ultimate Solemnity and greatest Feast and is the longest among the liturgical seasons. It celebrates the crowning, central truth of our faith in Jesus Christ. Easter is the most important day of the Christian calendar, more important than even Christmas. It is the day on which we celebrate Christ's triumphant victory over sin and death.

When we speak about Resurrection, we cannot ignore the death that precedes it. Indeed, without death there is no resurrection. Jesus Christ is significant because of his Death and Resurrection. Death is a painful reality, a devastating truth, a shattering experience. However, without death one cannot even imagine Resurrection. As the popular saying goes, "there is no Easter Sunday without Good Friday". Jesus reminds his disciples that the "the Son of Man must suffer many things ... and be killed." However, he does not stop with that but asserts "and after three day He must rise again." (Mark 8:31). The Resurrection makes sense only when one surrenders oneself to the reality of death.

The Israelites also experienced the struggle with death on foreign soil. They were tortured and killed. Their dreams of a glorious future were ruined by the relentless violence of their enemies. Their emotions had dried, and their identity was dead. Then the Passover happened, the most important event of their salvation history. They see the hand of God leading them from bondage to freedom. The drowning of the raging enemy army was not only the ultimate and definitive end of oppression, but also was the beginning of a new hope-filled identity. Nevertheless, they had to endure slavery, pain, suffering and death before the Passover. They had to tread the desert path before reaching the Promised Land. The Passover changes everything. New life emerges; new identity is bestowed.

The Easter liturgy is rich with symbols. One that captivates me is the fire, announcing the newness of life. Even though the new fire is blessed on the Easter Vigil, the Vigil itself begins with darkness. Every form of light is put out. The power of darkness must be felt strongly in order to experience the ever-radiating light of the Risen Lord, symbolized by the Easter Candle. Like the pillar of fire that showed the Israelites the way in the wilderness and also protected them from the pursuing enemies, guiding them from bondage to freedom, so also does the Easter candle, lit with the new fire and standing for the Risen Christ, protect us from danger and lead us into hope. "Christ the Light" dispels the darkness of despair.

While presenting the divine manifestation at Easter after the painful Passion, St. Ignatius beautifully captures this movement from despair to hope in the First Contemplation of the Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises: "Consider how the Divinity, which seemed hidden during the Passion, now appears and manifests itself so miraculously in this holy Resurrection, through its true and most holy effects." (SpEx. 223). If during the contemplations of the Third Week (Passion and Death), the exercitant is advised to

reduce light in the room, during the Fourth Week (Resurrection), the person is asked to brighten the room with more light. Darkness is transient and only light is lasting.

During the Urbi et Orbi message for Easter 2020, Pope Francis addressed humanity battered by the pandemic: Resurrection "is a different 'contagion', a message transmitted from heart to heart – for every human heart awaits this Good News. It is the contagion of hope: 'Christ, my hope, is risen!' This is no magic formula that makes problems vanish. No, the Resurrection of Christ is not that. Instead, it is the victory of love over the root of evil, a victory that does not "by-pass" suffering and death, but passes through them, opening a path in the abyss, transforming evil into good: this is the unique hallmark of the power of God."



Image Source: UN Development Programme

Easter this time is more meaningful and significant than ever. Many have suffered the loss of their dear ones due to the Covid pandemic; others have experienced health issues; poor people have lost their livelihood; daily wage laborers have struggled to make ends meet; students have suffered psychologically due to overuse of technology and lack of interaction with fellow students and teachers. The lack of sacramental life has affected all of our brothers and sisters.

Despite all this, we do not lose hope. Several have helped the needy, offering assistance to the sick, providing psychological support to the distressed. This is what resurrection is: without losing hope, bearing witness to the Risen Christ through our own little deeds of charity, as Christ Himself mandated (Acts 1:8). We can say triumphantly with St. Paul. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Cor 15,55).

The author is a Jesuit of Karnataka province and teaches New Testament Greek and Exegesis at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

Contact: [cliffysj@gmail.com](mailto:cliffysj@gmail.com)



# Community Prayers for the Ignatian Year



TITLE: To See All Things New In Christ, Community Reflections and Prayers for the Ignatian Year, 2021-2022

AUTHOR: Hedwig Lewis, SJ

PUBLISHER: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand

PAGES: 120 | PRICE: ₹100

This is an off-beat book containing Community Prayer Services based on the early parts of the Autobiography of Saint Ignatius, related to his 'conversion'. The undergirding theme is: 'Through Ignatius to Christ'. Each unit has four I's (eye's!): Invocation, Ignatiana, Insights, Intercessions. The thought-provoking and challenging reflections and prayers are drawn from wide-ranging sources. There are four sections:

(a) Dynamics of conversion; (b) "On the road to Manresa"; (c) Pathways to God (UAP); (d) Special features: Our Lady of the Way, Saint Francis Xavier, Vocation Promotion.

Pascual Cebollada SJ, the Coordinator of the Ignatian Year in Rome, was requested to appraise the manuscript. His response: "I shared your wonderful initiative with the committee of the Ignatian Year... We underline the simplicity and easy understanding of the texts, their deepness, and other things..." John Dardis SJ, General Counsellor for Discernment and Apostolic Planning, Director of the Communications Office, added: "... and the prayers which you so thoughtfully brought together. ... You have made an amazing integration of the Ignatian sources; of the different comments of successive Father Generals; of comments on Ignatius and on the First Companions." The book has global appeal, and hopefully will have translations/adaptations in several foreign languages.

I Hedwig Lewis, SJ

# The Social and Psychological meanings of Suicide

This book is an outcome of the study undertaken by the faculty of the Centre for Culture and Development, Vadodara, which was financially supported by the Indian Council for Social Science Research, Delhi. This book provides a socio-psychological enquiry of the phenomenon of suicide in the Indian context. It addresses the rising trend of suicides across the world and through case studies explores its primary reasons, the after-effects on survivors and families, and measures to prevent them.

The volume focuses on deciphering the social and psychological meanings associated with suicide. Through an examination of psycho-social autopsies of numerous cases, it highlights the patterns and trends which emerge around mental well-being, suicide, and bereavement. It examines the primary roadblocks for robust suicide prevention measures and provides great insights into behavioral and personality categories and their relationship with suicide. A special feature of this book, is the case studies of attempted suicides and completed suicides and their analysis. Through case studies, it explores primary reasons for suicide, the after-effects on survivors and families and measures to prevent them.

Offering theoretical and empirical perspectives on the issue of suicide and self-harm, this book will be of interest to students, researchers, and faculties of behavioral sciences,

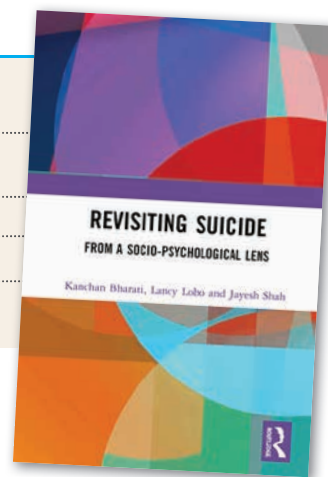
TITLE: Revisiting Suicide: From a Socio-Psychological Lens

AUTHOR: Kanchan Bharati, Lancy Lobo and Jayesh Shah

PUBLISHER: Routledge, London

PAGES: 402

PRICE: Hard cover- ₹12,540/| Kindle ₹ 2793/-



psychology, social anthropology, demography, criminology, social work and sociology. It will also be an essential read for psychologists and counselors, policy makers, NGOs, CSOs, legal experts and media personnel working in the area of suicide prevention and research.

This is a global edition brought out by Routledge London. Soon the South Asia edition is expected which would be priced much less.

I Lancy Lobo, SJ



# JCSA Meeting

## February 2021



The JCSA had an online meeting from 22nd- 26th February 2021. It was the second JCSA meeting in a row in the online mode. The Major Superiors of the Conference along with the Regional Assistants, Fr. Vernon D’Cunha and Fr. M.K. George spent five days sharing, discussing and discerning on various issues affecting the Jesuit life and mission in the conference.

Fr. General joined the meeting for a session on the first day. He gave an inspiring message. Having recounted with sorrow that one hundred and fifty Jesuits died of Covid-19 worldwide, he reminded the Major Superiors that Covid-19 pandemic is an opportunity for compassion. He spoke on authoritarianism of particular ideologies and shrinking space for the marginalized in South Asia. He spoke with anguish about the continued incarceration of fellow Jesuits Fr. Stan and Fr. Alphonse Aind. He reminded the Major Superiors the need for serious discussions, and listening to the spirit through discernment for starting new colleges and universities. While stressing the universality of our vocation and the oneness of the Society of Jesus, he said that all persons and finances belong to one body. He empathically said, “Ours is not a federation.” He made a mention of the Ignatian year as an opportunity to see all things in Christ. It is an opportunity for conversion. He exhorted all to implement the Universal Apostolic Preferences in our communities and institutions. He said that the work for the renewal of the statutes of poverty is going on. He said with deep feeling about his intense interior movements with regard to renewal of the vow of poverty in the Society of Jesus. He encouraged the Major Superiors to build a culture for vocation promotion. “The best way to promote vocations is praying to God for vocations,” he stated. He asked the Major Superiors to look into the need for a fulltime vocation promotor in each province, building solidarity for formation, and a coordinated effort at vocation promotion and youth ministry.

The main theme of the meeting was on shrinking space for pluralism, dissent and justice in South Asia. The keynote address was given by Dr. Brinelle D’Souza, a faculty member at the center for health and mental health, TISS. She said that democracy is under siege today. The pandemic

has given more room for authoritarian regimes to consolidate and expand their powers. What is required is a covenantal pluralism and building solidarity. She encouraged the Jesuits to give a prophetic voice in the wilderness (not just when Jesuits are attacked), to stand in solidarity with the spirit of Fratelli Tutti, practicing the praxis of tolerance, making the institutions the avenues for critical discourse for a just cause

for the poor and the vulnerable, involving in compassion, justice, peace and reconciliation, and not competition and exclusivism. Answering the questions raised, she said that there are some still fighting back or resisting. Therefore, it is important to build alliances. Time has come to rethink on our institutional position of strength. The Gospel message is for the poor and the vulnerable and hence we need to give a thought to radical choices: “I feel called to risk all whenever there is injustice. Somebody has paid a prize for where we are today.” She also encouraged all, saying, “God is with us in every struggle, we are a people of the Resurrection.” Our commitment is to the Gospel. Our mission is to bring God and the Christ experience to the people. The Church is not about institutions but people. She said, “I have a certain dignity. For this, I need my democratic rights.” She ended her speech with a consoling note, “We shall overcome.”

The other speakers who interacted with the Major Superiors were Fr. Milroy Fernando, SJ from Sri Lanka, Fr. Juan Carlos, SJ from Pakistan, Mr. Kanak Mani Dixit from Nepal and Fr. Jerry Gomes, SJ from Bangladesh. They talked on exploring various practices to establish a pluralistic and egalitarian polity.

During the meeting there were discussions and discernment on building solidarity in formation. The six Conference Secretaries, Fr. Siji Chacko, Fr. James Arjen Tete, Fr. Anthony Dias, Fr. Joye James, Fr. Arun Kumar and Fr. Sunny Jacob, presented reports of their activities, concerns, and challenges, especially after the establishment of new structures for the Secretariates of the Conference. The February JCSA also dealt with programs and activities for the coming Ignatian year. Although it was an online meeting the Major Superiors experienced the unity of JCSA as one body, and felt much joy in coming together. However, there was a strong feeling that the situation in South Asia is alarming. Many expressed with dismay the dwindling number of vocations in the Society. The JCSA also bid farewell to Fr. Varghese Pallipalakkatt and Fr. Keith Abranches.

■ Shajumon Chakkalakkal, SJ | Delhi

# Centenary Celebration Jiffies

The concluding commemoration of the Patna Jesuit Mission Centenary was held on March 3, 2021, at XTTI, Patna. Though, the pandemic situation did not permit any kind of elaborate celebration, it was a year-long spiritual renewal and interiorization of the spirit of the pioneers and Jesuit companions who were instrumental in scripting 100 years of history of the Jesuit Mission in North India and Nepal.

The commemorative event began with a short prayer at the cemetery, remembering and honoring the veterans of the mission. In a symbolic expression, a flame lit from the burning ember at the cemetery, was carried in procession to the venue of the Mass, and the ceremonial lamp was lit by the same flame. At the end of the prayer, Most. Rev. Sebastian Kallupura, unveiled a plaque dedicated to all the Jesuit pioneers and companions who have toiled to serve the people of God and the benefactors who have nurtured the Patna Jesuit Mission in the past 100 years. As a memorial of the event, two saplings were planted at the entrance of the cemetery.

The Eucharist that followed the prayer service, was presided over by Most Rev. Sebastian Kallupura -Archbishop of Patna, and con-celebrated by other Bishops of the region, Fr. Stanislaus D'Souza, SJ, the President of the South Asian Conference, seven Jesuit Provincials, and more than a hundred priests. The devotional and melodious singing under the leadership of Fr. Rajesh Somepalli, SJ, helped the congregation to participate in the liturgy meaningfully.

The Eucharist was followed by a felicitation program. Most. Rev. Sebastian Kallupura, graced the occasion as the chief guest, and Fr. Stanislaus D'Souza, SJ, was the guest of honor. We were honored with the presence of Fr. Soosai Mani, Provincial of Delhi province, and Fr. Mathew Assarikudy, representing Nepal Regional superior Fr. Amrit Rai. We were also blessed to have the presence of two Bishops of the region - Archbishop (Emeritus) Most. Rev. William D'Souza, SJ, a number of provincial sisters, six Jesuit provincials of South Asia, many priests from different dioceses of the region, religious sisters and brothers, and a few representatives of the Catholic laity, and village people, as part of the august gathering.

Though, due to COVID travel restrictions, Fr. General, Rev. Arturo Sosa, SJ, could not be present for this historic event, in

his video message, he recounted the contributions Patna Jesuit Mission has made, over the years, for the good of the most neglected people of God. Rev. Fr. Brian Paulson, the Provincial of the Jesuit Mid-West Province, also greeted the gathering through a video message. It was heartening to listen to Fr. Theodore Bowling, again through a video message, about his experiences of being part of the Patna Jesuit Mission. Acknowledging the accompaniment and collaboration of different groups of people, the representatives were felicitated during the function. All the other dignitaries were also felicitated for being co-pilgrims in this momentous journey.

A dance drama, depicting the successful journey of the Patna



Jesuit Mission for the past 100 years, added color and pomp to the concluding ceremony of the Centenary. At the close of the program, the flame that was carried from the cemetery, was handed over to Fr. Donald Miranda, Provincial of Patna, Fr. Soosai Mani, Provincial of Delhi, and Fr. Mathew Assarikudy, representative of the regional superior of Nepal, symbolizing our determination to be ignited by the same spirit of our pioneers in our journey for the 100 years to come.

| Benny Moolan, SJ | Sasaram, Bihar

# MAIN (Migrant Assistance and Information Network) Inaugurated



Setting a new milestone in accompanying distressed migrants to live with dignity by building a caring humanity, the Jesuit Conference of India's premier initiative MAIN (Migrant Assistance and Information Network) has begun its operations. Fr. Jerome Stanislaus D'Souza SJ, President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (JCSA), inaugurated the office of the Central Hub of MAIN at the Indian Social Institute (ISI), Delhi, 25th February. "MAIN is the outcome of long study, reflection, discernment and decision", said Fr. Stany. He quoted Elizabeth Browning's poem, "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God; but only he who sees, takes off his shoes; the rest sit around and pluck blackberries." Fr. Stany added that it is important to see one who sees, judges and acts. Jesuits responded to the need of the hour during the time of pandemic, and a very conscious effort was made by the team, while conceiving MAIN, and many participated in the discussion to fashion it.

Speaking at the inaugural event, Fr. Siji Chacko SJ (Director of MAIN, and Conference Development Office), said MAIN is the outcome of the felt-need for a concerted, collective and innovative response to reach out to the distress migrant labourers--inter-state and intra-state. It emerged in the context of the ongoing global pandemic and the related crisis. When the pandemic struck, many organisations, including NGOs, CSOs, and individuals in various capacities, extended support by providing assistance to the people in distress. Migrant workers who got held up in many cities without food and place to stay, were also provided timely support by several Jesuit-led organisations across India. Fr Siji said that "MAIN is conceived as a network of NGOs/CSOs, institutions, including academic like universities and research centres, alumni, government departments, etc.

Explaining in brief the MAIN model, Fr Siji shared that MAIN will establish a central helpline system, wherein distress migrants/his or her family member/close associates, can call to seek critical assistance/information. The team at the

Central Hub in Delhi will assess the call received and transfer the information to the respective State Hub for further action and follow up. The team at the State Hub studies the matter, initiates response (services as required) to the caller (distressed migrant), and prepares the first Action Taken Report (ATR), which would be updated on the dashboard at the Central Hub. He also shared that initially MAIN is envisaged for 13 states including Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Goa, apart from Delhi. MAIN will become functional with the respective state hubs coming into full operation.

MAIN has three pillars which are: Accompany, Serve and Advocate. (1) Accompaniment is about closeness, solidarity support, care of the person, and to be in live contact with the realities of distress migrants. (2) Service includes variety of responses that would help in alleviating the sufferings, harassment and abuse, discrimination, exclusion, and inhuman treatment of distressed migrants. However, considering the complex systemic issues, provision of services depends on the availability of both human and financial resources at the disposal of MAIN. (3) Advocacy is premised on research, and includes campaigns and consultations. MAIN would undertake policy engagements for proper implementation of laws/schemes through scientific analysis of data gathered through helpline, and experiences and narratives from the field by working among distressed migrants.

Fr. Joseph Xavier, Director, Indian Social Institute (ISI), Bengaluru, launched the website of MAIN ([www.mainindia.org](http://www.mainindia.org)) during the inaugural event. Speaking at the occasion, Fr Joseph said, "The website will demonstrate a dream, passion and commitment. The end that we are visualizing, is to see the migrants having food on their table, children educated, then looking into their rights, entitlements, policies, laws, etc. This model can be seen as a commitment to make a change in the lives of the people, and we can align many different dimensions. If we can work on the economic development of the people, then it would be the rational way of working to generate real vehicles to reach out to the migrants.

The inauguration of the MAIN Central Hub is a critical component in strengthening Jesuits' work with the migrant community across India, in the context of COVID-19 and beyond. Dr. Denzil Fernandes SJ - Executive Director, ISI, Delhi, Dr. Paul D'Souza SJ - Superior, ISI, Delhi, Fr. Shin Kallungal SJ - Assistant Director, MAIN, Fr. Shajumon Chakkalakkal SJ - Socius to President JCSA, Fr. Martin Pudussery SJ - GIAN Migration Co-ordinator, Fr. Antony Dias SJ - Secretary, SJES, and Fr. Stan SJ - Socius to Pune Provincial, attended the inaugural function held at ISI, Delhi. The event was also live broadcasted on JCSA YouTube channel.

| Mr. Anil Kumar | Delhi

# Muslim & Christian Co-pilgrims converse

The Islamic Studies Association (ISA) a Jesuit-run initiative organised a convention on Christian-Muslim Relations on 27th February, 2021 at the Ismailpur Pastoral Centre, Jammu. Bishop Ivan Pereira of Jammu and Kashmir inaugurated the programme.

The programme had three components. The first component focussed on Christian-Muslim relations. This was a conversation-based presentation.

The second component focussed on the context in which we are called to engage with Muslims. An input on the pluralistic character of India and the Constitution of India: Constitutional values and human rights, fine-tuned our understanding of dialogue with Muslims in India.

The third component was about listening to Muslims. Ten Muslim brothers and sisters from Rajouri (members of an organisation called Centre for Peace and Spirituality) spoke about their faith—Islam—and about how the Holy Qur'an and the life of the Prophet of Islam had helped them to be better persons, better Muslims.



Bishop Ivan in his message pointed out that when we begin to interact closely and positively with people of other faiths, we learn to respect their desire for God. He added that in dialogue our faith is not compromised, rather it is deepened, and becomes more open to find God in all circumstances of life.

By opening up to Muslims, a Christian can become a better follower of Christ, said one of the youth leaders of the diocese, who attended the programme.

In dialogue with people of other faiths we come to recognise our common brotherhood and sisterhood, said another participant.

In a thank-you-message, a participant wrote: “Personally, it was a transformative experience ... God’s call for all of us is to know one another, appreciate one another, and love one another, for God loves each one of us”.

Victor Edwin, SJ | Delhi



# JCERT Organizes Educators' Meet with Mr. Rahul Gandhi

‘Educate, Enlighten, Empower’ was the theme of the Educators’ Meet, organized by Jesuit Council for Education, Research and Training (JCERT) on 28th Feb in St. Xavier’s College with an enlightening and spontaneous interaction with Mr. Rahul Gandhi for an hour. About 1200 professors and teachers participated.

On the NEP-2020, he said that it should have emerged from the conversation with students, teachers and all the stakeholders. Since it has not been done, the NEP is an incomplete product. This policy aims to make education a weapon to communalize and push a particular ideology into the Indian system. Rather it should be a weapon of empowerment.

On education being commercialized, he said that education is not a financial commodity. It should be freely available to everybody.

On teachers, he expressed that the modern technology should be incorporated into the education system, but the teacher has to be the central pillar of this system. There are three components to education: information – one can get it from Google or computer; knowledge – it requires a teacher; and the final goal is wisdom. It can only be given by another human being – that is the teacher. The government needs to empower and strengthen the teachers so that they can effectively and efficiently impart knowledge and wisdom to the students.

On the present Central Government, he said that the Government of India says that they represent Hinduism but a lot of ideas that they espouse have nothing to do with Hinduism. Nowhere in Hinduism, does it say, ‘insult people, kill people, beat people’ but they do it. True principle of any religion should be ‘treat the other with respect, love and affection’. ‘Hate and kill other persons’ is not at all what religions say.

Fr. John Kennedy SJ, main organizer of this event who compered the programme, presented his recent book on NEP, EIA and AA – 2020 to him, and requested him to take up these things in parliament, with the arguments presented.

S.M. John Kennedy, SJ | Tirunelveli

# JCSA Appointments

As on 25 March 2021

## By Fr General

Fr Antonysamy Stephenraj, SJ (PAT) – Regional Director, JRS

Fr Francis Pudhicherry (GUJ) – Rector of De Nobili College, Pune

Fr Nirmal Raj Arulanandu (DUM) – Rector of Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi

Fr Sunny Jacob (JAM) – Asst for Mission and Identity for the Secretariat for Education and Jesuit Education Specialist for ‘Educate Magis’

### Subject to the appointment by CBCI

Fr Jesu Benjamin (DUM) - National Director, AICUF

## By the POSA

### Jor Bagh, Delhi

Fr Shajumon C.K. – Superior

Fr John Ravi Selvan (DEL) – Secretary, JEA

Fr Nelson Gonsalves (GOA) – Asst Finance Officer, JRS

Fr Arun Kumar (KAR) – Secretary of Faith

### ISI, Bangalore

Fr Francis Balaraj (KAR) – Administrator and Program Head of Social Inclusion and Democracy

### ISI, Delhi

Fr Thomas Perumalil (PAT) – Acting Superior

Fr Shin Kallungal (KER) – Asst Director, MAIN

Fr Franklin Rex (CEN) – JRS

Fr Alwyn D’Souza (KAR) – Research Scholar

Fr Lancy Lobo (GUJ) – Research Scholar

Fr Siji Chacko (PAT) – Director MAIN (Additional responsibility)

### Satya Nilayam, Chennai

Fr Francis D’ Souza (KAR) - Registrar & Treasurer

Fr Arul P Stanislaus (CEN) - Minister and Spiritual Director

Fr Benedict Lakra (RAN) -Spiritual Director

Fr Lindsay Lobo (GOA) – Trial teaching and Asst Program Coordinator of SNRI

Fr Martin Gnanapragasam (AND) – Trial teaching

### Papal Seminary, Pune

Fr Antony Raj R (JAM) – Moderator of Philosophers & Spiritual Director

Fr Rocha Rozario (GOA) – Spiritual Director

Fr Linus Dabre (Pune Diocese) – Trial teaching at Jnana Deepa

### Jnana Deepa, Pune

Fr Peter Ignatius (PAT) – Registrar and Teacher

Fr George Cordeiro (BOM) – Moderator of PG Students and Manager of PG Block

Fr Biju Vadakkumchery (KER) – Change of residence to PG Block

### De Nobili College, Pune

Fr Paul Chemparathy (NEP) – Treasurer

Fr Joji Devara (AND) – PhD

Fr Jagdish Parmar (DAR) – PWP Office relocated to De Nobili College, Pune

Fr Clement Jesudoss (MDU) – Teaching at Jnana Deepa

### Vidyajyoti, Delhi

Fr Hector Pinto (GUJ) – Registrar & Treasurer, Vidyajyoti, Delhi

Fr Anthony D’ Souza (KAR) – Trial Teaching, VJ

Fr Edwin Philip Rodrigues (BOM) – Teaching, VJ

### JRS, Afghanistan

Fr Jerome Sequeira – Country Director

### Tertianship

Irudayaraj Manickam (GUJ) - Tertian Instructor, Sitagarha

Fr William Sequeira (KAR) – Tertian Instructor, Kandy

Fr Jose Jacob M (KER) – Tertian Instructor, Shembaganur

Fr Valerian Mendonca (JAM) – Tertianship at Shembaganur

### IGNIS

Fr Somy Mathew Mannoor (JAM) – Editor, IGNIS

### Gratitude for the services rendered to Common Houses and works of South Asia

Fr Edward Mudavaserry (HAZ)

Fr Michael Thanaraj (JAM)

Br Christuraj A (CCU)

Fr Jose Thayil (PAT)

Fr George Karuvelil (PAT)

Fr Paul D’Souza (GUJ)

Fr Alex Gnanapragasam (JAM)

Fr Chandy Kumblankal (KER)

Fr Louie Albert (CEN)

Fr Stanislaus Fernandes (PUN)

Fr Linto Kanichai (KER)

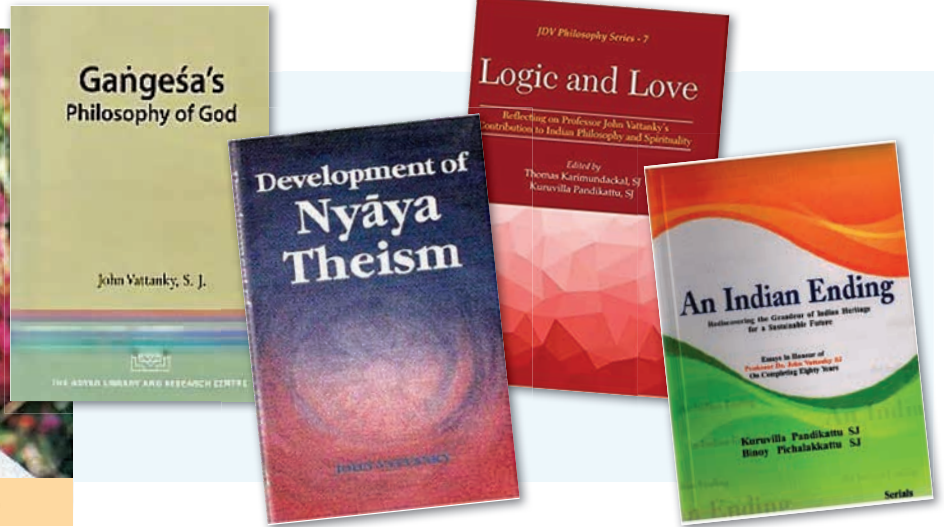
Fr Stephen K.C. (DUM)

Fr Keith Abranches (GUJ)

# Indian Logician, Erudite Philosopher, Faithful Servant



Prof. Dr. John Vattanky, SJ (1931-2021)



With the passing away of Prof. Dr. John Vattanky, SJ, on Feb 22nd, 2021, the Church and the nation has lost an erudite scholar, a passionate lover and a visionary thinker. His logical mind, coupled with his passionate heart, contributed significantly to a better understanding of the classical Nyaya school!

Fr. John was born on 3rd July 1931, and joined the Jesuit Novitiate at Kozhikode (1950). He was ordained a priest on March 19th, 1963, at Kurseong.

Then he pursued his MA in Oriental Studies at the Oxford University (1966-1969). He obtained his PhD in Indology from Vienna (1974). He then moved to De Nobili College, Pune, and founded the Centre for Advanced Indian Studies (1982). He served as Professor of Indian Philosophy at Jnana Deepa, Pune. He authored five significant books and has become a world authority on Navya Nyaya.

What guided his philosophical quest and Christian reflection, may be summed up in three of his enduring passions:

## Passion for Indian Philosophy

His training at Oxford and Vienna prepared him to be an erudite and meticulous scholar, capable of long hours of serious and dedicated research. He had truly fallen in love with Indian philosophy and its nuanced interpretations. He was fully convinced of the relevance of classical Indian philosophy. That is why the first festschrift in his honour, was aptly titled *An Indian Ending: Rediscovering the Grandeur of Indian Heritage for a Sustainable Future* (2013). His book *Gangesa's Philosophy of God* was favourably appreciated by Kanchi Sankaracharya, who honoured him specially.

## Rooted in Logic and Love

A man of deep conviction and faith, John had a rigorous mind for the Navya-Nyaya system of logic and a devout heart for God. His intellectual acumen brought him closer to the people. Hence the second volume in his honour - *Logic and Love* (2019). He was both a logician and a lover with mystical traces.

## Open to Oriental Traditions

Late in life, he had discovered the depth of Oriental theology and symbolism. After learning Syriac, he studied St. Ephrem, and was truly fascinated by his symbolic theology.

Vattanky firmly believed that it is only in the absolute, that the human being is able to explain himself. According to him, a "proper self-understanding of the human being is not possible without the absolute. In other words, the human being cannot understand himself properly except in the absolute."

Fr John passed away on Monday, 22nd February 2021, at Christ Hall, Kozhikode, after being bedridden for five long years, and suffering peacefully and joyfully.

Vattanky was a passionate thinker, based on Indian tradition! He was a logician-lover, open to both reason and devotion. He was also open to his oriental roots, which did not limit him. It enabled him to open himself to others, with a deep love for the Church, for the nation and for his traditions.

┆ Kuruvilla Pandikattu, SJ



## Rev. Bishop Linus Nirmal Gomes, SJ

Most Rev Bishop Linus Nirmal Gomes, S.J., passed away on 27th February 2021. He was 99. His funeral Mass was held on March 1st 2021 in St. Teresa Parish Church, Kolkata, at 8.30 a.m., in the Cathedral of the Baruipur diocese at 11 a.m. At the 3 p.m. Mass, Baruipur Bishop Shyamal Bose was the main celebrant, and all of Bengal Region's Bishops concelebrated. His niece Ms. Margaret was present for the Mass. He was buried in the Baruipur Cathedral cemetery.

He was a real good shepherd with tender love, a big heart, simple, humble, disciplined, serviceable, grateful, compassionate, concerned and available. He was close to Jesus and Mother Mary and so, close to people. He was a man of God and led a prayerful life. He earned respect from all who came in contact with him. Punctuality was one of the priorities in his daily routine, which he practiced throughout his life. He was physically fit and mentally alert almost till the end. His enthusiasm and encouragement was a great source of inspiration to all.

Bishop Linus was the eldest son, born on 7th September 1921 in the village of Balidior, Dacca, Bangladesh, St Francis Xavier's Parish at Golla. Mr Domingo Gomes and Anna Cecilia Gomes were his parents. He had four brothers and four sisters, all of whom have passed away.

He studied at Holy Cross High School, Dhaka and then at St. Xavier's, Calcutta. There he met Belgian Jesuit teachers such as Fr Johannes and Fr

Turmes. Inspired by their life of service, he joined the Jesuits. After the training in Hazaribagh and Shembaganur, he did BA Bengali from Central Calcutta College. Then he taught at St Xavier's School, Calcutta.

Pope Paul VI appointed Fr Linus Gomes the first Bishop of the newly established diocese of Baruipur on 30th May 1977, while he was the Parish Priest of St Teresa's Church, Kolkata. Archbishop Cardinal Lawrence Picachy, S.J., consecrated him as Bishop on 19th November 1977, at St Xavier's College. Bishop Linus Gomes served the nascent diocese of Baruipur for 18 long years.

After his retirement, he went to Bangladesh in 1997, to support the Jesuit works there. He remained there till 2014, rendering spiritual help to the Christian community and religious sisters at Dhaka. His humble and cheerful service of 18 long years was a great support and encouragement to the Jesuits in Bangladesh.

He spent his last years at St Xavier's College, Kolkata. Bishop Linus' fatherly presence was a source of immense joy and inspiration to everyone in the community and in the infirmary. May his soul rest in peace!

Francis Jerome, SJ



## Fr. Anthony A. D'Souza, SJ (BOM)

The life of 'Tony the Leader' reminds us to always celebrate life to the full. Tony lived life joyously and passed on that joy to others. We shall revisit his long, fruitful life under three aspects – the Leader, the Person and the Follower.

**Tony the Leader:** This was the title he was best known by and it typified his work and his attitude to life. He made an outstanding contribution in the field of Leadership and Management through his training programs offered to business executives, religious leaders, bishops and pastors. His books continue to be used as standard material for leadership training. The pioneering spirit in Tony saw him build up important institutions such as ISI-Delhi and XIMR Mumbai. And of course, one cannot forget his stint with the World Council of Churches at Geneva.

**Tony the Person:** Enthusiasm and optimism are qualities that marked Tony right through his life. He lifted people up and always had a word of encouragement. People felt better about themselves

after being in his company. This enthusiasm remained with Tony till the end of his life. He was the 'darling' of the Infirmary staff – they loved his childlike joy and heaped loads of love upon him. His cheerful ways brightened up life in the Infirmary.

**Tony the Follower:** Despite his numerous achievements, Tony always proclaimed that there was only one true leader – Our Lord Jesus Christ. The servant leadership of Jesus was the model Tony proposed as the one most suited for our times. Tony saw himself as a disciple, learning from the Master. This outstanding Jesuit was acknowledged by many as leader, but he always knew his identity as disciple of the true Master.

Tony lived life to the full, here on earth. He now enjoys it in superabundance in the company of his one true leader - our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke Rodrigues, SJ

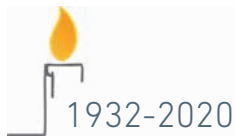


## Fr. Mathew Olnidian, SJ (KER)

Fr. O.P. Mathew was the first vocation and the first Jesuit from the Chirackal Mission in Kerala founded by the Italian missionaries. He joined the Society as a Brother, but was later ordained a priest at 55. Born in 1945 in humble circumstances, he lost his father while still a child. So the Boys' Home run by the Mission in Mattul became his home. The life of the missionaries attracted him to the Society. He entered the Jesuit novitiate at Christ Hall in 1966. Mathew turned out to be a hard-working and exemplary Brother. He never forgot his roots, and this made him kind and sensitive to all. He proved it with his empathy for the poor and orphaned students at St Vincent Boys' Home, Kozhikode where he was in-charge. He helped many of them in getting special training and decent jobs. Mathew was aged 45, and 25 years a Jesuit when, after completing his Master's in Sociology privately, he was inspired to apply for

priesthood. Devoting ten more years in priestly studies, he was ordained in 2000 at Mattul, his home parish. He spent the initial years of priesthood in different parishes in the diocese of Trivandrum. Later, he was transferred to Pariyaram, Kannur, to assist Fr Zucol, the great Italian missionary. Mathew accompanied the octogenarian in every activity of the parish. The work was heavy and he became partially paralyzed. The death of Fr Zucol added to his failing health, and gradually he became bed-ridden. Still he was optimistic and desirous of returning to his mission, but the Lord had other plans for him. Mathew breathed his last on the feast of St. Francis Xavier. Like St. Francis, his eyes were set on his mission even in death.

|| Raphael Thottan, SJ



## Fr. Stanley D'Souza, SJ (DEL)

Fr. Stanley J. D'Souza was born on July 4th, 1932, in Zanzibar, East Africa. After his school education in Bombay, BE in Pune and MS in the US, he entered Milford Novitiate, USA, in 1957, for Patna Mission. After philosophy at West Baden College and theology at DNC, Pune he was ordained a priest in 1966.

Stan served in various places in the provinces of Patna and Delhi and at Vidyajyoti in different capacities. Even though he held a PG degree in civil engineering, his dream over the years kept driving him toward retreats and spiritual direction. These ministries meant the world to him, and he often wished he had more of them to satisfy his zeal and "fill up his cup of happiness." He spent several years giving retreats fulltime, basing himself in Goa and Bandra. He was a very patient listener in counselling situations. Stan was a very caring person and was always willing to help anybody in need.

He was very systematic and did his job to perfection. As treasurer he kept accounts accurately. He was a voracious reader and lover of Crossword Puzzles and Sudokus. His lifestyle was simple. He wore old clothes, leaving all the new clothes gifted to him in the suitcase itself. He travelled light. A small backpack was all that he needed for a month-long stay outside the community. Stan cherished deep relationships and longed to be in the company of people.

In November 2020 Stan was shifted from Shahbad to Raj Niwas Marg Community, Delhi. He enjoyed reasonably good health. His condition suddenly deteriorated on December 2nd and so was rushed to Holy Family Hospital. There on December 19th, 2020 the Lord called Stan to his eternal reward. Stan, intercede for us.

|| Mathew Padayatty, SJ



## Fr. Savarimuthu Xavier, SJ (CEN)

Fr. X. Savarimuthu, a remarkable priest and spiritual director of Jesuits, other men and women religious and lay people, made a significant impact on the spiritual journey of many in Tamil Nadu Catholic Church in the past 50 years. A liberated Jesuit, he indeed lived his life in constant and profound union with God. Born on 28th May 1937, at Rammathapuram in Tirunelveli District, to Mr. Xavier Madurendiram and Mrs. Annamariyal, he grew up with his siblings--two brothers and two sisters--in a well-to-do and devout Catholic family. On completing his college studies, he sensed a sudden yet intensely-felt desire in the depths of his heart to become a priest. Responding to God's call promptly, he left home and entered the Novitiate at Beschi, Dindigul, on 14th June 1961, against his father's wish. After the Novitiate and Juniorate, he did his Philosophy at Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, and Theology at Jnana Deepa, Pune. He was ordained a Priest in Madurai on 28th March 1971. He served

as a Parish Priest in Tiruchi and Thirumanur, and as a much sought-after retreat preacher and spiritual guide at Dhyana Ashram, Chennai, VMI, Vilangudi, Clive House - Tiruchi, and Beschi Illam - Dindigul. He was known as a mobile pastor, charismatic exorcist, spiritual formator, mercy-filled confessor, generous giver, kind father of the poor and composer of devotional hymns.

Unexpectedly, due to intestinal perforation, he had to undergo a surgery at St. Joseph Hospital, Dindigul. Though initially he showed improvement, his health deteriorated and he passed away peacefully on 3rd March 2021. On the following day, the Funeral Mass was celebrated by Fr. Jebamalai Irudayaraj, Provincial (CEN). Fr. Savarimuthu's mortal remains were laid to rest in the Beschi cemetery. He was the first CEN Jesuit to reach his heavenly abode.

|| Michael Panimaya Raj, SJ





## Fr. Lancy Pereira, SJ (BOM)

Fr. Lancy Pereira was a man who was fascinated by the deep mysteries of life, strove to understand them and encouraged others to make their own explorations. His life was one relentless quest to get deeper into the mystery of life and God, a quest best expressed in his books 'The Enchanted Darkness' and 'Death, the Final Freedom'.

Lancy was intellectually gifted and takes his place in the long tradition of Jesuit scholars who blended faith with scientific pursuits. He had an incisive mind that could quickly separate the essentials from the peripherals, arrange the facts logically and build up a convincing case for his point of view. Along with intellectual depth, Lancy displayed great versatility. He had a great range of academic interests and was also a keen sportsman and an accomplished violinist. At St. Xavier's College, he was the driving force behind the Life Science department, the Caius Laboratory, the Malhar festival

and the Indian Music Group. A true all-rounder indeed!

There was a nurturing side to Lancy that emerged only after you knew him well. Once you earned his respect, he would then be ready to lift you up to see the large picture and discover your own potential. In this way he became a guiding star to many a professional who wanted to blaze new trails in his/her own field. The quest for God was the main driving force of Lancy's life. His explorations in different fields all threw some light on the Divine Mystery, but left him hungering for greater clarity. In this quest, he often encountered darkness and uncertainty, but there were also moments of magic and enchantment. We are grateful that he has shared those moments with us. We rejoice that Lancy now experiences the enchantment of being one with the Divine Mystery.

▮ Luke Rodrigues, SJ



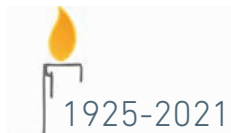
## Fr. Vasco do Rego, SJ (GOA)

It is a Herculean task to write the obituary of a multifaceted and multitalented personality like that of Fr. Vasco do Rego, SJ, of Goa Province. He was a student counsellor, spiritual father of Rachol Seminary, novice master, director of retreats, preacher, translator, musician, writer, rector of Bom Jesus Basilica, pastor, editor of Konknni monthly "Dor Mhoineachi Rotti". He was fondly known as "Guruji" and "Pitaji" among his friends.

He did his early studies in Portuguese at Panaji. While doing philosophy at Rachol Seminary, he heard an inner voice "Trust in my heart and go". Due to this voice he joined the Jesuit novitiate at Vinayalaya, Mumbai on 5th August 1945. He completed his theology at Eegenhoven, Louvain, Belgium. On 15th August 1955, he was ordained. His life and apostolates were centred on Trinitarian spirituality. The greatest and most valuable contribution he rendered to the Church in Goa

were in the fields of Liturgy in Konknni and translation and editing work of the Missal, Lectionary, and the Konknni Bible. Due to his efforts, emerged the Konknni hymnal "Gaionacho Jhelo". He was a strong crusader of the Konknni language. The Novenas and Feast of St. Francis Xavier is the most important event in Goa. It was Fr. Vasco who restored the sanctity of the shrine and was instrumental in conducting well organized liturgies during the novenas, feast and exposition of relics. During his term as the Rector of Bom Jesus Basilica, many prominent global figures visited the shrine, including Pope John Paul II. Truly, he was a rarest gem in the Konknni world and a treasured gift for the Society of Jesus and the Church in Goa. He passed away on 17th February at Ishaprema Niketan, of which he was the founder.

▮ Pratapananda Naik, SJ



## Fr. Ronald Victor Menezes, SJ (KAR)

Fr. Ronald Menezes, SJ, was born on 10th March 1972 in Mangalore. He joined the Society of Jesus on 20th June 1994, and took his first vows on 21st June 1996. He was ordained a priest on 28th December 2008 and pronounced his final vows on 18th October 2015. He was a teacher at St. Aloysius High school, Mangalore, and St. Joseph's High School, Hassan, until he sought refuge in the Lord's bosom on 14th January 2021.

Fr. Ronald revealed in his person a culture of care (cura personalis) as he practiced his profession as a teacher. He cared for every one of his students. His care for the environment was seen in his love for gardening. He has left behind a legacy of green culture, especially during these pandemic days. Fr. Ronald was a man of wit and humour which would surface all of a sudden at table or at a meeting. Such humour kept everyone alert and cheerful.

Fr. Ronald was a man of God, a man of the Church and a man of commitment. He used to get up early and direct his steps to the chapel as a daily routine. He was simple, spiritual and systematic in his lifestyle. He was a voracious reader.

Fr. Ronald was a man of conscience, perhaps of a delicate conscience, which made him suffer in his life of commitment. In a world full of falsehood and deception, Fr. Ronald tried to live with an awakened conscience - a great ideal yes, but one which made him more sensitive, more scrupulous and more disturbed within. He was honest, transparent, and above all - a man of truth. Fr Ronald has left behind for us a legacy of an awakened conscience.

▮ Henry Saldanha, SJ





**Julian Fernandes, SJ**

Appointed provincial with no prior experience or training as religious superior, I had to make a conscious shift from management (I was college principal) to Ignatian spiritual governance.

In the hands-on learning experience, I discovered that discernment, the DNA of Ignatian governance,

embraced everything. Listening and observing, analyzing and praying: the new apostolic challenges to which we were not responding, our men's frustration with the status quo uncharacteristic of the Ignatian magis, their unhappiness over the prevailing negativity in communities, the desire to go where the need was greater, above all the urge to keep moving, not get stuck.

So I dared to dream a new direction the province must take, geographic as well as apostolic. When I articulated this dream during the province meet at the end of a year, the province men responded with a burst of enthusiasm they had not felt for years, a collective Ignatian consolation – and readiness to move to new, difficult areas of the province. I am amazed to find that the dream I had proposed then is a reality now. Not my merit: the Jesuits saw their own collective dream crystallized, and conditions created for its realization.



A superior is the 'sacrament' – the visible sign of the bond of unity around a shared vision, of spiritual and apostolic dynamism among his companions. He is also the screen on which his companions project their dreams, hopes, frustrations.”

This approach stood me in good stead all through my years in governance at various levels. Pray over the challenges of a constantly changing world which are also mirrored in the Jesuit companions' apostolic desires; crystallize them into a concrete vision; create the climate conducive for the brethren to realize that vision; and make ample space for their freedom and creativity. You risk making mistakes, but a bad decision in a new direction is better than getting stuck with smug satisfaction over the status quo. In the Ignatian dynamic, union of hearts and minds is the fruit of passion

for mission among the companions, rather than a pre-condition.

A superior is the 'sacrament' – the visible sign of the bond of unity around a shared vision, of spiritual and apostolic dynamism among his companions. He is also the screen on which his companions project their dreams, hopes, frustrations. They knew I was not perfect as I knew they were not perfect. Aware that as superior I did not have the monopoly of the Spirit, I had to listen to what the Spirit inspired in them. In the account of conscience, the companions' transparency to me called for my reciprocal transparency with them, regarding my plans for them and for the province. In this dialectic of trustful dialogue, I could draw the best out of them, as they helped draw the best out of me. A healthy balance between cura personalis and cura apostolica.

The bond of mutual respect and trust, even affection that I generally enjoyed with my companions, enabled me to take decisions for their life-mission. Tough decisions sometimes, but even the most vocal critics among them never criticized me. I am grateful for their understanding.

The author is Former Provincial of Karnataka Jesuit Province, Former President of the South Asian Jesuit Conference and Former General Assistant in Rome.

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**Sandesh Gonsalves, SJ**

On my decision to be Brother, instead of being ordained to the priesthood; there were Jesuits who told me that my decision to remain a brother would limit my leadership role in the Society.

I however, have another opinion to offer. What I have experienced, and wish every other Jesuit brother to experience is the feeling of being a team member. I am stressing this point because at meetings with other brothers, I have heard contrary views. Brothers have been sidelined because they are outspoken, or whose professional capabilities have been ignored because the Superior feels threatened by an 'over qualified' brother.

GC 36, has been unique in the sense that there is no special decree for brothers. All of us, priests and brothers work together towards the Mission of the Society. Superiors need to realize that the present day brother chooses to be a brother by personal conviction. He can study and is capable of leadership roles. The challenge is for the superior to rise above petty opinions and accept the brother as a team member. If the Superior insists on an old understanding of brother's roles, then the Mission of the Society suffers. I still state the fact that I have been blessed to be in communities where priests and brothers have come together to share responsibilities, irrespective of one's personal calling.



Brothers have been sidelined because they are outspoken, or whose professional capabilities have been ignored because the Superior feels threatened by an 'over qualified' brother.”

In JRS South Asia, our interventions are futile, if we as Jesuits are not able to practice the values of peace and reconciliation. A mission like JRS South Asia, offers a fertile ground for a collaborative type of interaction between the Superior and the subjects. In JRS, good practices are shared in order to replicate the model at other places.

My personal experience with various Superiors at JRS South Asia helps me to reflect on the constructive role they have played in my ongoing formation.

The sharing of the responsibility and trust not only amplifies the loving commitment among the Jesuits but also builds faith in the leadership.

The commitment towards the responsibility offered and faith in leadership provides freedom to the Jesuits to “row out into the deep” with absolute trust in Him.

The nature of work among the refugees and the vulnerability of the people served through JRS intervention increases the stress on the individual Jesuit. Without the constant accompaniment of the Jesuit by the Superior, the mission cannot be accomplished. Accompaniment is not only for spiritual gain, but also to ensure the professional development of the individual Jesuit.

Servant leadership has been an important characteristic of the Superiors I have had and have. The type of leadership qualities has helped not only in expansion of JRS South Asia service to the most vulnerable but also the ever-growing maturity among the Jesuits under their care.

The author is presently working in JRS Afghanistan, based in Kabul.

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# Engineer-turned Farmer harnesses Wind & Solar Energy



Frustrated by the erratic power supply, Gitaram Kadam built a windmill and a solar power plant in Maharashtra, to help irrigate farmlands in his village.

He bought a 12-acre land in the village to practise organic farming. His urge to invent came from constant helplessness with load shedding and unpredictable power cuts.

Gitaram decided to rely on his engineering skills and 26 years of experience in the field to bring about an innovative solution.

"I decided to build a windmill and set up a solar power plant, too. I learned that the winds were good between May and October, while in the remaining months the sunlight was strong." He decided to harness the power of two renewable energy sources and synchronise them.

"My American friend shared technical knowledge, and we worked together to source the building material. We bought magnets, copper and some steel parts, while we procured the wood and other components from the scrap market," he says. We roped in expertise of 22 students pursuing mechanical and electrical engineering for the task. The students from Aurangabad, Pune, Beed and Kolhapur underwent training for 10 days before working on the project. A week later, a windmill of 3 kw power at the cost of Rs 3.5 lakh was ready.

Two weeks later he set up a solar power plant of 2 kw, spending Rs 2.5 lakh. "The unique aspect of the plant is that there is no battery involved to store the energy. The windmill and solar plant directly deliver Alternate Current (AC) which directly powers appliances."

After synchronising the two technologies to perfection, Gitaram is now a satisfied, independent farmer. He grows fruits and vegetables, processes them and sells them for a better price.

Later Gitaram built six windmills for the farmers there. "We are currently testing them for efficiency, before seeking government subsidies for developing appropriate technology for these farmers."

The engineer quit his job in 2020 to create rural entrepreneurs. They could grow garlic, ginger, fenugreek, turmeric, coriander and moringa. These vegetables are dried and sold for added value.

He has empowered 450 women there to grow and dry vegetables as he has done. "They dry the vegetables up to 70 per cent as required by the companies, and earn 40 per cent more profits by selling them." he adds.

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*Adapted from TBI*

## THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

C. Joe Arun, SJ  
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# The Face of the Face-less



When attacked with acid she had just turned 19. The reason was that she was beautiful. A man in her village forced himself on her, stalking her for months. . Now she has a disfigured face and loss of vision. But today, at 31, she is a beacon of hope for women survivors of similar violence. Currently, Kavita Bisht from Uttarakhand teaches young differently-abled children at the USR Indu Samiti School.

On that fateful day, 2 February 2008, Kavita was at the bus stop early in the morning. She remembers the time very clearly, it was 5:15 am. Two men with their faces covered came on a bike, and one threw acid on her. Her face was completely disfigured. Till 2:30 pm that day, no hospital admitted her. When she was finally admitted, Kavita remained unconscious for six days. After treatment for months, by doctors attempting to salvage as much of her face as they could, she was told she would remain blind all her life. She was brought to her village only to be locked in her house for two years, in depression because of the trauma she was undergoing. However, she did not lose hope. She was determined to live and make others like her live happily.

She went on applying to institutions where she could train herself and acquire skills. Two years of perseverance opened doors to Drishtiheen Training School for the Blind, where she learnt that even the visually impaired can lead a life of happiness. Later, she took admission in the National Institute of Visually Handicapped in Dehradun where she underwent training in using computers, writing shorthand, and making candles and envelopes. Once her training was complete in 2012, she returned to Haldwani and started counselling and training women who were burn victims, in arts and crafts. From 2017, she has been teaching blind children in USR Indu Samiti School, Nainital. She says, "I have not lost my face. I really see my face in the faceless children and women to whom I teach crafts."

Kavita was recognised for her work and she received eighteen awards, including the Uttarakhand Rajya Mahila Puraskar, and was declared as Uttarakhand's ambassador for women in 2015. In 2016, she became the state icon for Uttarakhand, and in Gujarat, received an award under the *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* programme.