

November 2020

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA

Martyrdom and Jesuits of South Asia

A. T. Thomas



Thomas Gafney



Herman Rasschaert



Mathew Mannaparambil



James Kottayil



Stan Swamy

FOOTPRINTS

In Commemoration of All
Souls Day - 2nd November

Moving On

People enter our lives and just keep moving on
Will things remain the same after they are gone?
There's a void that others can't easily fill, until
Warming our hearts, the Spirit gives us a thrill.

Does sadness dispel joy and joy remove sadness?
Does darkness drive away light or light dispels darkness?
Or does a blend of the two create an awesome scene
One can only cherish with a heart love-filled, serene?

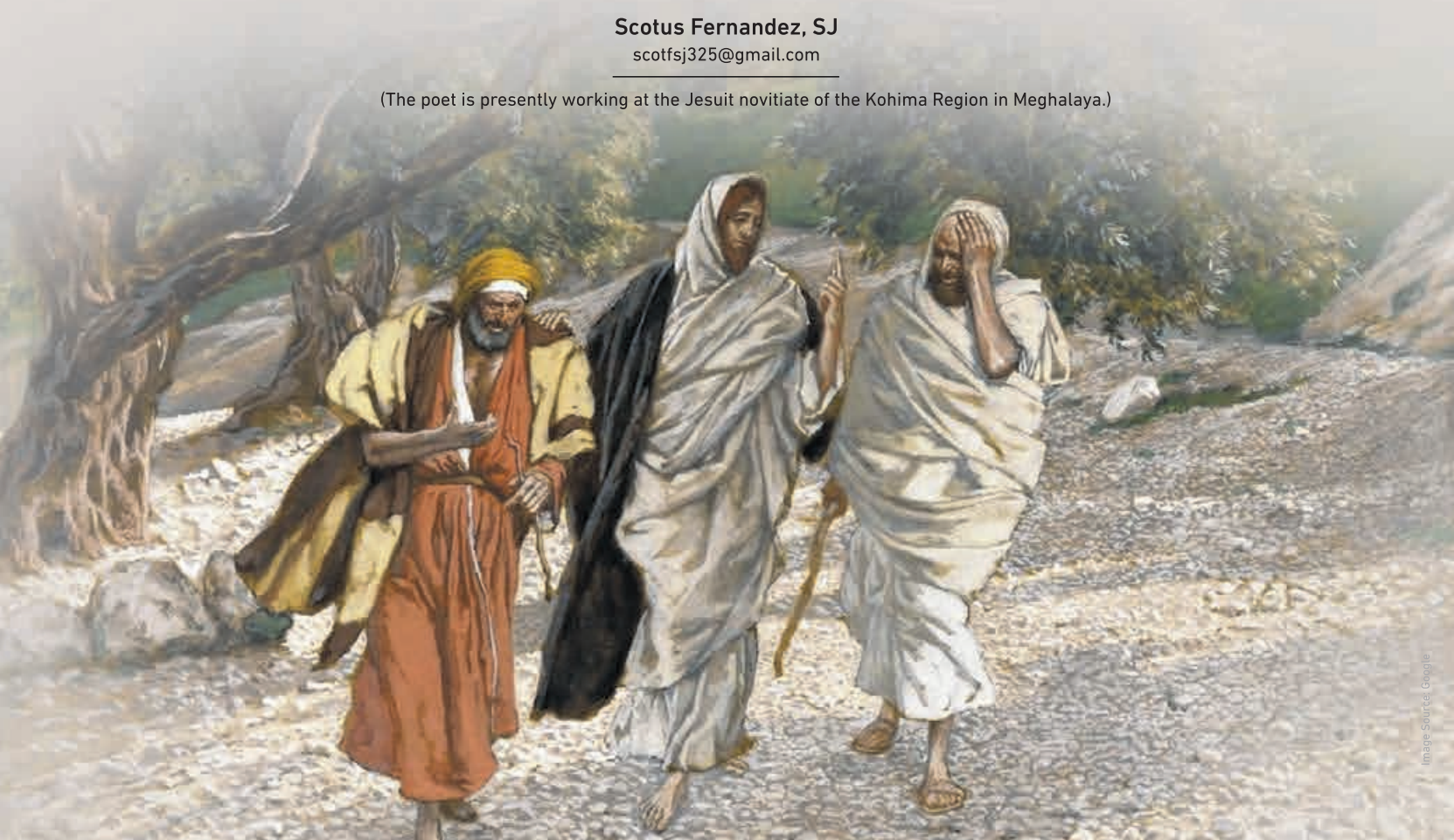
Yes, at times the Fifth Week beckons us
Not to linger on, but keep growing on and on
Till his warm loving embrace takes us in
To the treasures that hearts kept longing for long.

There's much to do here as we keep moving on
May we do it all so well that their glow will one day tell
Of what the Word made flesh in us did accomplish
And others gazing at it all will gently, softly cherish.

And so, linger not with regrets, move on with hope
Is what He told them on the way to Emmaus
And so we march on.


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(The poet is presently working at the Jesuit novitiate of the Kohima Region in Meghalaya.)



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November is the month of feasts of the Departed. All Saints day, All Souls day and particularly for the Jesuits, the day of all the Saints and Blessed of the Society of Jesus on 5th November. To commemorate these feasts in a meaningful way, JIVAN dedicates the issue to the heroic memories of the Jesuit Martyrs of South Asia. We thank Fr. Job Kozhamthadam, SJ for his editorial leadership in planning and procuring articles for this issue.

As a service of information for the South Asian Jesuit Assistancy, 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.



May our beloved world groping in the darkness cast upon by the pandemic, discover the light of new solutions and new way of life during Diwali, the Festival of Light.

JIVAN wishes all our staff, mission-partners, well-wishers and their families; an en-lightened DIWALI !!!

- Jivan Parivar



Thank you and Welcome!



Thank you, Dear Fr. George!

The President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia, Fr. George Pattery, SJ handed over the charge to the newly appointed President Fr. Jerome Stanislaus D'Souza, SJ on 10th October 2020. JIVAN joins the South Asian Conference in thanking the Lord for the gift of a dynamic leader in Fr. George Pattery. We express special gratitude to the outgoing President for his constant interest and appreciation for JIVAN and its TEAM. We particularly thank him for his insightful "POSA Speaks" every month. We wish every blessing upon him in his future Life and Mission.

Warm Welcome, Dear Fr. Stan!

JIVAN heartily welcomes the new President Fr. Jerome Stanislaus D'Souza, SJ and looks forward to a path-breaking journey of Jesuit communications under his experienced leadership. We wish every grace upon him in the new ministry of Governance of the South Asian Conference and assure him of our prayerful support.

JESWITS

| Trevor Miranda, SJ | miranda.trevor@gmail.com



Your prayers for martyrdom have been answered.
I'm appointing you as the next Provincial!!



He's considering himself a saint just because
he's living with a so-called martyr!!



I'm prepared for martyrdom Lord,
but can it be postponed a bit!



He's prayerfully making BBQ in memory
of the martyr, St. Lawrence!



POSA Speaks

STANY D' SOUZA, SJ

Amidst Crucial Signs of Time

I took up my mission as the POSA on 10 October, 2020, during the Eucharist with the Jor Bagh community.

Is this resort to simplicity, albeit enforced by the prevailing situation, unusual? Certainly not. It is quite in line with the several graced events in the Bible, which, despite having significance for a multitude of people, as a rule, are witnessed only by a few. When, for instance, Yahweh met Moses in the burning bush and commissioned him to liberate the Israelites, Moses was all alone. Similarly, many great men and women witnessed significant events in the salvation history, when they were alone or just a few. The message is clear. Our God is not a God of anonymous crowds. He chooses, anoints and commissions people individually and personally.

Covid 19 shows no signs of loosening its grip. In fact, the infection is spreading relentlessly. It did not spare us Jesuits as well. Many of our men have been infected and some have even succumbed. It was indeed a moment of great pain to see the way our dear departed were laid to rest, with so few mourners in attendance.

It is not only the pandemic. There is also a hostile socio-political context as well. One of our very own, Fr Stan Lourduwami, is now languishing in judicial custody, for standing with and working for the tribals in Jharkhand.

However, every crisis is an opportunity, a locus theologicus, a context to discern God's ways, an invitation to be the messengers as well as the message of faith, hope and love.

When the pandemic hit hard and the uncertainty prevailed all around, all, including us, were initially huddled in meaninglessness and hopelessness. However, suddenly there was a spurt of life. We became men of hope. Along with the multi-dimensional relief work, some of us responded to the pandemic intellectually through studies and articles. The beauty of our work is that we discerned and collaborated with the people of good will, government and non-government agencies.

Even for the liberation of Fr Stan and other warriors of human rights there is sudden support from all quarters. The human right activists and social thinkers, politicians and the Church personnel, all have come out in a big way to press for the release of Fr Stan.

Many say that the virus has come to reassert the essentials of life. So too the captivity of Fr Stan. They urge us to give primacy to all forms of life, and all stages of life from conception to death; promote creativity and collaboration in our mission, and keep the people especially the poor at the centre of discernment and decision-making. I am sure we will be able to read the signs of the times and creatively respond to them in collaboration with our friends and partners, especially the poor, to serve the mission of reconciliation and justice. We have our clear orientations in UAPs, don't we? Let us then walk the way and make a difference!



Editor's Desk

VINAYAK JADAV, SJ

A New India! Changing India!

Gone are the good days (Acche din!) when we could at least dream of 'freedom at midnight'. Sadly, the time has come to witness bondages in broad daylight!!

Today's India is changing with a definite plan! A Machiavellian (or Chanakyan) scheme is changing it instead of an earlier Gandhi-like dream. A hidden agenda is distorting its democratic fabric, rather than knitting it into a nation united in caste, class and creed. The change is not of its own accord, but through a well-deployed machinery let loose with vendetta after precise targets.

The Citizens' Amendment bill turned into act despite widespread outrage. Article 370 was revoked almost overnight with the power of numbers more than the strength of consensus. Privatizations carried out precisely amidst the public distractions of the Covid crisis. Farmers' bills passed cold bloodedly, despite the frantic pleas of the poor farmers. The noose around the NGOs (including Amnesty International) tightened by FCRA amendments. Hathras hushed up amidst the 'arrest' of the victims, not the culprits!! Bona fide human right advocates picked up one by one and detained – the last of them, being an 83-year-old Jesuit, Stan Swamy. The list goes on. All because dissent has no room.

Recently the innocent Tanishq advertisement with a 'jewel' of a message on communal harmony was pulled off the screens because it allegedly contained a plot of 'love jihad.' Woe to you, if you speak of peace and harmony! You are anti-national! Woe to you, if you speak of tribal rights, you are a Naxalite! Cursed be you, if you speak of women's dignity, you are a westerner! Cursed be you, if you speak of religious freedom, you are a proselytizer or a Jihadist. If you do not speak in favour, you are necessarily against – and therefore a 'Deshdrohi'. The national climate has seriously changed.

'You may win elections but we know to get power', is the new equation of electoral democracy. 'You may have boxes of votes but we have pots of money' is the joke mocking the legislative assemblies. Speak our language or shut up or else be ready for hand-cuffs!! The media is our newest pet! We make it tell everything else except what "the nation wants to know".

However, what the world wants to know and needs to know, was recently expressed categorically by the High Commissioner (Michelle Bachelet) of United Nations Human Rights, referring to the recent developments that are found to be shrinking the civic space in India: "Constructive criticism is the lifeblood of democracy. Even if the authorities find it uncomfortable, it should never be criminalized or outlawed in this way."

Our voices may be strangled, and our arms may be clamped, but our soul and spirit can never be shackled. For it is in the soul that truth dwells, and it is with spirit that freedom flies. A slogan from a street play wakes me up in the middle of the night:

Shayad hum gunge hai, lekin andhe nahi !
Tum lakh dabalo avazein,
par prashn to pucha jayega, prashn to pucha jayega!!!
We may be dumb, but we're not blind!
You may suppress our voices a million times,
but our questions will be raised, will still be raised.

Therefore, India asks today ('Puchta hai Bharat'): Is this the 'Badalta Bharat' (Changing India) and 'Naya Bharat' (New India) of our dreams? – or have we woken up into a nightmare?



Martyrdom and Jesuits of South Asia

A few years ago, just after I had given a quick rundown of the many international honours the Jesuit scientists have achieved for their accomplishments – 35 lunar craters, 11 asteroids, the first credited scientific discovery in India, more than 80 species of plants in India, etc., etc., named after Jesuits – one of the many provincials in the group commented to me: “If this were the case of any other group, how much publicity they would have made of it!” Very true; we Jesuits are poor at such public relations! Most of the members of my audience were hearing these things about Jesuit scientists for the first time! Equally, if not more, significant is the large number of holy martyrs the Society has given to the Church and the world. Ever since 1540 when the Society of Jesus was founded, there has been an uninterrupted stream of Jesuit martyrs

from practically all corners of the globe, including our own India. Many of these heroic men also remain relatively unknown and un-remembered.

In this November issue, Jivan is bringing out 5 such Jesuits from the South Asian Assistancy, who in recent times sacrificed their lives for the Gospel principles they believed in and the Jesuit values they lived for. I have chosen these 5 mainly because I knew all of them personally, and they achieved the palm of martyrdom just recently, during the past 56 years.

Martyrs – A Breed of Paradoxes

A martyr originally meant a witness – witness to the ideals and values he/she lived for. Their witnessing is the most

powerful affirmation of the ideals and values they stand for, because in this case the affirmation is not in terms of what they have, but in terms of what they are – their very lives. That is why all consider martyrs so powerful and effective. Having a martyr for a cause, gives it special credibility and acceptability. Powerful institutions in the world make sure that their opponents don’t become martyrs. We had a striking display of this policy recently when the Americans gave Osama bin Laden a watery burial in the vast, open, deep ocean, thereby ensuring that he would not easily be made a martyr.

Punished for Doing the Right Thing

Martyrs are a very special breed of leaders. For the secular world they are a



Photo: International Fellowship of Evangelical Students

contradiction or at least a paradox. For one thing, martyrs are punished and given the severest punishment – death – not because they did the wrong thing, but precisely because they did the right thing. We have a magnificent illustration of this paradox in the words of the Good Thief who was crucified by the side of the supreme Martyr of all times: “We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” (Lk 23: 41).

The 5 martyrs in this issue of Jivan bear this out. None of them was found doing anything wrong in any sense. A.T. Thomas was “punished” for liberating the oppressed and the exploited. Fr. Tom Gafney was martyred for his prophetic stand against corruption and drug-trafficking. The Servant of God Fr. Rasschaert was martyred for being

a messenger of peace and harmony. Fr. Mathew Mannaparambil was martyred for expecting honesty and integrity from the “employees.” Fr. James Kottayil was martyred for liberating the poor from moneylenders and bonded-labour.

Transform Defeat into Victory

Another contradiction or paradox in the case of martyrs is that they transform what seems to be a defeat into an incomparable victory. No martyrdom goes in vain. Each martyr or martyrdom is a forward thrust to the cause espoused by him/her. Whenever I had the opportunity to pass before St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican, a thought used to haunt me again and again. Tradition tells us that the spot where this magnificent basilica stands is the very spot where

St. Peter the Apostle was crucified head down. What were the thoughts of his executioners? “Yes, we have finished Simon Peter once and for all. Never will he raise his head again,” they boasted. History tells us that exactly the opposite is what happened. The majestic, imposing basilica stands as a most powerful reminder to the whole world of the greatness of Peter. His persecutors? Their memory has been wiped out of history once and for all!

Appear Weak, but Powerful in Reality

A third paradox about martyrs is that they appear to be weak and helpless, especially to the secular world, but in reality they are most powerful and effective. St. Paul’s words to the Corinthians is very real in the case of



A T Thomas



Thomas Gafney



Herman Rasschaert



Mathew Mannamparambil



James Kottayil

martyrs: “For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

(2 Corinthians 12:10). I have always pointed out in my writings and public presentations that the Catholic Church was strongest in the first 3 centuries of its history – “The Age of Martyrs.” During this period the Church had no means at all to take on the mighty Roman Empire. But the glorious martyrs were winning all the time. At the end of the age of persecution and martyrdom, the Catholic Church had total victory – in 380 CE, Christianity was declared the official religion of the Roman Empire! Indeed, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

Transform Ideal into Real

Another remarkable feature of martyrs is that they make the ideal real – what remains a mere, abstract ideal is transformed into a part of the reality of life. Their life teaches us that these great and sublime ideals need not remain merely in the world of ideals; they can be brought to our earth and everyday life. Of course, one needs a martyr’s courage and commitment to carry this out; but the point is that it can be done. Take the case of our martyr A.T. Thomas. “Denounce the oppressor!” is the ideal all Jesuits endorse wholeheartedly. But the heavy price such denunciation involves inhibits most, if not all, of us. Not so in the case of AT. He dared to speak out, and he did not hesitate to pay the price. The developments that followed bear witness that his courage, commitment and self-sacrifice did not go in vain. Today the village of Karanpura, his karmbhumi, is no more what it used to be. The villagers have been awakened, they have been emboldened to assert their rights and demand justice, they have grown in every way. There will be no going back. There is good reason to believe that the nearby villages also will follow suit. Indeed, AT’s self-sacrifice has been the dawn of a new era for the underdeveloped, jungle regions of Hazaribagh.

Give Credibility to the Ideals and Values

As mentioned already, martyrs give credibility and authenticity to the ideals and values they stand for. When people witness that well-informed, intelligent and upright persons are ready to give their life for these principles, naturally they reason that there must be something precious and salubrious in these ideals and values, and they are motivated and encouraged to make these values their own. When more and more people do that, we have the ushering in of a new and

better world. Fr. Rasschaert’s martyrdom is a beautiful illustration of this fact. He indeed was a messenger of peace and harmony, and sacrificed his life on the altar of being a peacemaker. Most people will shy away from such situations on the plea that it is not their duty, and, even more, it is dangerous. Not so Fr. Rasschaert. He was a firm believer in the Beatitudes: “Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons and daughters of God.” He got involved. It cost him his life, but not in vain. His self-sacrifice transformed the whole situation. Soon the government authorities got into action and the “law of the jungle” was stopped. The same can be said of the martyrdom of Fr. Tom Gafney in Nepal. His prophetic stand and courageous denunciation of corruption and drug-trafficking rampant in Nepal, which was ruining the youth in the nation, cost him his precious life. But it brought to the attention of the whole nation the terrible menace that was destroying the present and future of the nation, and slowly appropriate action was taken. Something similar happened in the case of Fr. Mathew Mannamparambil in Sasaram also. Real injustice was being done to both the donors and recipients of the assistance that came from the generous benefactors of Fr. Joe Mann because several selfish, malicious and cunning “employees” of the mission were squandering the money away in lavish and luxurious living. Fr. Mathew correctly saw through their game and took appropriate action. That cost him his life, but his self-sacrifice served to uphold the values of honesty and integrity.

Conclusion

Today we often hear that our world is deteriorating on all fronts. However, my studied observation is that all this rot and corruption were present in the past too, but they were hidden away, and the media then was subdued and less aggressive. My many experiences in many parts of the world tell me that our world is slightly better than what it was 60 years ago. My rather optimistic perception tells me that this progress, despite all odds, has come about because of courageous and selfless martyrs like A.T., Gafney, Rasschaert, Mathew, James, and many others not discussed in this issue. I bow my head in admiration and gratitude to these great persons. May their tribe increase and multiply!

The author is currently Director of IISR (Indian Institute of Science and Religion) Delhi and Professor Emeritus of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune.

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Photo: Communication Hub, JCSA

Let us together make a difference

Hearty Congratulations, Fr. Stany, on being appointed the President of JCSA. As you assume this important responsibility, what are your first feelings, rather your consolations and/or desolations?

Thank you very much. I have mixed feelings. On the one hand I am overwhelmed by gratitude to the Lord and to the Society for reposing so much trust in me. On the other, I am anxious as the load is heavy for my young shoulders and it has become heavier in the uncertain and hostile context due to the pandemic and the current socio-political situation.

However, in addition to feelings, you have also mentioned consolations and desolations. Frankly, I am in consolation

amidst trepidation, because I am not alone, the Lord is with me. He will surely accompany me while fulfilling His mission for me. I trust my fellow Jesuits, as well, a band of 'spirited men'. They will support me and collaborate with me as I embark on the mission of the Society. I am sure, with the grace of God and the assistance of the people of good will, I can contribute my wee bit to this mission.

What do you understand the job of POSA in general is, and what exactly is your role vis a vis the JCSA?

It is a dual responsibility. As Provincial, I will have the responsibility for the Cura Personalis and Cura Apostolica of the men and ministries under my care, and as President, planning and coordinating the activities of JCSA.

Well, my job has become relatively easy for many reasons: first, we have orientations thanks to the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) and Conference Apostolic Preferences (CAPs). Second, my predecessor, Fr George Pattery, has done a commendable work in galvanizing our men with a Conference sense. Third of course, are the REGAE I & II. They have awakened in us the universal dimension of our vocation, have instilled in us the skills of spiritual conversation and have deepened the desire for collaboration at every level to serve the Lord and His people in South Asia.

To be specific, as the POSA, my job is to discern concrete pathways to love, live and work on the UAPs and CAPs. The JCSA, as a body, was fully involved in discerning and formulating them. Now I will have to ensure that we, together, translate them into concrete, measurable actions. My experience with the JCSA has been extremely positive, proactive and productive. I am sure, we can make South Asia a creative and constructive body of Jesuits.

What according to you are the major strengths and limitations of the JCSA today?

Our strength is certainly our men. Not only numbers but the relative youth. Hence, the conference is energetic and enthusiastic. Despite all constraints, many young men join us, and keep us young in our service. An additional strength is their variety of backgrounds and multiple experiences and expertise. Very few conferences can boast of such a rich multi-culturality. It certainly brings in manifold perspectives and pathways for the mission. Thirdly, our multi-religious milieu. If we are open and are ready to dialogue, we can be richer in our perspectives and contributions. Finally, we have many poor and young people with us. They have a way to teach us as to where and how to discover and serve the Lord.

Our limitation is that we have not sufficiently exploited our strength. We need to raise many world-class Jesuits among our young people. We need to give them more opportunities and challenges to give signal service. We have to find ways and means to make them more responsible for their own growth and thus work effectively for the mission of the Society. We need to grow in our familiarity with our land and people, cultures and religions. Of course, thanks to our forefathers, we Jesuits, are not considered totally alien, but still, we need to be familiar with and regularly dialogue with them so that we may introduce their rich insights in our discernment. Some time ago, the JCSA reflected on our life and mission and articulated some latent viruses. I think we need to attend to them, otherwise, they may become cancerous and spread like the coronavirus and destroy us from within.

What specific role would you wish the South Asian Conference can and should play in the Universal Society today especially in the challenging context of the UAPs and the Post-Corona “new normal”?

With our sheer numbers and multiple experiences and perspectives, we should be able to play a role in the ‘new normal’. However, to play any role in the Universal Society, first, we need to be familiar with our sources and heritage. Any reflection in the Society proceeds from this standpoint. Second, we need to be familiar with the multi-dimensional culture of South Asia. It will help us make our unique contribution to the discussions and discernment at the universal level. Third, we need to imbibe and internalise the unique character of the Society – intellectual dimension in all ministries and intellectual ministry in particular. At times, our presence is not sufficiently felt in this dimension. For instance, I have come across very few articles from ours providing an intellectual reflection on and response to the Pandemic. I think South Asia needs to grow in this dimension of our identity and mission. The UAPs and the post corona world have, in a way, shown us the wonderful opportunity. We have to be open and generous, recommitting ourselves with renewed ways, to this our world, where a majority of people are basically spiritual, poor, young and eco-sensitive.

You have experienced Governance in the Society of Jesus as the Provincial of Karnataka. What are your hopes and fears about Governance in the Society of Jesus especially in the 21st Century?

Governance in the Society is always personal, spiritual and apostolic. This is our strength. Governance is discernment by keeping the person and the mission at the centre. It

implies that we need time to prayerfully consider an issue. However, today there are pressures of all kinds from within and without to seek quick solutions. We need patience, perseverance and prayer to discern well.

The important aspect of governance in the Society, is the account of conscience. It is a time-tested means to commission someone. Today quite a few Jesuits find it difficult to give an account of their faith journey to their superior with utmost trust. There may be problems from both sides. A lot of conversation and gossip takes place outside this privileged forum. However, without a sincere and trustful dialogue we may not be able to govern well.

GC 36 emphatically stated: discernment, collaboration and networking offer three important perspectives on our contemporary way of proceeding. It is an important insight. In fact, this has been the tradition in the Society. The discernment



The discernment process in the Society concludes with the discernment and decision of the superior. Today, there are threats to this. On the one hand there are demands for a totally “democratic” way of decision-making, and on the other, superiors may be afraid to stand alone and take discerned decisions.”



Image Source : jcsaweb.org



We prepare men and plan our resources only for our Provinces. I too am guilty of this. We should generously and joyfully send our men and money where there is greater need. We also need to get over our narrow loyalties based on language, tribe and caste, and think and feel more and more as members of the universal Society with a universal mission.”

process in the Society concludes with the discernment and decision of the superior. Today, there are threats to this. On the one hand there are demands for a totally “democratic” way of decision-making, and on the other, superiors may be afraid to stand alone and take discerned decisions.

Similarly, collaboration and networking were always key to the Society’s mission. Jesuits from different nationalities worked together in different parts of the globe. However, due to various reasons ‘provincialism’ is quite strong in us. We prepare men and plan our resources only for our Provinces. I too am guilty of this. We should generously and joyfully send our men and money where there is greater need. We also need to get over our narrow loyalties based on language, tribe and caste, and think and feel more and more as members of the universal Society with a universal mission.

The pandemic has opened new perspectives, priorities and preferences, especially the value of life, importance of creativity and emphasis on collaboration. Many lay people have adopted new ways of living. The Society has always been pioneering. Our men down the centuries have walked untrodden paths with imagination and creativity. The ‘new normal’ has placed before us a call to read the signs of the times anew and collaborate with our friends and partners, especially the poor, to serve the mission of reconciliation and justice.

Any specific dreams for the formation of the scholastics, as the common houses of Formation will directly come under you now?

Surely, I have a few dreams: We are good men and do a lot of good work. However, although we are a huge conference, we are not noticed much beyond the conference. In this context we need to be imaginative, innovative and inventive about our regular and ongoing formation so that we form great men with great dreams and great possibilities.

As I said earlier, our strength is our men. To make them resourceful, along with formal formation we need to help them take responsibility for their self-formation. If our formees fail to take responsibility for their growth, which includes all dimensions of their personality, we fail somewhere. Once again, gratefully remembering Fr Adolfo Nicolas, let us stress on intellectual aliveness, emotional integration and spiritual depth!

We also need to pay attention to our Faculties, where excellent teaching is going on by highly competent men. But it seems to me that these faculties need to be more than mere teaching faculties. Our formators need to devise innovative methods, pursue refresher programmes, and have opportunities to do research and write solid articles.

No matter how good the formation, if we do not have a conducive atmosphere - formative communities and apostolic works - formation will be rendered futile. In this context, the well discerned UAPs and CAPs are useful. They will give future orientations for our life and mission.

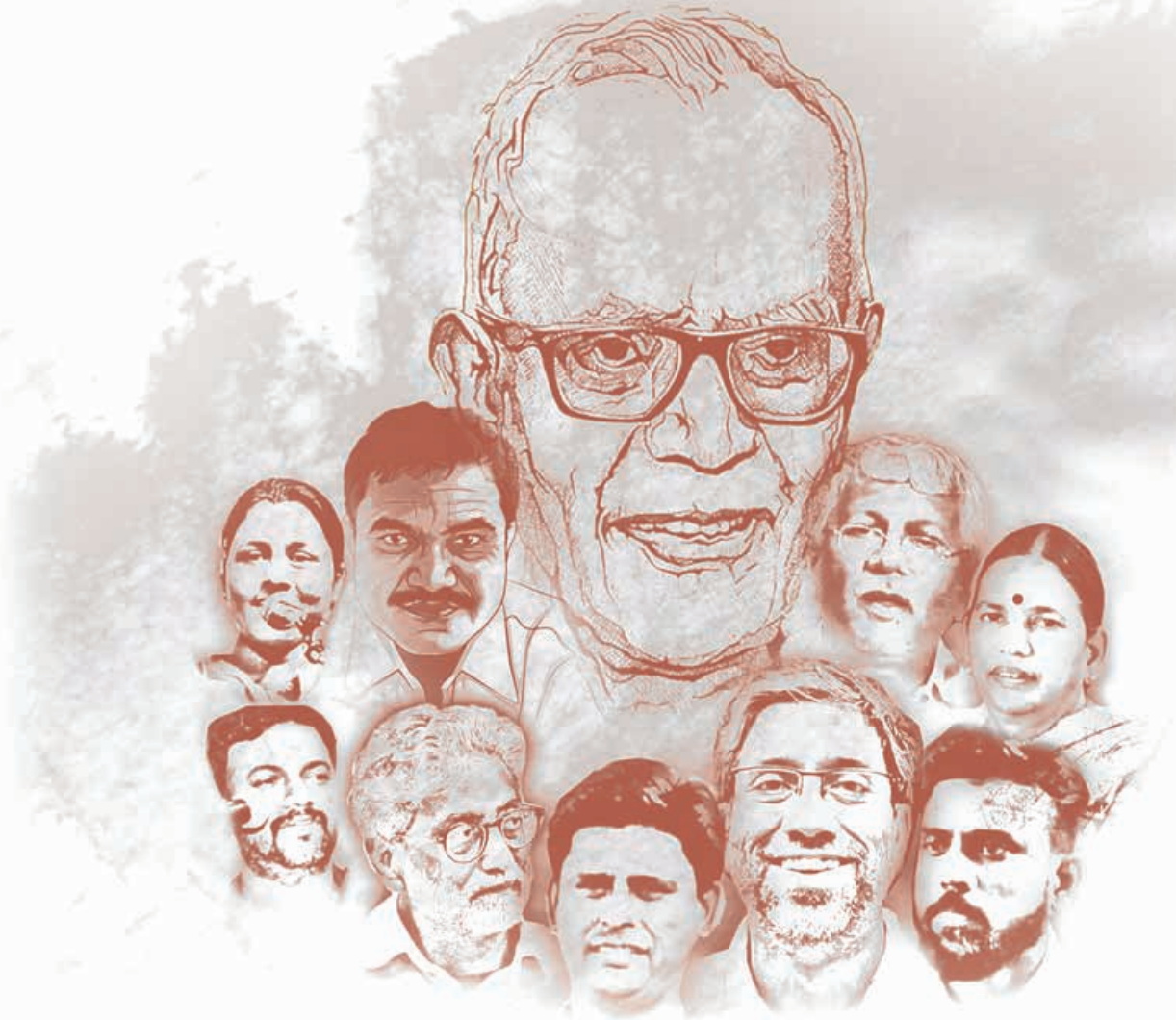
In other words, my dream is simple. I want our men to be great and do great works, give signal service to the Lord and His people. However, I do not have concrete pathways. Hence, I will surely sit with the Major Superiors and formation coordinators, formators and formees and explore and evolve a methodology to form men of availability and mobility for mission.

As you will be leading the more than four thousand Jesuits of the South Asian Conference, what is the message you wish to share with them?

My message is quite simple. We are good and we are doing good work. Let us be better and make a difference within and outside South Asia.



Image Source: jcsaweb.org



Contemplation in Political Action

We live today in cataclysmic times! If one goes by the experience of the last couple of years, and particularly since the pandemic COVID-19 gripped the world, one realises there is not much positive happening anywhere. The pandemic has taken a toll: millions are affected, many have succumbed. Climatic changes have overwhelmed the earth and with untold suffering to millions of poor and marginalised people. Modern-day tragedies are compounded with a serious lack of political will to address endemic issues. Several nations are economically in doldrums; xenophobia and exclusivism are on the rise; discrimination, divisiveness and violence are mainstreamed. The US-based think tank 'Freedom House' in

a recent report says, "Democracy and pluralism are under assault. Dictators are toiling to stamp out the last vestiges of domestic dissent and spread their harmful influence to new corners of the world. At the same time, many freely elected leaders are dramatically narrowing their concerns to a blinkered interpretation of the national interest. In fact, such leaders—including the chief executives of the United States and India, the world's two largest democracies—are increasingly willing to break down institutional safeguards and disregard the rights of critics and minorities as they pursue their populist agendas". There is a desperate cry being heard everywhere, 'let me breathe'.

That courage to allow others to breathe the fresh air of freedom, justice, equality dignity and fraternity – is not easy today. It calls for a governance which is compassionate, attuned to the aspirations of the people, particularly those who live on the peripheries. It calls for good politics; what Pope Francis says in 'Fratelli Tutti', "what is needed is a politics which is far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspects of the crisis".

Just before Pope Francis released his path-breaking Encyclical, the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, made public an incisive document 'Contemplation and Political Action: An Ignatian Guide to Civic Engagement'. "The document is a reflection on how our faith and Ignatian values might guide our pursuit of the common good in the public square" says Fr. Timothy Kesicki, President of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States. In his introduction to the document Fr Kesicki refers to a major 1973 speech of the then Superior General Fr Pedro Arrupe, to the alumni of Jesuit Schools, "Fr. Arrupe's speech, in the tradition of the biblical prophets who criticized their own communities when they weren't living up to their values, called out Jesuit schools for not adequately preparing their students for the work of social justice. That message undoubtedly made some people uncomfortable. "Have we Jesuits educated you for justice? You and I know what many of your Jesuit teachers will answer to that question. They will answer, in all sincerity and humility: No, we have not," Fr. Arrupe said. "What does this mean? It means that we have work ahead of us."

It would be difficult work, Fr. Arrupe continued, but we have the tools to do it — tools still accessible to us today, as we continue to pursue justice in our own era. We have the Ignatian tradition of "constantly seeking the will of God," discerning how God might be calling all of us to respond to the signs of the times. "Men and women for others" are therefore marked by a willingness to pay attention to the injustices around us and to develop a "firm resolve to be agents of change in society; not merely resisting unjust structures and arrangements, but actively undertaking to reform them."

The 20-page document is an excellent practical guide for meaningful political action. It embraces every section of the Ignatian family; in fact, anyone who sees the need for justice, inclusivity, truth and compassion in the politics of today. It takes its cue from the countercultural message of Pope Francis in a 2013 homily, "Good Catholics meddle in politics, offering the best of themselves, so that those who govern can govern. Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good. I cannot wash my hands, eh? We all have to give something!"

One Jesuit, in recent times, who has taken Fr Arrupe's faith-justice vision and Pope Francis' call 'to meddle in politics' seriously is Fr Stan Swamy, who for years has worked among the Adivasis, in Jharkhand and elsewhere, accompanying them in their quest for a more just and dignified society, with their legitimate rights respected. On 8th October, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) arrested this 83-year old Jesuit from his Ranchi residence; the following day he was imprisoned in the Taloja jail near Mumbai. The charges against him 'speak' about his connection with some 'extremist' organisations and of his involvement in the Bhima-Koregaon violence of January 2018. Fr Stan vehemently denies both charges.

Fr Stan has for several years been empowering the Adivasis. He has struggled alongside with them on issues related to the violation of laws in acquiring land for mega projects for mining and infrastructural development which flout the rights of the downtrodden and tribals. He has been consistently raising his voice in democratic, legitimate ways against the state-sponsored violations of laws and assault on democratic rights of people aimed

at paving the way for unrestricted exploitation of land and natural resources. He has questioned the non-implementation of the 5th Schedule of the Constitution, why the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act [PESA], has been ignored. He has expressed disappointment at the silence of the Government on Samatha Judgment, 1997 of the Supreme Court; he has raised his voice at the half-hearted action of the Government on Forest Rights Act, 2006. He has expressed his apprehension at the recently enacted Amendment to 'Land Acquisition Act 2013' by the Jharkhand government which sounds a death-knell for the Adivasi Community. He has strongly disagreed with

the setting up of 'Land Bank' which he sees as the most recent plot to annihilate the Adivasis. He has challenged the indiscriminate arrest of three thousand young Adivasis under the label of 'naxals' just because they question and resist unjust land-alienation and displacement.

Fr Stan today epitomises the spirit and the verve of the quintessential Jesuit who has embraced the faith justice mandate unconditionally. As he continues to languish in a prison with sparse facilities, he has become a motivating factor to Jesuits and others everywhere to get out of their comfort zones, institutionalised lifestyles and cosmetic band-aid approaches to the grim realities which our people face today! With him in jail, are fifteen other human rights defenders who have been vocal and visible in standing up for the rights of the poor. Fr Stan walks the talk, lives tangibly the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) of the Society of Jesus. There are other Jesuits who have also understood the meaning of being a contemplative in political action. One of

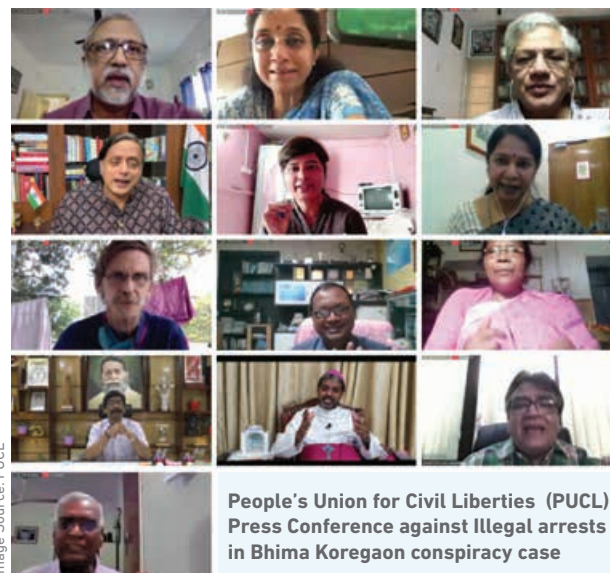


Image Source: PUCL

them was Rutilio Grande who inspired the likes of St. Oscar Romero. Presiding at the funeral Mass in March 1977 of his dear friend Rutlio, the then Archbishop of San Salvador said, “The government should not consider a priest who takes a stand for social justice as a politician or a subversive element when he is fulfilling his mission in the politics of the common good. Anyone who attacks one of my priests, attacks me. If they killed Rutilio for doing what he did, then I too have to walk the same path”.

In ‘Fratelli Tutti’, Pope Francis challenges the disciples of Jesus to be authentic witnesses in a world which is becoming more fragmented and dehumanized. He says, “for these reasons, the Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, does not restrict her mission to the private sphere. On the contrary, “she cannot and must not remain on the side-lines” in the building of a better world, or fail to “reawaken the spiritual energy” that can contribute to the betterment of society. It is true that religious ministers must not engage in the party politics that are the proper domain of the laity, but neither can they renounce the political dimension of life itself, which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development....The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother”. And in imitation of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, “we want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation” (#276)

‘Contemplation and Political Action’ concludes, “Our mission of reconciliation and justice, articulated by the UAPs, calls us to practice our faith in the public sphere. Here are four key themes that express our distinctively Ignatian way of carrying this out:

1. Our political action emerges from discerning how Christ is already active in the world and cooperating with his saving work, as opposed to acting out of our own limited ideologies.
2. Listening is at the heart of civic engagement — listening to the marginalized, the young, those we don’t agree with, the cry of the Earth. True listening is detached from our own preconceptions and prejudices.
3. Kinship and accompaniment with those on the peripheries require including their own voices at the centre of our civic engagement.
4. Without a life of prayer and spiritual practice, our civic engagement would lack the grounding that makes it Christian.

We hope this chance to reflect on how our Catholic, Ignatian values might influence our political participation will spark thoughtful conversation and action throughout the Society of Jesus and the broad Ignatian family”.

Today, the ordinary citizen of India- particularly, the Adivasis, Dalits, minorities, women and children, the poor and the unemployed, the vulnerable and the excluded –are subject to many injustices. In ‘Caritas in Veritate’, Pope Benedict XVI states, “Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love — caritas — is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace.” Fr Stan actualized this challenge! The Society of Jesus in South Asia desperately needs prophets like him today, endowed with the vision and mission of Jesus, who get out of their comfort zones and are not afraid to speak truth to power; who are truly contemplatives who engage in political action. Do we have the faith and courage to live that prophetic challenge today?

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Hope of the People

(dedicated to Fr. Stan Swamy)

You may send me behind bars
With your bitter and fabricated lies
You may kill me physically
With your guns and powers
But you can’t kill my spirit
Nor the seeds I’ve sown

What causes you to be so fearful, my dear?

Is it my trembling voice

Or my feeble body?

Is my honesty

Or my stand for truth?

What are you afraid of, my dear?

Leaving behind my country I came

Not for comfort nor for power

But to be the voice for the suppressed voice

To stand against the injustice

To be with the most cornered people

To fight with the mighty to bring justice

Does my truth cause you to tremble?

Then, I’ll speak even more for my people

Does my stand with the weak upset you?

Then, I’ll firmly hold my stand with them

Does my voice for the voiceless palpitate you?

Then, it will increase even if I am no more

I am not a caged bird

To be dead behind the bars

I am phoenix, I’ll rise again

With more vigour and spirit

To be with my people

Because I’m the hope of my people

■ Sch. Pravin Jose, SJ



Blessed Emilio Moscoso, SJ

First Martyr of Ecuador

Emilio Moscoso (1846-1897) was beatified in his birthplace Riobamba, Ecuador, on November 16, 2019. His feast-day is on 21st November, together with Blessed Miguel Agustin Pro.

Emilio Moscoso was born in Cuenca, Ecuador, on April 21, 1846, of a pious Catholic family of 13 children. While studying Law at the University of Cuenca, he felt the call to religious life. In 1864, at the age of 18, he was accepted into the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in Cuenca. After completing his Jesuit training, Moscoso was ordained a priest in 1876 and was sent for tertianship to Manresa. The Jesuits of Ecuador were at that time a "mission" dependent on the Province of Castile in Spain.

Returning to the Americas, Moscoso was missioned to Lima, Peru, where he worked both in the Society's residence and in the Colegio de la Inmaculada. In 1882 he was transferred to Quito. In 1889 he was assigned again to Riobamba, where he worked at St. Philip Neri College as minister of the community, spiritual director, professor of logic and metaphysics, and director of the Apostleship of Prayer. In 1893 he was named rector of the college and superior of the community. He was greatly appreciated for his kindness and magnanimity.

In 1895, Eloy Alfaro, general commander of the Army, took control of the country, and spearheaded the Liberal Revolution in Ecuador. The regime passed a legislation restricting the Catholic Church. A new era began in the country. Ecuadorian Jesuits were at the front lines in the defence of the Church. In 1896, the regime imposed harsh conditions on religion; it openly persecuted the Redemptorists and the Jesuits working in Riobamba. Moscoso and his companions, in the spirit of the Magis, intensified their resolve to serve the youth of the city.

On May 2, 1897, the Alfarista army officials placed the Jesuits of the college under arrest. Moscoso was away at that time, and he could have made good his escape. However, given his magnanimous nature, he wanted to express his solidarity with his brothers, notwithstanding the abuse, exile and even death that awaited them. He abandoned all rationalizations of being able to help them from a place of safety. Taking a compassionate approach, he felt that his physical presence

was needed to support them in the crisis. The Jesuits were then transferred to the prison and threatened with expulsion.

In the midst of so much tension and distress in the prison, the Jesuits observed that Moscoso was more than serene and peaceful. There was a certain happiness that was



Photo Courtesy: Hedwig Lewis, SJ

evident despite the harsh conditions of that imprisonment, which strongly contrasted with his usual way of acting – his reserved and shy manner was altered by one of joyful anticipation of an upcoming grace-filled event. This perhaps reflected a personal manifestation of his intimate spiritual world to which he was transported in the hours before his imminent martyrdom.

At early dawn on May 4th, a group called "the Constitutionalists" – a band of rebels opposing Alfaro, who had sneaked into the college terrace overlooking the barracks in the dead of night, opened fire on the soldiers below. The soldiers retaliated with fierce vengeance. They broke down the church door and easily entered the college. They killed the twenty or so attackers. They proceeded to Fathers' quarters and barged into the Rector's room. They found Moscoso kneeling at his desk with the rosary in his hand. They killed him at point-blank range, with three distinct rifle and revolver shots in the head and chest. Then they placed the bleeding corpse in a chair and put a rifle in his hands to make it appear that he had killed himself.

They then made their way into the church, destroying everything in sight. In the church they killed or apprehended the construction

workers who were hiding there. They vandalized the sanctuary. They tore off the tabernacle door, took the consecrated hosts out of the ciborium, ate them and drank wine from the chalice, and committed inconceivable sacrilegious acts for several hours.

Next, they decided to attack the other Jesuits who were lodged in another part of the college and were unaware of the scene at the church. The soldiers dragged the Jesuits out of the chapel and their rooms, beat them up severely, bound their bruised bodies with cords and herded them to the prison. After a fortnight in prison, the Jesuits returned to the college, and had to yield to the petitions and pleadings of the families to open the classes again in order to complete the scholastic year.

The Postulator to the cause for the beatification, Fr. Jose Benetiz, described Moscoso as being "serene, simple, kind, humble; he gave the impression of being shy; attentive and helpful; he always manifested true faithfulness to his obligations." These qualities were his trademark throughout his life and would become even more evident in the tragic events preceding his martyrdom.

The author's books include "Profiles in Holiness: Brief Biographies of Jesuit Saints" and "Jesuit Saints without Paint".

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St. John Berchmans

As a rose dances in the gentle breeze,
You arose with God's blessings and grace.
Kindness took flesh in your heart,
Being brave and open was your natural art.

So soft is your praying heart,
So strong are your pilgrim feet.
Found your call in God's light,
Lived your life with great delight.

Stay with us as we make our way,
Sing with us your awesome say:
If I don't become a saint when I am young
I shall never be one.

■ Sch. Arockia Pradeep, SJ



Konkur entrance exam mock test in Bamiyan (Afghanistan)

Courtesy: Louie Albert, SJ

JRS-South Asia 40 years of Accompaniment

As Jesuit Refugee Service enters into 40 years of existence in November 14, 2020, it is not a time to triumphantly celebrate its achievements but to trace out God's footprints and His providential accompaniment with refugees, members of JRS, religious, supporters, volunteers, and people of goodwill. JRS was founded on November 14th, 1980, by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, the then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, to respond to the needs of the 'Boat People'. In India, JRS began its operations in 1984 in an unstructured way. In the early 1990s, JRS set up its South Asian office in ISI, Bangalore. Under dynamic leadership of Fr. Louis Pragash, the then RD, JRS shifted its head office in 2011 to ISI, Delhi, in order to give greater impetus on networking with international agencies like UNHCR, and visibility to the urban refugees.

Milestones of JRS in South Asia

Sri Lanka

The birth of JRS in the decades-long conflict-ridden Sri Lanka, was connected with Fr. Arrupe's incapacitation. Although almost paralysed, Fr. Arrupe asked the question to Fr. Mark Raper, then Director of the JRS in Asia Pacific, by unsteadily drawing a map of India, then the droplet shape of the island next to it, as to what was the involvement of JRS. Through the support of the Sri Lankan Jesuit Province, JRS got involved in a modest way in the 1980's. Local Jesuits and collaborators took part in relief operations and emergency support. The mission in the war affected area responded to the needs of people from relief to rehabilitation and then rebuilding their lives through capacity-building programs. Developing self-reliance, resilience,

cultivating the capacity of individuals and the communities were the cornerstones of the JRS strategic programs for the war-torn people. When the war against the so-called rebel group was over in 2009, amounting to huge human casualties and gross human rights violations, JRS handed over the mission to the Jesuit Sri Lankan Province, after deliberation and discernment in January 2017.

Bhutanese Refugee Service, JRS-Caritas Nepal

With the 'one nation one people' malicious and bigoted policy of the Bhutanese government, hundreds of the ethnic Nepalese minority, who were citizens of Bhutan for many years, became stateless overnight. Systematic violence, brutal attacks on the properties, rape and torture, accompanied the forceful elimination of the minority community. Caritas Nepal responded to the cries of the people, and began its relief and recovery operations in 1992. Caritas Nepal had entrusted the management of the Bhutanese Refugee Education Program (BREP) to JRS, which became one of the best educational programs in refugee camps. With pioneering efforts of Jesuits and collaborators, the program grew into a well-organized, integrated and inclusive educational system. More than forty thousand students enrolled into different centers of learning. Through workshops, trainings and in-service program, teachers were trained to become competent and compassionate. The repatriation began in stages to diverse countries. Though the refugees were uprooted and displaced until they found peaceful resettlement, educational qualification and vocational training given by JRS/Caritas Nepal remained deeply rooted, and enhanced their capacity and confidence in a foreign land. With

a sense of gratitude to God and all the stakeholders, Caritas-JRS closed their operation in Nepal after overseeing the resettlement mission. With innumerable international partners, religious members, locals, Frs. Varkey Perekatt, SJ, and P.S. Amalraj, SJ, nurtured the mission of accompaniment doggedly.

Teamwork of Jesuit Madurai Province and JRS in Tamil Nadu

Under the Srimavo-Shastri pact of 1964, 500,000 indentured Indian origin estate labourers were forced back to India. The Jesuits in Madurai Province worked for the resettlement of them under MAITRI, which is a unit of the Bishops' Conference of India. Fr Robert Cutinha, SJ, the first official JRS contact person in India, was influential in the formation of Malayaga Makkal Maru Vaazhvu Mandram (Upcountry People's Rehabilitation Front). When an ethnic clash erupted in a massive level in 1983, a team of Jesuits attended to the various needs of refugees who landed in Mandapam. When the exodus of refugees became an acute problem, Fr. Provincial dispatched a small Jesuit team, headed by Fr C Amalraj SJ, to work on Pastoral counselling and relief operations as primary activities. The active presence of JRS started functioning from the 1990s onwards, in the service of refugees. With the entry of JRS in administering and accompanying the refugees, the dynamics of services took shape with the dire needs of refugees. Denial of human rights in Sri Lanka, confiscation of land by the army, destruction of houses, inaccessibility of livelihood opportunities, rampant unemployment and lack of planned repatriation programs by India and Sri Lanka, are some of the discouraging factors for possible return to the home country.

Collaborative venture of JCSA and JRS in the Frontier Mission – Afghanistan

With the intention of working for Afghan refugees, the then JRS Regional Director of Asia, Fr. Mark Raper, SJ, visited Pakistan in 1987. Due to various reasons, the mission could not take off. After a gap of 15 years, the international JRS carried out an assessment study with a possibility of engaging with the Afghan returnees after the fall of the Taliban regime. JCSA, being the largest Jesuit Assistency, took a deliberate and decisive stand to rebuild and reconstruct the war-torn nation through educational and capacity-building programs. Consequently, in 2003, two commissions were assigned to make a systematic analysis of working with Afghan returnees. Through a series of deliberation and discernment, JMO (Jesuit Mission Outreach) was born, to give a witnessing value through humanitarian engagement in Afghanistan. With the then JRS Regional Director, JMO was officially registered as JRS Afghanistan – an international Non-governmental Organization (INGO) on September 15th, 2005. Earmarked by JCSA, two daring Jesuits - Br. Noel Oliver and Fr. Anthony Santiago began their pioneering and path-breaking works in Kabul on April 28th, 2005. With an entry of a few more Jesuits into the mission, JRS members began teaching in Herat University in 2006 and subsequently extended its operation at Bamiyan in 2007, at Daikundi 2008 and at Kabul in 2009. Located in Kabul, the JRS Country office coordinates all its activities and programs across four provinces.

Promoting peace-building sessions through cultural celebrations: With the strategic guidance and leadership, Fr. Stan Fernandes, SJ, has been animating the JRS team as its

country director and mission superior for a long period. He is competently guided by Dr. Silvia – an international volunteer, known for uncompromising commitment to the cause of refugees and shouldering the JRS mission during the most challenging period. Young and energetic Jesuits - Fr. Linto and Sch Ronald, having their base in Bamiyan, carry on the mission with their innovative and creative outreach. Though the number of Jesuits got reduced, the mission continues to flourish. As Chief Operating officer, South Asia, Br. Sandesh, with care and compassion, looks after the project management covering four provinces. Preserving the gains as well as accomplishing Impact Assessment goals, needs unprecedented efforts from JCSA-JRS.

Mission of JRS among Rohingya community with Calcutta Jesuits at Cox's Bazar.

In Dhaka, after listening to the stories of unimaginable horror and persecution of Rohingya refugees, Pope Francis sent out an unequivocal message: "We won't close our hearts or look away. The presence of God today is also called Rohingya". Deeply touched and saddened by the heart-wrenching Rohingya humanitarian crisis, JRS Rome explored the ways of addressing and accompanying the refugees. Fr Tom Smolich, SJ, JRS International Director, directed and supported the Deputy Director, Fr. Joe Xavier, in all efforts to make an exploratory visit and a feasibility study, together with the Regional Director of JRS South Asia, Fr Stan Fernandes, in 2017. Intriguing feasibility study led the Jesuit team to take appropriate steps through discernment, in order to launch the mission. Fr. Raphael, Provincial, Calcutta province, generously offered Frs. Jeyaraj Veluswamy and Francis Dores to work with JRS-Caritas in a collaborative mission at the service of Rohingya refugees. Amidst struggles and technical issues, JRS South Asia kick-started this challenging mission on 26th November 2017, with the full support of Fr. Klaus Vathroder, Director, Jesuit Mission, Germany, primarily focussing on children in 11 CFS (Child friendly space). To upscale activities to a larger group, CFS has been upgraded into Multi-Purpose Child and Adolescent centers (MCAC). Fr. Jerry Gomes, SJ, is missioned to look after the training, monitoring and evaluating the projects in order to give high premium service.

The journey continues on uncertain terrain

The journey of JRS is intrinsically connected with the spirituality of St. Ignatius. Like the pilgrim, JRS continues to walk with the refugees and forcefully displaced people, without knowing how far our journey is and how the dispossessed people are going to be settled. We resonate with the prayer of Mother Teresa, "We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop". Changing geo-politics, increasing pressure on industrial structures and social dynamics, Jesuits need to reimagine our service to the refugees. It beckons us to go deeper into advocacy, networking with academia and political engagement with global forums in order to find ways and means of resettling the refugees beyond the three-fold approach of UNHCR.

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Sandesh Gonsalves, SJ - The author is the Chief Operating officer, JRS-South Asia.



THOUSAND WORDS
Images of worldwide protests against the arrest of Fr. Stan Swamy

Vijayawada



Panjim



Bangalore



Trivandrum



Kolkata



London



Rome



Mumbai



Anand



Patna



Pune



New Delhi



Ranchi

“

What is happening to me is not something unique happening to me alone. It is a broader process that is taking place all over the country.

We are all aware how prominent intellectuals, lawyers, writers, poets, activists, students, leaders, they are all put into jail because they have expressed their dissent or raised questions about the ruling powers of India.

We are part of the process. In a way I am happy to be part of this process.

I am not a silent spectator, but part of the game, and ready to pay the price whatever be it.”

|| Fr. Stan Swamy, SJ



Photo Courtesy: Communication Hub JCSA, Irudaya Jothi SJ, Moieson, SJ, Simon Fernandes, SJ & Alex Tirkey, SJ



A.T. Thomas

Liberator of the Oppressed and Exploited



Courtesy: George Thomas, SJ

Fr. A.T. Thomas received martyrdom on 24th October 1997. It is 23 years since his martyrdom. In 1996 he went to Manila, taking two years break from Dalit apostolate, to do his study. I was appointed in-charge of Patra Dalit Centre. In 1997, AT returned to do field research for his thesis. He came to Patra and we were together for two days. On the 3rd day (24th October 1997) which was a Friday, after the Eucharist and breakfast we came together to Rajahar Hostel which is a facility for Dalit children. There I got a message that there was a medical emergency for a Dalit woman whom I got admitted in Columbus Hospital, Hazaribagh. I rushed to Hazaribagh to attend to the emergency, and AT went to Sirka Village. It was from there that AT was abducted by a Maoist group who were conducting a meeting. He was tortured and beheaded in Sirka forest. I was the last Jesuit AT talked to before his martyrdom.

AT was an angry young Jesuit - angry because he could not take a situation of oppression and exploitation; angry because he saw a lot of poor people suffering due to poverty, sicknesses, illiteracy, caste system and injustice; angry because the powerless people were violated and deprived of their basic human dignity. During his theological studies in Pune, a few of them formed a group called POT – Praxis Oriented Theology – and stayed outside De Nobili College on an experimental basis. During that time they read books of liberation theologians like Gustavo Gutierrez, Leonardo Boff, Juan Louis Segundo, Jon Sobrino and others who had popularized the phrase Preferential option for the poor. In 1974-75 the Jesuits had their General Congregation (GC) 32. The Decree 4 of the Congregation focused on their commitment to the promotion of faith doing justice. As a result, AT's anger was transformed into a faith commitment promoting justice.

Dalit Mission Ambience in Hazaribagh Province

The Dalit Apostolate was a conscious choice of our Province. In the early 1970s, late Fr. Peter Doherty and Fr. Tony Herbert came into the picture and started working among them in Hazaribagh and Karanpura respectively. Peter Doherty formed a Kirtan group. This group composed gospel songs based on gospel stories to the local tunes and toured dalit villages singing kirtans. Peter translated Mathew's gospel into Magahi. He organized short Magahi courses for scholastics during the summer vacation, in view of inducting young Jesuit blood into the dalit ministry. Tony Herbert widened the ministry in the Karanpura area. The dalit ministry introduced Satsang, a community of disciples of Jesus. Jesus became their Sadguru. To alleviate illiteracy, primary schools and non-formal schools were started. Adult literacy programs were conducted. Along with the literacy efforts, women's empowerment programs and development schemes were introduced. Through these activities dalit people started asserting themselves for their human dignity which brought about confrontations with landlords and upper caste people. Those dalit groups who linked themselves with Satsang, rose to a new level of consciousness.

Pope Francis speaks of the smell of sheep. He speaks to the priests saying, "Be shepherds with the smell of sheep". Both Tony Herbert and late Peter Doherty got well attuned to that smell. They introduced AT into the same smell. Those sheep were the poor, illiterate landless dalits of Hazaribagh area of whom some were bonded labourers and others daily labourers. These sheep had an earthy-dusty smell. Disturbing the Dust was a book written by Tony Herbert describing his experiences and reflections on his involvement with the dalits. It was in this ambience of dalit mission that AT was appointed to the dalit apostolate.

AT was happy and very eager to enter this challenging ministry. Soon enough he got attuned to the existing ambience. He was a young man with radical thinking, very enthusiastic in social action, having been highly influenced by Decree 4 of GC 32 and Jesuits like Sebastian Kappen, Samuel Rayan and George Soares. I found that he was a person always ready to help people in difficult situations and in stressful ambience. Whether it was night or day, summer or winter, he would be ready to go anywhere if people asked his help or needed his presence. This commitment to the people was because of the radicality of the gospel message he believed in. These moments were glimpses of his holiness. What is holiness? It is to be present to the joys, sufferings and pains of people, especially to those who are on the edges and periphery.

After his appointment to Karanpura dalit mission, he established the Patra Dalit Centre. He networked dalit village communities

into Dalit Vikas Samiti (DVS) and conducted regular DVS meetings. A strong thrust on social justice was injected into the ministry. Formal and non-formal education, adult literacy, women's development through Mahila Mandals were taken up. He took up many land issues and human dignity issues of dalits in the face of stiff opposition from the landed class. There was a significant confrontation and struggle in Beltu village between the dalit group and the landed group. AT filed a case against the landed group because of which a few from the village were rounded up by the police and were put in jail for some time. After their release they joined the MCC Naxal group who happened to be in Sirka village from where AT was taken bound to the forest, and murdered by chopping his head off. It was a revenge killing.



There was a significant confrontation and struggle in Beltu village between the dalit group and the landed group. AT filed a case against the landed group because of which a few from the village were rounded up by the police and were put in jail for some time. After their release they joined the MCC Naxal group who happened to be in Sirka village from where AT was taken bound to the forest, and murdered by chopping his head off.

The Dalits of Karanpura keep up the memory of Fr. A. T. Thomas. Punnyia Bhumi, the place where AT was beheaded, in the middle of the forest between the villages Sirka and Chichi, witnesses a crowd every year on October 24. They are there to thank God for the liberating action of God effected through A. T. Thomas. In 2019, for the memorial Eucharist in Punnyia Bhumi, the main celebrant was Fr. Marianus Kujur, Jesuit Provincial of Ranchi, and also present were all the Provincials of South Asia along with Fr. George Pattery, the POSA, General Assistants Frs. Vernon D'Cunha and Lisbert D'Souza. The memorial celebration was something beautiful, wonderful and awe-inspiring.

For us believers in Christ and his Church, witnessing to the faith by shedding blood is martyrdom. Yes, indeed, AT is a martyr. It was reported later by some people from Kusumba village, who were grazing the cattle in the forest, that they heard the loud cries of a human being in great pain. That was the cry of our martyr. The

reverberations of that cry resounding through the all-pervading ethereal field enveloping our universe, would have connected with the reverberations of the cry of that Man who was hung from the Cross, more than 2000 years back, who said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do".

Keeping up the memory of AT is important. The Shahid Divas celebration in Babupara village has a revolutionary message. This message is that human beings, irrespective of caste, creed, language, ethnic origin, possess a certain dignity which should not be violated and any attempt to violate should be opposed, come what may. This message has to be and is being transmitted and communicated to the coming generations.

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Thomas Gafney

A Prophet against Corruption and Drugs



Fr. Tom Gafney was born in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, on November 28th, 1932. He joined the Jesuits in September 1952, and came to Nepal in 1959 after doing his philosophy studies at West Baden, Indiana. He was treasurer, teacher, and rector at St. Xavier's, Jawalakhel, from 1969 to 1976. In the meantime, he became director of the Social Service Centre for the region, and this became his full-time job from 1976 onwards.

Fr. Tom began his Social Service Centre in a house near St. Xavier's School, Jawalakhel. He used to go into the streets and gather the homeless boys from the city. The main goal of his venture was to give them education, a home, and paternal love. Being well aware of the psychological needs of the boys, he designed the appearance of the building with multi-coloured bricks, and the place had a really cheerful look. He also took care of their physical growth by introducing various sports activities such as Taekwondo, a form of martial art, for the boys. They were very happy and full of fun.

He also had a heart for the differently-abled. This led him to open a centre for the handicapped at Nakhipot. Many a time he would take a child, or even an adult, for heart surgery or to get an artificial limb or any special treatment, in India or any other country where the care was available. He also took them for "Special Olympics" in Nepal and abroad.

Gradually Fr. Tom expanded his work, and established other centres in the city. Somehow Tom managed to do all the good things most of us would like to do. He saw the effects of drug-addiction on the youth of Nepal, and began detoxification programs. He founded Mukti Kendra (Freedom Centre) to help them. In the process of treatment he accompanied and helped drug addicts through individual and group counseling. It can be assumed that through counseling Fr. Tom must have known the drug nexus in Nepal and the people involved in it.

He attended many international conferences on drug addiction. He treated the helpless addicts just like ordinary human beings, which was just what they needed. Fr. Tom was a person who took a prophetic stand. He could not tolerate corruption or inefficiency. He was not afraid to confront anyone who he thought was exploiting or profiting from the funds intended for the poor or outcasts of society. He did not hesitate to denounce corruption in the columns of the Kathmandu newspapers. In doing so, he certainly made enemies among the rich and powerful. Finally he faced the consequence for his prophetic stand.

In the morning of December 14th, 1997, one of the workers found his blood-drenched body on his bed in the small bungalow where he lived alone. There were deep knife wounds on his neck. The door was closed, but not locked, and it did not seem to have been forced open. His death came as a terrible shock to the Nepal Jesuits, and to all who knew him.

The whole of Kathmandu was taken by surprise. Mourners started gathering at St. Xavier's School, Jawalakhel, where Father's body lay in state until Tuesday, December 16th. By the time of the funeral, there were piles of bouquets. Two large condolence books were filled by the mourners. At 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, the procession took Fr. Gafney's body to Assumption Church at Dhobighat. A Mass was conducted entirely in Nepali in front of many of his well-wishers. Then his body was taken to the banks of the Vishnumati River in Teku, where he was cremated. While alive he had expressed his wish to be cremated rather than be buried.

My Experience with Fr. Thomas Gafney as a Regent

It was on December 14th morning at 7 a.m. that Fr. Jim Donnelly told me, "David, your Boss is no more." I did not understand what he meant, and so he said that Fr. Tom had been murdered. I rushed to Fr. Tom's residence and found the body.

After seeing the dreadful sight I recalled reading the books of Jesuit saints and martyrs which I read in the novitiate. I could tangibly picture Tom with those martyrs. After Tom's death I recalled all my experiences with him and the vivid events which were very unique and personal.

He often quoted the words of St. Irenaeus: "The Glory of God is a human person fully alive." Many people could feel that Tom's active life brought glory and honour to God.

Fr. Tom had expressed convincingly to all boys at the centre and others, that God had the first place in human life. The second was others and the third ourselves. He accompanied the youth and walked with the poor and the outcasts of society whose dignity had been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice.

Dashain is the longest and the most auspicious festival in Nepal. On the tenth day of the festival a mixture of rice, yogurt and vermilion is prepared. This preparation is known as "tika." Elders put this tika on the forehead of younger family members to bless them with abundance in the upcoming years. This ritual of taking tika from the elder helps renew community ties greatly. This is the main reason why the festival is celebrated with so much vigour and enthusiasm. This feast was Tom's last celebration with the boys in October 1997.



Thomas Gafney at Dashain blessing ceremony

Courtesy: David Ekka, SJ

After that Dashain festival Fr. Tom and I accompanied the differently-abled boys to attend the Special Olympics in Osaka, Japan. This was the sixth time he took the boys to Japan. He repeatedly said that his time was over. His words were truly prophetic.

After the Osaka trip we were back in Kathmandu, and then I prepared a program for his birthday. On his birthday, 18th November, he came to the centre with Bishop Anthony Sharma. The boys prepared the program with love despite their limitations. The program was good. Each boy honoured Fr. Tom with a little bouquet of flower and thanked him for his fatherly love and care. At the end of the program Fr. Tom had so many bouquets of flowers that he said cynically, "This looks like a funeral ceremony." This too turned out to be a prophecy.

Fr. Tom was a sociable person, with a wry sense of humour, a ready smile and an amusing joke or story. He, like most of us, was faced with the choice of keeping quiet and going along with a system or speaking against the evils of society. He chose the latter. We miss his witnessing to the values of the Gospel, the values of Christ.

The death of Fr. Gafney left thousands of poor and former residents orphaned, and millions of others grieved. He was a man who spent all his life for others, a man who was fearless and zealous for others. It's been said by his people, "He was a real father, God in disguise."

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**Intention For
November
2020**

Artificial Intelligence

We pray that the progress of robotics and artificial intelligence may always serve humankind.



**Pope's Worldwide
Prayer Network**





Mathew Mannaparambil

A Voice against Dishonesty and Disloyalty

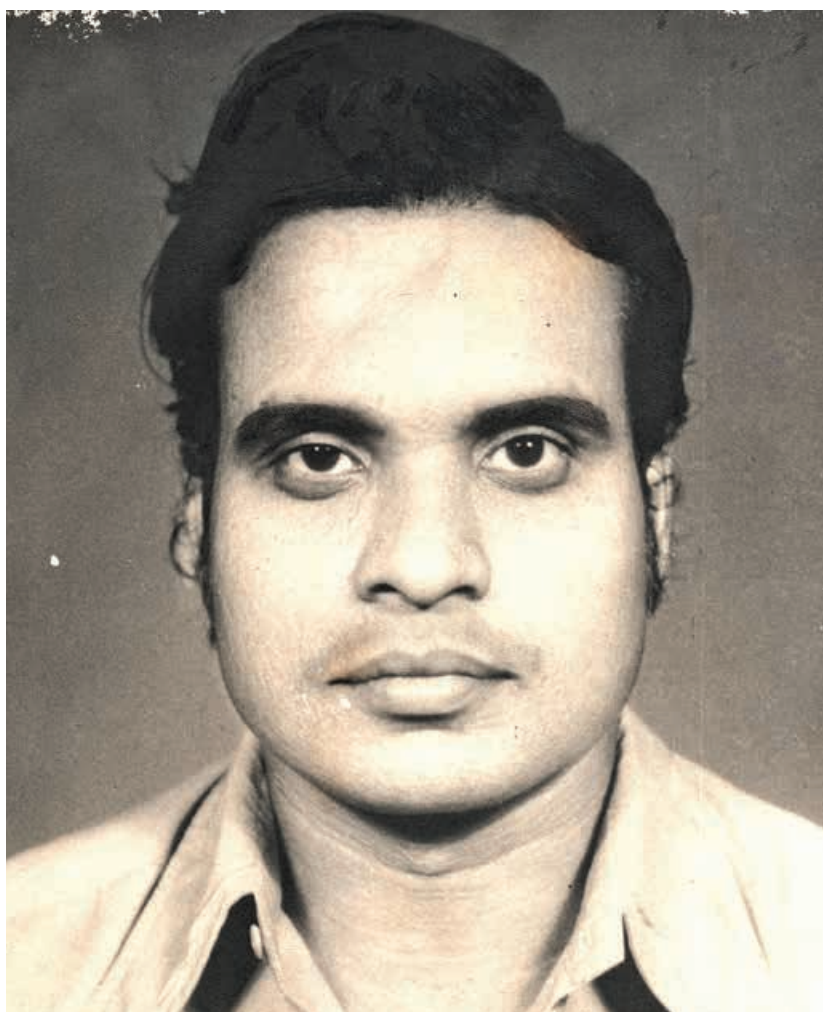
Transition from one generation to the next can not only be challenging, but even be fatally dangerous, particularly when big money and other vested interests are involved. This is what happened in the case of Fr. Mathew Mannaparambil, SJ, at St. Anne's Parish, Sasaram, on the fateful night of 7 March 1980.

“Jungle me mangal” Mission of Fr. Joe Mann

Fr. Joseph Mann was a great Jesuit with a clear vision for the mission of Christ among the Dalits and other disadvantaged sections of society. He chose Sasaram in Rohtas District, Bihar, as his karmbhumi. His dream was to build up an ideal Christian community, not in the middle of a town, but in a place away from all forms of physical and spiritual pollution. “Jungle me mangal” (Bliss is in the forest) was his favourite dictum. Accordingly, he chose Burhan, an interior area a few kilometres away from Sasaram. Hardly did his simple, generous and trusting heart know that this same jungle was also the home of bloodsucking beasts!

Fr. Mann, with the generous help of the benefactors in the US was able to transform his life-dream into a reality. In its heyday the Sasaram mission seemed to have practically all that a missionary could reasonably aspire for. Indeed, the Sasaram mission seemed to be a huge missionary undertaking with a parish church and priest-residence, a convent of Sisters of Notre Dame in a nearby compound, a middle school run by the sisters, two hostels – one for boys near the church and another for girls near the convent, many small primary schools in the villages, a well-run dispensary managed by the sisters, over 40 catechists and several teachers, two large farms, and about 100 villages where regular evangelical work was supposedly going on.

Although outwardly everything looked grand, the reality was something very different. Not much was going on in the schools. The masters ran their stations like their personal fiefdom with no proper accountability to Fr. Mann. Large pieces of land were purchased by the mission in various places, but no proper records were kept. There were many court cases with regard to these land possessions, and there were people siphoning off money in the name of running these cases. The



Courtesy: Job Kozhamthadam, SJ

catechists hardly cared about imparting religious instruction to the people, and they were not bound to give any genuine report. Fr. Mann hardly had any proper knowledge about what had been going on except that money came in easily in large amounts, and went away also easily.

Fr. Mathew Mannamparambil, Successor to Fr. Mann

Fr. Mathew was born at Arakulam in Kerala, and joined the Patna Province of the Jesuits in 1960. After the long Jesuit

training and formation, including one year of special Hindi studies, since his desire was to become a missionary in the rural regions of Bihar, he was ordained a priest on 22 March 1972. In 1977 he was appointed pastor at Sasaram.

Given the situation of the Sasaram mission at the time of his take-over, Fr. Mathew's principal challenge was to put the house in order, to turn it into a Catholic Mission Station serving the people and the Church. He took up the challenge courageously and systematically. He began visiting the people in the villages and locating the land and other possessions belonging to the Church. When he contacted some of the persons in charge of the properties and the administration of the institutions associated with them, Mathew noticed that some of them were very secretive and non-cooperative. Coming to religious matters, the Christians had no proper instruction, no regular religious functions organized in any systematic way to bring and bind the community together and to keep their Christian faith and commitment alive and active.

Step by step, Mathew began rectifying the system to bring certain order and regularity. He was able to locate the properties flung around in different villages. Also he drew up a plan and program to build up the faithful scattered all around into a true Christian community. According to this plan the Christians of the area would come and stay at the station overnight. Late in the evening they would participate in the Holy Mass, religious instructions, and have their meals together. In the morning again they would have Holy Mass and then breakfast together, and then go back to their homes refreshed and happy. On these occasions Brother Silvester (Shilanand) with his bhajan singing group also would be present, adding more life and zest to the community. Thus things began to change. The poor people around, particularly the Christians, were happy about this turn of events. But this was not at all the case with those who were running the show earlier.

He called for monthly meetings of the catechists and masters of schools during which they had to give a report on the actual happenings at the centres. People who were enjoying a jolly-time at the expense of the mission began to feel the pinch of duty and accountability. They certainly were not happy about the changes taking place. Naturally, some of them were seriously looking for a chance to remove the cause of all these new developments once and for all. Although Fr. Mathew was getting hints about such resistance and opposition, he did not fully assess the gravity and seriousness of the threat.

The Martyrdom

The climax of the tension between Fr. Mathew who was determined to put the house in order, and those who were exploiting the generous and trusting attitude of Fr. Mann, came on the fateful evening of 7 March 1980. From the sequence of events two points were clear: The heinous crime was meticulously planned and there was involvement of some "insiders." For instance, Fr. Mathew had a substantial sum of money in his room, just brought from Patna to pay the employees.



For Mathew, the mismanagement and corruption going on in the mission was not just a matter of money. It was also the question of justice and moral responsibility. The money coming to Fr. Mann for the mission from the US was donations from many real poor people from their small savings. This money was meant to build up the mission, particularly the poor Christian community, not to be plundered by dishonest persons for their life of luxury. So there was injustice done to both the donors and to the poor beneficiaries. ”

On 7 March evening Mathew had called a meeting of 40 plus catechists and 4 teachers. This was followed by a prayer-service in the Church, after which Fr. Mathew sat in the rear of the church. At this juncture a group of men, armed with a gun, walked into the church and asked for Fr. Mathew. Fr. Pradeep Narikuzhy, Swami Shilanand, and the assembly, who were in the church, were ordered not to intervene. These men ordered Fr. Mathew to go to his room. Fr. Mann and a scholastic were in the next room, but they were threatened to remain in the room. Soon gun shots were heard, and the gang hurried away. The community rushed to Fr. Mathew's room, only to find him dead from bullet wounds, the room ransacked and the documents strewn all around. The money brought was gone, so also the licenced gun of the mission. Thus ended the attempt of Fr. Mathew to build up a genuine Christian mission, to create an authentic Christian community of faith, love and fellowship in Sasaram.

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real poor people from their small savings. This money was meant to build up the mission, particularly the poor Christian community, not to be plundered by dishonest persons for their life of luxury. So there was injustice done to both the donors and to the poor beneficiaries. Fr. Mathew wanted to rectify this gross injustice and selfish exploitation. Fr. Mathew was a martyr who sacrificed his life for justice, honesty and integrity.

(Assisted by Job Kozhamthadam, SJ)

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James Kottayil

Emancipator from Moneylenders and Bonded-Labour



From Abel to Zachariah in the Old Testament, from Christ to Stephen in the New Testament, we see martyrs who stood for their faith and truth. Saul, who guarded the blood-stained clothes of the martyr and certified the great martyrdom of a Christian, himself became a faithful servant of Christ and a martyr for Christ. From new-borns to adults, adults to the elderly, from virgins to princesses, from kings to ordinary faithful, from scholars to the uneducated, from the beginning of creation till today humanity is witnessing the martyrdom of individuals who stood for God and truth. The Church is experiencing this persecution every day, and these martyrs are the real heroes of the Gospel, and they bring thousands upon thousands to experience the mercy and compassion of God. Fr. James Kottayil S.J. is one among these thousands who shed their blood for God and his kingdom.

Life & Mission of Fr. James

Fr. James Kottayil S.J was born on the 15th of November 1915 at Thuruthipalli near Kaduthuruthy in the Diocese of Palai in Kerala. He was the third child of Chacko and Mariam Kottayil. His father was from St. John the Baptist Parish Church, Thuruthipally, and his mother from Mapilaparambil, Matha Mary Parish, Kurvilangad. They both were God-fearing and benevolent Catholics noted for their generosity and concern for the neighbours, especially the poor and the needy. He did his primary schooling at Kuravilangad and intermediate at Trivandrum.

The young James was well instructed by his parents in Christian values and practices. As in the case of most Syro-Malabar Catholic families in Kerala, his parents paid special attention to bringing him up in deep faith and good character. To be a great missionary in a faraway place, like St. Thomas the Apostle from whom the Syro-Malabar Catholics of Kerala received the Christian faith, was his life ambition and dream. At the age of 21, on the 26th of April 1936, he entered the Society of Jesus, in the Province of Ranchi in the Chotanagpur mission. After the usual long and highly-disciplined Jesuit training, on the 1st of November, All-Saints' Day, in 1948, he was ordained priest. He made his final profession on 15 August 1952.

Fr. James' first appointment was to be the assistant parish priest at Jashpuri. Like his beloved parents, he had so much love for the poor and downtrodden, and so he chose to serve in rural missions, rather than in towns and cities. From Jashpuri he moved to St. Mary's High School, Samtoli, which had a boarding for the Adavasi Children. He worked here as the minister of the institution.

Fr. James had the good fortune of working with great missionaries from Belgium and Holland. These were great missionaries noted for their hard work and great practical vision. For instance, they

started a project to help the poor, uneducated Adivasis to save their hard-earned money through small saving schemes. In this connection Fr. James was sent to Bombay to get special training in this scheme, particularly how to educate and train the poor Adivasi farmers to save their money and become self-reliant. Since his heart was very much for the poor in interior village areas, he himself volunteered for the remote village Nawatanr parish. He put his heart and soul for the development of underprivileged people. When he reached this remote mission village 7 kilometres away from Mandar, there was only a lower primary school for the children and a small shed for the pastor. There he lived and went around the villages and brought small children to school and educated them. Also he started small self-help groups to save the lives of bonded-labours who literally lived like slaves. Furthermore, he also used the technical know-how and experience he had already acquired to save the poor Adivasis from heartless moneylenders and landlords. Naturally, in course of time there arose jealousy over his work, and it all created strong animosity against him. The cruel moneylenders and those owning bonded-labourers wanted to eliminate him.

The Martyrdom

On 13th July, 1967, at 9 P.M., a few anti-Church persons approached Fr. James and asked for water and overnight stay in the premises. Being a person of kindness and Christian hospitality, he most willingly accommodated them in the compound. But their malicious plans were very different and Fr. James, being a man of a clean heart and good intention, never suspected any foul play. Again after an hour they knocked at the door. When he opened the door, immediately they stabbed him thirteen times. They were professional contract killers, and rolled the knife in the stomach bringing out his intestine. Hearing the great cry of agony, villagers came out and took him to Holy family Hospital, Mandar. With the help of Bro Thomas Mecheril from the Diocese of Shillong who was doing regency in the parish, they took him on a bullock-cart to the hospital. Although the best possible medical care was given by the medical staff of the Medical Mission Sisters in their hospital, the damage done to the body was so deep and extensive that his life could not be saved. On 16th July he was called to his eternal rest, asking blessings from his Provincial and, like St. Stephen, the proto-martyr, forgiving all the murderers and praying for them and the Ranchi mission. Fr. Provincial celebrated the funeral mass, and his Grace Pius Kerketta, SJ, Archbishop of Ranchi gave absolution and officiated at the grave. At the time of martyrdom, he was a priest for nineteen years. Thus Fr. James also joined the great company of brave Jesuit martyrs at the prime of his youth in the Chotanagpur Mission.



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Although physically absent, Fr. James lives on in the memory of the Ranchi Jesuit Province and the people whom he served selflessly. His family in particular keeps the memory alive. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his martyrdom, at his home-village Thuruthipally, there was a grand celebration. Rt. Rev. Joseph Murickan, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Palai, was the main celebrant, Fr. Marianus Kujur, the Provincial of Ranchi at that time, Fr. George Muthothil, then Provincial of Kerala Jesuits, now Assistant to Fr. General of the Jesuits in Rome for the South Asian Assistancy, and many other priests concelebrated. Fr. Marianus said in the public gathering that the Ranchi Jesuits and the people whom Fr. James served sincerely and selflessly, had not forgotten him. As a token of their appreciation and gratitude for what he had been to them, they had instituted “Fr. James Kottayil Memorial Football Tournament” in the Jesuit Province of Ranchi, and people take great interest in it.

A martyr is first and foremost a witness to the person and values of Christ. Fr. James lived a simple and humble life of a Jesuit missionary, always wishing the good of others, never doing any harm to anyone. Yet, he became the target of heartless moneylenders and avaricious landlords, and became the victim of their wickedness. A martyr is punished not because he/she does anything wrong, but precisely because he/she does the right thing. Indeed, Fr. James was a martyr in the true sense.

(Assisted by Job Kozhamthadam, SJ)

The author is a Claretian Parish Priest of St. Jude's Church, Karahalli of Archdiocese of Bengaluru. He is the nephew of the martyred Fr. James Kottayil, SJ.

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STOP PRESS



Fr. General has appointed **Fr. Agnelo Mascarenhas, SJ** (GOA), born on 8th December, 1965 as the new Provincial of Pune Province. Presently he is the Superior and Coordinator of Youth Ministry, at Pedro Arrupe Institute, Raia, Goa. JIVAN extends prayerful wishes to Fr. Agnelo Mascarenhas, SJ for his new ministry as Provincial.



Herman Rasschaert

Peacemaker among Religious Communities

Fr. Herman Rasschaert was born on 13th September 1922 in the Netherlands. He entered the Jesuit novitiate in Drongen on 7th September 1941. In the novitiate he made up his mind to go to India as a missionary. On 6th August 1947 Herman got his official appointment to the Ranchi Mission. He arrived in Ranchi on 3rd December 1947. He was ordained a priest at Kurseong on 21 November 1953. On 13th November 1955 Fr. Herman received his first appointment as an Assistant Parish Priest in Khunti. On 14th January 1958 Herman joined his new post at Torpa as an Assistant to Fr. A. Van Exem. Two years later, on 4th June 1958, Fr. Herman took up his new task of Parish Priest at Karra. In December 1960, he received news of his transfer to Kutungia Parish. The faithful of Karra vehemently opposed his transfer simply because he had won their hearts. However, as Fr. Herman was a man on the move, taking up new challenges, he left Karra and arrived in his new mission on 2nd January 1961. Kutungia was an isolated place at a distance of 240 km from Ranchi on the border of Orissa. In Kutungia, he had no assistant and therefore he had to take care not only of the pastoral work, but also of the school and the co-operative Credit Society. He took it all in his stride.

The Martyrdom

On 18th March 1964, communal riots based on religious sentiments broke out in the nearby city of Rourkela. All educational institutions were closed immediately. Soon the violence spread to the rural areas. On Monday 23rd March 1964, when Fr. Herman had gone to a nearby village to administer the sacrament of the sick, he came to know that a frenzied mob was attacking Muslims gathered in the Mosque at Gerda. Next morning, on 24th March, Fr. Herman celebrated the Mass, took his cycle and set out for Gerda to stop the killings. On his arrival, he saw a large crowd in an aggressive and destructive mood. He at once requested them to calm down. He gently told them that we are all brothers and sisters and whatever be the differences or disagreements among us, we can always settle them all by talking them over among ourselves. Violence and force cannot solve any problems. But the mob was so charged with frenzy and anger that they were in no mood to listen to him. The he implored them: "Let us not harm anyone. Harming can solve no problem. It will only create more." But the crowd was unimpressed. The Fr. Herman raised his voice and said: "Killing people is a grave sin, please stop this madness." There was a short silence. Then a stone flew through the air and hit Fr. Herman on his face. From the impact he fell down on his knees. A few young men from the mob rushed forward and killed Fr. Herman with sharp weapons. He died instantly, died for being a peacemaker. "Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons and daughters of God." (Mt 5:9). Indeed Fr. Herman proved himself to be a true son of God by shedding his blood for peace and harmony, particularly among different religious communities.

In the morning of 25th March 1964, St. Anne's Sisters of Kutungia

together with the catechist and a few teachers went to Gerda to bring the dead body of Fr. Herman back to the Parish. They found the face of Fr. Herman badly wounded and all his teeth knocked out. The same evening, arrangements were made for the funeral Mass. Fr. Bossuyt and Fr. Joseph Tigga offered the Holy Mass and buried him in the local graveyard.

The Aftermath of the Martyrdom – Support and Appreciation for the Sacrifice

The sacrifice of Fr. Herman was a wakeup call for the state administration, and immediate measures were taken to stop the violence from spreading further. The Chief Minister of Bihar, who came to Ranchi to meet Church leaders and government officials, told His Grace the Archbishop of Ranchi Pius Kerketta, SJ: "Fr. Herman Rasschaert will go down in history as a true martyr of charity."



Photo: Geni

On the occasion of the first anniversary of his martyrdom on 24th March 1965, in the commemoration ceremony held at St. Xavier's School, Delhi, Dr. Ashok Mehta said: "Fr. Herman was a Man of Humanity, a Man of God." This phrase remains and will remain in the years to come as an apt description of who Fr. Herman was. Also, I believe that reading and reflecting upon the life of Fr. Herman is very inspiring to those who would like to know the meaning of faith, love, justice and service, the worth and cost of following Christ and spreading his message to the world around. Indeed, Fr. Herman was an outstanding missionary who was martyred for faith in Jesus Christ, the faith which led him to lay down his life for peace and harmony in the society. His supreme sacrifice is a clear example of his witness to faith in Christ for he was martyred

for the service of God and of neighbour. Truly, he was martyred to save humanity.

At present, his reputation of martyrdom is growing ever stronger and there is ample evidence that God is granting graces and favours to people through his intercession. Indeed, Fr. Herman deserves our highest esteem and veneration. Therefore, the Society of Jesus has started the process of Beatification and Canonization of this great martyr. He has already been declared a Servant of God by the official Catholic Church. Let us hope and pray that further steps in this regard will soon follow. I firmly believe that his sainthood will strengthen the faith of the local Church and the entire Diocese and will bring about peace and harmony in today's society which is torn apart by various forms of conflicts and rivalries.

The author is the Vice – Postulator for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Fr. Herman Rasschaert, SJ and currently pursuing his doctoral studies in Canon Law at the Gregorian University, Rome.

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The Heaven I Imagine

What is heaven like, is a question whose answer we do not know but are keen to know. Based on the following 4 faith-linked premises, I make the following imaginative presentation of heaven

Heaven is not a place but a state of being, where we will have limitless access: to know, to love and to get connected with God and with everyone and everything God has created.

God who is love does not destroy anything He has created.

No matter how wild our imagination, the God mystery and the God actions will always be far greater (Deus semper major) and will produce the greatest of surprises

The focus in the Gospel is on a God who unites and does not divide; a God who connects with all and does not disconnect; a God who includes all and does not exclude any, not even one.

These faith revelations are keystone affirmations that define our present and our eternity with God in heaven. I have come that you may have life, life in all its abundance (John 10.10) There is a permanency in what God reveals, and in all actions done by God.

In heaven, we enter into a mystical communion with God

Our deepest desire is that we get to know God, love God and experience the God mystery. The Word of God reveals that God is love and that His love is faithful, (no second thoughts by God), unconditional and everlasting. We do not have such a love experience in this world. That is the love that God gives us in heaven. In the Aramaic language, when one says that I give you my flesh and blood, it means I share with you my life. What begins in the Eucharist of our sharing in the divinity of God, will be continued at a much fuller level and for all eternity in heaven. The intimate and eternal love-connection that God gives is unique and unmatched. In heaven God will share with us his love in intimate personal communion. Will we get bored? No, since the infinitely abundant and creative God will reveal something new and attractive always in the infinite Now of God. Intimacy is redemptive. We become more and more like God, as God, the ultimate giver, will continue to give of Himself his God-ness. This God-connection and God-experience are the most attractive experiences we will receive from God our Father. We will get to know God in increasing measure, grow in our love of God as we will have a profound mystical experience of the God mystery. Here on earth our love connection with God is often very peripheral. But in heaven, we will experientially know God's intimate love of us. Yes, for all eternity! This is the core experience and the most cherished gift we get in heaven.

Everyone of us will connect with the entire human creation

God's love, innovation and sharing are most manifest in His creating us as wonderful human beings. Here on earth, we know so little and so superficially the many varieties of the human race that God created as His precious sons and daughters. Steven Kotler says that in the last few decades we humans have been able to create more applications

and innovations than what humans could do in the past 350,000 years of human history. We have entered the 4th industrial revolution. The advancement of the human race has been phenomenal in the past few centuries. The first industrial revolution (1784) was characterized by mechanization; the second (1879) by the advent of electricity, mass production and division of labour; the third (1969) by advances in the field of electronics and IT and the fourth industrial revolution will be marked by the fusion of different technologies like genetics, robotics, nanotechnology, 3D printing and biotechnology. There has been an unprecedented advancement of technology. It has fundamentally changed the way we live, work, and relate to one another. What the new revolutions will bring remains to be seen.



Entering into intimate communion with all humans, beginning from Adam to the last human creation, will be our next keystone experience. Since we believe in the resurrection of the body and since God does not destroy anything He creates, this communion of intimate experience with all humans, gains substance and credibility. As nothing is impossible with God, in heaven, God re-democratizes the entire human race, keeping differences.

We will intimately connect with the Wonder of Nature, created and sustained by God, including the tiniest star and the biggest galaxy

Science and technology, its executive engineer, have been able to explore and discover so much about Nature. However, Thomas Edison, the scientist, who singly or jointly held the world record for 1093 patents, affirmed that, so far, science has been able to discover less than 1% of Nature and 99% remains yet to be explored and discovered. In our resurrected form, the entire Nature and its mysteries and functioning, will become open to be known and appreciated by the humans. It will be a most soul-stirring experience for us to get to know every star, every galaxy, every tree, every fish, every bird, every flower and the whole of Nature, and discover the wonder of Nature while experiencing the wonder of God, their creator.

God saves all

While there are many good people who live norm-based lives, there are many who do not. Imagine a fidayeen, (suicide attacker) for instance, who lands up before God after killing a lot of innocent people. He is obviously unfit for heaven. How does God make him fit for heaven? Today it is a matter of faith (declared by Vatican II) that God saves all His people but how He does it is a mystery that is known to Him alone. Discovering the inner secret of how God saves all (His act of universal redemption) will be one of the keenest revelations we will get to have.

To conclude, no matter how great and wonderful we imagine heaven to be, the actual state of heaven that God has prepared for us will hold many happier surprises and which will be far, far greater. Deus semper major.

The author is a nonagenarian living in the Senior Citizens' community at St. Xavier's School, Delhi.

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TITLE: Towards Loving Service

AUTHOR: Jesuits at JDV Campus, Pune & VJ, Delhi

PUBLISHER: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand

PAGES: 252 | **PRICE:** ₹125

Mission is the heart of Jesuit spirituality (as it could be seen in Ignatius' Autobiography, Spiritual Journal, Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions). The initial missionary zeal "to help souls" eventually, during the history of the Society of Jesus, took more and more concrete and contextual shapes. We have been witnessing this especially from GC 32 onwards. On convoking GC 36, former General Fr. Adolfo Nicholas had posed the question before us to reflect: "To what sort of mission is Christ the King calling us today?" After GC 36, the present General Fr. Arturo Sosa, in continuing with the same concern, initiated the discernment process involving the whole Society in order to articulate our Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) for the coming decade. We, the Jesuits of South Asia, have

further fine-tuned those preferences at the Conference level (CAP) and at the individual Province level (PAP).

As a way of sustaining the new missionary vision, Fr. George Pattery - the POSA, came up with an inspiring idea of a prayer book on these Apostolic Preferences. And rightly, he requested the Jesuit theology staff and students both at Pune and Delhi. Although a number of Jesuit staff have contributed to the book, it is predominantly a work of love on the part of our young Jesuit scholastics, who will be, mainly, shouldering the responsibility of these preferences during the decade to come. The Jesuits at JDV campus prepared the prayers on UAP and the Jesuits at Vidyajyoti on CAP. Among other things, the prayers in this book focus on two things: Introspection and Intercession. The reflections and questions help us to ponder on the challenges and opportunities these Apostolic Preferences offer before us. The intercessory prayers remind us of the fact that, ultimately, it is the Lord who works through us and we constantly depend on His Grace. (Please read pages 8 and 9 of the Preface for further guidance). We hope that this prayer book will help us Jesuits to bring our daily work into prayer and take the prayer into our daily work and thus enable us to become contemplatives in action for the greater glory of God.

By: Ilanko Xavier, SJ & M. I. Raj, SJ

An Eco-text book!

The University Grants Commission (UGC) under the flagship program of Environmental Education implemented the subject Environmental Studies in the year 2000 as per the Supreme Court directives to promote environmental awareness in higher education curriculum of the country. Environmental Studies is an added subject to existing curriculum and so the students with an unquenchable thirst of knowing the important issues of the ecological and environmental issues in the world look for an effective text book that is crisp, easy to understand and fulfils their objective of becoming environmentally conscious citizens. The Cambridge University Press published a text book under the title "Fundamentals of environmental studies" authored by Dr. Mahua Basu and Dr. S. Xavier of St. Xavier's College, Kolkata.

The authors of this book have done an excellent job of depicting the current environmental issues in a systematic manner in ten well-written chapters. The first feeling one gets after reading this book is that the authors are truly passionate about the content of the book. As they have rightly mentioned in the preface, the main objective of this book seems to be to enlighten and enthuse the young readers to strive for a better environment.

As an exception, this book has given concrete information. Whether matters related to Copenhagen or Cancun, Le Ladakh flash flood or Amazon forest fires, Eli Nino or La Nina, Aila or Laila a student will stand par with a scientist or an environmentalist to discuss and debate on any matters related to environmental science, irrespective of the science or arts or commerce stream he/she belongs to.

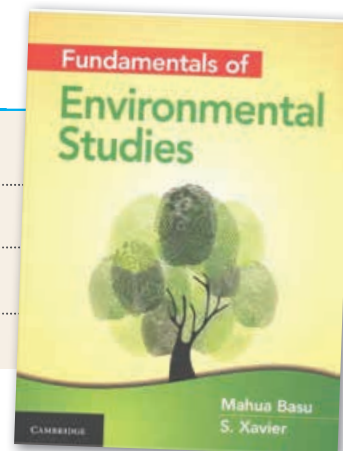
This book is one of the 8 best environmental guides today. The salient feature of this book is the relevance given to case studies which are well placed and grab the interest of the readers. The

TITLE: Fundamentals of environmental studies

AUTHOR: Dr. Mahua Basu and Dr. Xavier Savarimuthu, SJ.

PUBLISHER: Cambridge University Press

PAGES: 460 | **PRICE:** ₹ 425



multiple-choice questions and the short and long answer questions provided at the end of each chapter are sure to benefit the students from an academic point of view. The bibliography which also includes the websites of online resources are sure to benefit the readers who are enthusiastic in gaining further knowledge on the subject. The gravity of the various environmental problems in the current situation is presented in an appropriate manner. This book will equally benefit the students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels and also people who are interested to know more about the current environmental scenario.

Thus, the students are imparted with a sense of awareness regarding the serious environmental crisis that is confronting the human race at the present moment.

By: Suma Sarojini

National Day of Solidarity for Fr. Stan Swamy held at Jantar Mantar, Delhi

The National Day of Solidarity was observed by 200 representatives from several civil society organisations at Jantar Mantar on 12th October to express their shock, dismay and outrage at the arrest of Fr. Stan Swamy on 8th October, 2020, in the Bhima Koregaon conspiracy case. The meeting began with the rendition of the hymn "Abide with me". In his opening address, Fr. Stanislaus D'Souza, President of JCSCA, stressed the need to stand with Fr. Stan Swamy, who worked tirelessly for the rights of tribals in India for over three decades. Shabnam



Hashmi lamented that Fr Stan Swamy, who filed a PIL in Ranchi High Court for the release of tribal youth jailed in false cases, is now himself in jail in a fabricated case. Harsh Mander said that Fr. Stan's arrest only reveals the nature of the present rulers of the country. Prof. Apoorvanand pointed out that the arrest of Fr. Stan is an assault on all those who stand for truth and justice. Speaking via

video link, Medha Patkar said Fr. Stan worked for an "Atma-nirbhar" adivasi and we should work for the fulfilment of this vision. Fr. Jervis D'Souza read out the CBCI statement on the arrest of Fr. Stan. Paul Divakar and John Dayal also addressed the gathering. The meeting concluded with the song "We shall overcome" that reverberated throughout Jantar Mantar.

Denzil Fernandes, SJ | Delhi

In Solidarity with Stan

Ripples of discomfort are noticed in Bengal. The Catholic Association of Bengal, the oldest lay catholic organization in India, organized on 11th October an all-religious meet at Mother Teresa's Statue near Allen Park - Mother Teresa Sarani, to condemn atrocities against women and minorities.

Sikh Religious leader Sardar Bachchan Singh Sarai, Jain Guru Parmananda Maharaj, Buddhist Monk Moni Maharaj, Islam's Moulana Zaki Rijwi, a Ramakrishna Monk along with Father Dominic Gomes. Father Irudaya Jothi SJ read out the appeal of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India for his release, and demanded the repeal of UAPA.



On 16th October, Nagarik Udyog, a Civil Society Initiative met at 'Ranu Chaya Mancha' near Landmark Rabindra Sadan in Kolkata with a call, 'Bango Pachil Goro Bangla' (Break down the walls and build up Bengal) symbolically. The intellectuals resolved to awaken the people from all forms of oppression and destruction, and build up a new Bengal. They demanded the

release of Fr. Stan Swamy along with others falsely accused and jailed.

Another rally from Bishop's House on Park Street to St Teresa's statue on 17th October, was held, demanding Fr. Stan Swamy's release. The students and rights' activists, carried placards denouncing the "undemocratic arrest of the elderly man in the most inhuman manner". The vice-chancellor of St Xavier's University, Father J Felix Raj, SJ, along with Archbishop Thomas D'Souza, addressed the rally and demanded that Father Swamy be released rightaway.

Irudaya Jothi, SJ | Kolkata

Ranchi Stands with Stan

A 2.5 km long human chain along Dr Camil Bulcke Road, followed by a Prayer Service in St. Mary's Cathedral Ranchi, was jointly organised by the Ranchi Catholics, Ranchi Archdiocese and Catholic Religious of India, Ranchi, from 4:00 to 6:30 pm on 16 October 2020 to mark the 'Day of Protest for Stan Swamy', against his inhuman arrest by the National Investigation Agency on 8th October 2020, implicating his involvement in the Bhima Koregaon violence on 1st January 2018. Earlier, permission

for a silent march from Albert Ekka Chowk to a public Prayer Service at Loyola ground, was denied by the sub-divisional administration. Hence, there was a quick change in the strategy for the human chain, followed by prayer for 50 selected persons

in the Cathedral. Despite lockdown, more than 2500 persons participated in the protest. The predominant sentiment of all slogans in the placards was - 'We Stand with Stan'. Archbishop Felix Toppo, SJ, and Auxiliary Bishop Theo Mascarenhas, SFX, while expressing their shock at the way Stan was arrested and treated, demanded that he be exonerated from all false allegations and released at the earliest.



Joseph Marianus Kujur, SJ | Ranchi

The National Solidarity Day Celebrated in Goa

The voices of over 200 Goans, expressing solidarity with 83 year-old Fr. Stan LourduSwamy, arrested on charges of sedition, reverberated at the Azad Maidan, Panaji on October 12th, 2020, between 4 pm to 5 pm.

Joining the nationwide protests, the Jesuits of the Goa Province along with the collaborators and the Civil Society groups, converged to celebrate the National Solidarity Day to condemn the illegal arrest of Fr. Stan Swamy by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), and demanded his immediate release along with all the human rights defenders, who are arbitrarily incarcerated for championing the cause of the poor and the exploited. Speakers representing various Civil Society groups and Church organisations spoke about the yeomen service rendered by Fr. Stan to the poor and vulnerable tribals by defending, propagating and protecting their rights, enshrined in the Constitution of India, through peaceful means of expressing dissent.



The convenor, Fr. Simon Fernandes read out the Press note and thanked all people of goodwill and the civil society groups who came out overwhelmingly in support of Fr. Stan to express their solidarity, despite the inclement weather. At the end, the protesters took a rally around the Azad Maidan expressing hope by singing together, "We shall overcome, someday..."

Simon Fernandes, SJ | Goa

The Crux of Obedience

My sincere appreciation to Br. Pravin who, through his skillful writing tried to emphasize in one of the issues of *Jivan*, the equality and equanimity that should prevail in the bond between superior and subject. Br. Noel Oliver and Fr. Andrew Silvera resonated with Br. Pravin in their opinion on the matter. In this regard, I would like to take a slightly different stand than Br. Pravin. Hierarchy in the Society of Jesus is not to bring to the forefront, the hegemony of the superior or resentment of the subject to that hegemony. It is purely for the better governance and practice of obedience in the flavor of the third degree of humility. Hence from the subject, there flows the accountability to the superior who in turn becomes accountable to the provincial. On the other hand "Cura personalis" is the characteristic feature of every superior and not the accountability to the subject. "Acatamiento" the total loving submission to the will of God in and through the superior at all circumstances, is what makes the Society unique and prosperous at all time. Obedience is to be practiced as being carried along by the Divine Providence through the agency of the superior, as if one were a lifeless body [Constitution 547].

■ Suresh, SJ | Hazaribaug

Kindness-~~a~~ the way of life

A big thank you to the editor for publishing this article of C. Joe Arun S.J which inspires me by the rich act of kindness of Manisha. This refers to the article "Of a different kind-ness" on the cover page (October 2020). As I reflect it reminds me of our First Fathers who did these types of works. It also challenged me by the way she reaches out to the beggars and the downtrodden peoples. It is an inspiration for us Jesuits to act the same way. If a girl like Manisha can do such an act of kindness, what about us? One sentence that struck me in this article was this: "there is no stopping me, and I hope to convince them soon," says she.

I hope you may publish my article as many young ones may be challenged and inspired.

■ Joswalt Noronha, SJ | Mumbai

Accompanying the Eco- toddlers

I was deeply moved and touched by the article "Our Common Home". It awakened a deep love and understanding of the beauty

of our environment. It is a very interesting thing to learn from our lay collaborators, how we can be more creative in our methods to engage with the young children in some simple activities they like, to remove all their fears, depression and the loneliness caused by the pandemic and, also how well we can use the new technology in this recent times. It also challenges us - the young generation, as we are the future of the Society of Jesus, as ecology is one of our UAPs "to collaborate in the Care of our Common Home". It challenges us too, as to what more can we do to protect our common Mother Earth. The other most important aspect is to accompany the young, closer to their Mother Earth, just as teacher Saritha who accompanies the young and opens a new horizon of how to live a life in the 'service of our Mother Earth'.

■ Noel Fernandes, SJ | Mumbai

Another Discerning JIVAN

Many congratulations for yet another discerning JIVAN! Thank you for the contemplation on the 'runway' to illuminate 'our way of proceeding' in the Editorial. The article on NEP 2020 hits the nail on the head, as far as higher education is concerned. It is evident that the concerns expressed here, stand as dark clouds that would not allow the take-off of most disadvantaged groups from the runway that NEP 2020 offers. With collaboration and networking which are parts of our way of proceeding, we need to come together and register the injustice done to the constitution of our great nation. I am looking forward to more conscience-stirring articles on school education and NEP 2020, given the number of schools that the Church runs; we should have a stand on 'our way of proceeding.'

■ Arul Rayan, SJ | Gandhinagar

Conversion also includes shedding the patriarchal mindset

The various articles of the September issue pointing out the nuances and dynamics involved for Jesuits in partnership with women religious were thought-provoking and insightful. Obviously, the fact that all the articles were written by women religious themselves was indeed just. Evelyn, SCC, has rightly pointed out that women do not want a reversal of gender order but an order of partnership in mission. The steps taken in this regard have been commendable but much more needs to be done. This includes becoming increasingly conscious of the subtle ways, in ways in which the patriarchal mindset influences us Jesuits, as noted by Shalini,

PBVM. These ways are subtle precisely because they appear just and appropriate like the "angel of light" as mentioned in the rules for the second week (SE, n. 332) but in reality lead us towards unjust, and at times even cruel behaviour towards women religious who need to be our equal partners in mission. In this regard, we Jesuits need to do serious soul-searching and this could be considered as part of the call to conversion that the recent letter of Fr. Arturo Sosa reminds us about. In this letter that announces the Ignatian year beginning from May 2021, Fr. Arturo invites Jesuits to "ask for the grace of a real change in our day-to-day life-mission". This real change definitely includes shedding the patriarchal mindset that subtly influences our behaviour towards women religious in particular and all women in general. The call to conversion could also include continuing the process of rethinking governance in the Society. One of the significant aspects of governance that requires to be reinterpreted, is the role of those in authority and leadership as Godfrey D'Lima has pointed out in "Crucial Conversations". We need to be at least open to discuss and consider alternative ways of exercising leadership, in accordance with the spirit of the gospel and the signs of the times.

■ Jeevan Mendonsa, SJ | Rome

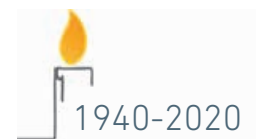
It's time to clean up our gender backpacks.

This refers to the article, "Thinking out of the Gender Box: Challenges to Jesuit Identity and Mission." This is written by Ms. Kochurani Abraham, on page-08 of *Jivan*-September 2020.

As I began to read the article "Thinking out of the Gender Box: Challenges to Jesuit Identity and Mission" something provoked me. I felt very challenging as it says, to think out of the Gender Box, and for that we need to clean up first all the invisible gender backpacks. Therefore the Jesuit formation comes into the picture. I was touched by this, where she says that during the initial and ongoing stages of Jesuit formation, there should be healthy and critical conversation on gender related issues such as, friendship, sexuality and power sharing. And I feel this is a valid point, which many of us don't take seriously. It will help every Jesuit to grow in maturity, mutuality and equality between men and women in the church and in the civil society.

Thank you, Ms. Kochurani Abraham, for her challenging and enriching article.

■ Pradip Gamit, SJ | Mumbai



Fr. Elias Arockiasamy, SJ (AND)

Fr. Elias was born in Ayyampatti, Trichy, Tamil Nadu on 31st July 1940 and entered the Society on 24th Sep. 1962 in Beschi College, Dindigul. He came to Andhra at the invitation of late Fr. T. Balaiah, SJ and worked in different places of Andhra Province as a pioneer. He worked in Suryapet, Karimnagar, Nambur, Loyola Academy, Nallapadu, Vinukonda and KD Peta.

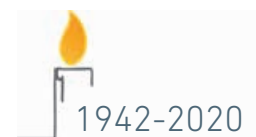
Wherever he worked, he worked in an unassuming way. From 2011 till his death, he worked among the tribals, as the director of LITDS at K.D Peta. He did not visit his family for the last 30 years. He dedicated himself to the given work. He never aspired for anything in his life and was content with his work.

Fr. Elias was a man of God, a great personality in stature and quality, with many affable human qualities. He was humble in doing any service and hilarious in his conversations, and truly human in

dealing with all walks of people. He was a voracious reader of spiritual books, and his sermons used to be short and apt. He was a patient listener and encouraged and consoled people who came to him.

He was a silent and joyful worker, and a silent sufferer too. He was suffering from a few ailments, but avoided going to hospitals. He was a self-made doctor for himself, and used to manage with herbal medicines. He was cheerful and hopeful till the end, in spite of loosing blood. He had developed pneumonia and breathed his last on 12th August morning, in St. Ann's Hospital, Visakhapatnam. We have lost a loving father of the poor - a great human being full of compassion and empathy, and a precious gem. May God grant him Eternal Bliss.

M. Sahaya Raj, SJ



Fr. Patrick de Melo, SJ (GOA)

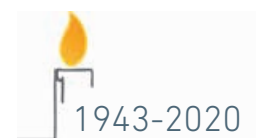
Fr. Patrick de Melo passed away peacefully on 14 August at the Province infirmary in Porvorim, just in time to celebrate the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady in heaven. Fr Pat served the province in various capacities: Provincial, Novice Master, Rector, Spiritual Director, Counsellor, Teacher etc. His departure has created a void which no one else can replace. He entered the Society of Jesus on 06 October 1959, in Soutelo, Portugal, and was ordained on 25th March, 1972.

As a Provincial, he laid great emphasis on 'cura personalis' which enabled him to build a good relationship with the Jesuit brethren and the Lord. His great strength was spirituality, retreat direction and counselling. He offered these strengths in accompanying novices, seminarians, diocesan clergy, lay people and religious. This was his unique Ignatian contribution that he alone could make. What he offered individuals was the unfailing love of God. He

assured them that God in his everlasting love cares for us and gives us the required graces. His life too proclaimed the same message. He was not particularly anxious about his health and wellbeing. He believed that God would always provide him with the required strength and graces to continue his ministries as long as God wanted to. This harmony between his life and his message, was picked up by all who had the fortune and the blessing to come in touch with him.

Pat had to endure a lot of pain and suffering during the past few months moving in and out of hospitals. He endured all his suffering with serenity and silence. May the Merciful Lord who sustained him during his life here on earth receive Pat into his glorious Kingdom, where there is no more pain and suffering.

Agnelo Mascarenhas, SJ



Fr. Walter Stephen Andrade, SJ (KAR)

Fr. Walter Andrade SJ (78), a Jesuit from the Fatima Retreat House Mangaluru, former principal of St Joseph's College of Commerce and St Joseph's Evening College, Bengaluru and St Aloysius Evening College, Mangaluru, passed away on August 26, 2020. He is fondly remembered as a dedicated educationist, intellectual, scholar, and yet a simple, affectionate and caring Jesuit.

Born on 5th July 1943 at Cascia, Mangaluru, Fr. Walter Stephen Andrade was the youngest of seven children of Stephen and Mary Andrade. Fr Walter did his schooling, and graduation at St Aloysius College, Mangaluru. Later he went to Loyola College, Chennai for his Masters in Economics. He joined the Society of Jesus at Mount St Joseph, in 1967. After his ordination on April 30th, 1977 he worked as Vice Principal and Principal for twenty years in Karnataka Jesuit Colleges. He was Socius to the Provincial, Director

of Scholastics and superior of Fatima Retreat House, Mangaluru.

Fr. Walter was a great educator, administrator and teacher. He was a voracious reader and knowledgeable person. He had a phenomenal memory and remained close to students, staff and family members. He had a great love for the poor and the underprivileged.

As a Jesuit priest, Fr. Walter was a person for others and remained at the service of the community. He was a hard worker and an efficient person, and yet remained humble and quiet. The Karnataka Jesuit Province will miss him, and his memory will remain with us forever. We have lost a great person in him. We pray the Lord to grant him Eternal Rest.

Eugene Lobo, SJ



George Pattery, SJ

I was fascinated by the re-discovery of spiritual (sp) conversation as an effective tool of fostering companionship in mission. This method places me in touch with my interior movements; it enables me to listen actively and speak intentionally; it implies the earnest desire to

recognize the working of the Spirit. I have experienced it employed magnificently in the Enlarged Council meetings of Fr. General; I have witnessed its working in some of our communities and in board meetings. It gives a level playing field for all who participate in the process, and shuts out the argumentative mind-set that refuses to listen. However, it was rather saddening to hear that sp. conversation was likened to a mountain giving birth to a mouse, meaning that the long REGAE process resulted only in sp. conversation. In fact, sp. conversation is a bigger mountain and a game changer. Reason does not dominate; the so-called clever ones do not hijack our meetings. We grow into a discerning group.

About two-thirds of our men in the South Asian Conference attended the spiritual animation process; a great deal of energy was generated around an increased sense of universality, to go beyond province

boundaries; this was more visible among the young Jesuits. This desire to revisit Zonal, Province and Region boundaries was not carried through. JCSA seems to have shied away from capturing this moment. It is now left to the zonal chairs to advance the process of restructuring, practically reduced to nobody's business! Is it a subtle way of ignoring the reminder from Fr. Nicolas to undertake a more thorough 're-structuring'?

Are we Major Superiors sufficiently free to make decisions that advance our life-mission according to our

'preferences' or are we being 'controlled' by the directors of work of big institutions with large resources, financial and otherwise? The rural missions totally depend on the provincials for their life-mission. They are under strict 'rules' of financial accountability. How can we make our governance typically Ignatian, that do not create two 'classes' of Jesuits with different accountabilities?

Called by the Lord, gathered in the Spirit, we live by the interior law of love in freedom. If at all there is 'power-at-work' in our governance, it is the power of powerlessness, as exchanged on the cross! Religious governance is radically a different way of exercising 'power'. It is oriented towards the life-mission of each member and the body of the Society. Earlier as provincial of Calcutta, and now as POSA, how did I govern? Did the helps of 'review/feedback' envisaged in 'our way of proceeding' transform me? I was not, and am not sufficiently free within, to make governance a continuous discerning process. If both the 'superior and the subject' are on this path of transformation, then life-mission becomes a pathway to God! Probably, we have relegated the project 'pathway to God' to the background? It is problematic then to be either a 'subject' and/or a 'superior'!

The author is the former Provincial of Calcutta Province and former President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (POSA).

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Nithin Monteiro, SJ



One of the unintended effects of technological acceleration is "institutional inertia." It wells up from a strong resistance to "progress" either due to the lack of ability to comprehend the change or simply because the institution/person denies the good in it. Many 'superiors' are easy victims of "institutional inertia." Well, I am neither weaving a narrative that 'superiors' are stuck in their analog cities, chained by their "austere-meaningful-sacred-moral-glorious" past, nor am I accusing them of disparaging the netizens of the contemporary digital cities! But I am expressing my discontent about the waning acuity in 'superiors' to comprehend, analyze and respond to the pernicious effects of unprecedented technological acceleration! I present three reasons to support my argument.

First, many 'superiors' suffer from an epidemic named "digital and technological illiteracy." This kind of "illiteracy" not only includes the lack of knowledge to use technological and digital artefacts, but also the lack of will and desire to educate themselves about them. Technology has altered our interests, the things we 'think about' and 'think with.' As a consequence, the "human community" is itself altered. And, a Jesuit community is no exception! A "technologically and digitally ignorant" superior would be helpless to address the issues of a technologically altered community. This situation raises a pertinent question; "Are our 'superiors' competent enough to govern the 'netizens of a digital world'?"

Second, a sizeable number of 'superiors' contribute to "lazy thinking" in a community. We live in an age of digital plenitude. Easy access to information has plummeted our power to think critically and has bolstered "lazy thinking." Many 'superiors' set wrong precedence in communities by graduating from the "WhatsApp University." They spend hours consuming extraneous information. A few transmit "official information" through WhatsApp while others naively forward "fake news!" Most of them depend on 'Google' for their exhortations, recollections and especially daily sermons. There is nothing wrong in having recourse to Google. But acute dependence on search engines has taken away our commitment to personal reflection and critical thinking, giving way to lazy thinking! What happens if the 'superior' himself becomes an epitome of such "lazy thinking?"

Third, many 'superiors' divorce the "discerning animator" in them! Information superabundance renders 'truth' into an elusive concept! Therefore, an essential and an indispensable quality of a superior is the 'interior freedom to discern.' Many 'superiors' let their "personal interests and aversions" affect a community's discernment process. Moreover, many 'superiors' grow old as either "control freaks" or as "perpetual fence sitters!" Only a few mature as "discerning animators", helping the community realize God's will for their mission.

It would not hurt the pride of a 'superior' to heed the advice of the dead: "An unexamined life is not worth living!"

The author studies in Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Boston College.

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“Many 'superiors' let their 'personal interests and aversions' affect a community's discernment process. Moreover, many 'superiors' grow old as either 'control freaks' or as 'perpetual fence sitters!' Only a few mature as 'discerning animators', helping the community realize God's will for their mission.”

“

Are we Major Superiors sufficiently free to make decisions that advance our life-mission according to our 'preferences' or are we being 'controlled' by the directors of work of big institutions with large resources, financial and otherwise?”

Organic Fruits from Drought-Prone Beed Dt.

This farmer of Beed Dt. switched to organic fruit farming after attending a seminar. He made a fortune growing organic papaya and watermelon.



Marginal small farmers do not easily experiment with alternative crops or new methods of planting. A farmer in perennially drought-stricken Parali taluka of Beed district chose to break the tradition. He has become quite a successful pioneer.

"I used to cultivate soybean, grams and other arid crops common to the region. A guiding session on organic farming, and its success on fruit crops, convinced me to try growing papaya in one acre of land," says Sandip Gite.

He planted 1,000 saplings in late 2019, some of which were given to him by Mayank Gandhi working on empowering village farmers.

Natural organic farming required less water. In seven months, he earned Rs. 3 Lakh from the crop with cultivating expenses of 1.5 lakhs. He also planted watermelon as a complementary crop. This meant manure, water and other resources were used only once. A double-crop in two acres helped him to earn Rs.11 lakh. Soon other farmers too wanted to experiment the same. In January 2020 eight Farmers, and later 50 farmers, are trying to grow other fruit varieties also.

A total of about 150 acres are used for fruit plantations

now. Papaya in about 40 acres, and the remaining land for custard apple, guava, sweet lime, lemon, and mango.

Surplus Papaya produced, were sent to the Delhi market. "I used the same technique as Sandip's, on a three-acre land, and earned 3 lakhs so far, by selling six tons of produce in Delhi. The fruit is still getting harvested and I hope to have a good income in future," Subhash Gite, cultivating custard apple and papaya said.

"The idea to cultivate other fruit varieties is to ensure that they supplement each other, and some produce is received every few months." This would ensure more than two harvests in a year. **It could also reduce the rate of farmer suicides in the region.**

Dilip Zende, joint director of the agriculture department (Pune division) said, "Many such experiments are being reported by farmers earning a good amount of money." There are different techniques used by farmers, and the government is trying to study their success and benefits in the long run.

Adapted from TBI

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

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Silent Crackers



Image Source: The Hindu

When Diwali comes, crackers will fill the sky. But for decades, two Tamil Nadu villages - Kollukudipatti and Singampunari - in the Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu have not burst crackers during Diwali festival. The reasons the villagers give will move you.

They have never seen bursting crackers inside their village. They have stayed off from crackers during Diwali. Instead of bursting colourful crackers, they watch and marvel at exotically colourful birds that arrive in Vettangudi Bird Sanctuary as the winter sets in during the Diwali month. The village people throng to the sanctuary to watch a variety of birds such as Grey Herons, Darters, Spoonbills, White Ibises, Asian Open Bill Storks and even some endangered species like Little Cormorant, Little Egret, Cattle Egret and Flamingos. For these two villages, watching the birds is a way of celebrating the festival.

Mr. Arumugam, former Panchayat President, Kollukudipatti, said, "Earlier, during the time of Deepavali,

we had exploded loud crackers, and on hearing the sound, the birds started to shake vigorously. In the process, their eggs fell down and were damaged. On seeing the birds shiver, we held a meeting with our village elders and then decided not to burst crackers."

The adults took a firm decision to give up crackers during festivals, but it wasn't easy convincing the children that they would have to sacrifice the yearly custom, especially one that they eagerly awaited. The school teachers told moving stories of birds that die due to the loud noise of crackers. This was sufficient for the kids not to ask for crackers, but instead enjoy watching colourful birds.

It has now become a tradition, an unwritten law. It is a counter-tradition that is passed on to successive generations. Diwali means for many, the noise of crackers. But for Kollukudipatti and Singampunari, it is watching the beauty of birds in silence.