

August 2020

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA



**The Post-Corona
'New Normal'**

Nation Submerged

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of the boy* who lost his mother,
not because of starvation but our indifference.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of the farmers who lost their crops,
not because of locusts but our greediness.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of the poor who barely eat one meal per day,
not because of scarcity but our selfishness.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of migrant workers who walk miles together to reach home,
not because of poor governance but our votes.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of patients who are hospitalized,
not because of Corona but our irresponsibility.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of citizens who are treated as strangers,
not because of religion but our fanaticism.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of journalists who are silenced,
not because of their inefficiency but our silence.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of the nature whose resources are ruined
not because of the need but our want.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of the minorities who are persecuted,
not because of their faith but our insulation.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of the youth who don't get jobs,
not because of their inability but our elected body.

Our Nation is drowning in the tears of the bonded labourers who work hard for nothing,
not because of their debt but our apathy.

Alas! Our Nation is drowning not in floods but in the tears of beloved Bharat Mata

(*A child trying to wake his dead mother up at a railway station in Bihar's Muzaffarpur.)

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PUBLISHED AT

Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, P.B. No. 70,
St. Xavier's Road, Anand-388001,
Gujarat.

PRINTED AT

Anand Press, Gamdi, Anand-388001,
Gujarat.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES OF JIVAN

(Visit jivanmagazine.com for online subscription)



Jesuits:
₹1000 / yearly

Non-Jesuits:
₹750 / yearly

Foreign:
US \$25 (Or ₹1500)
/ yearly

Online Edition:
₹700 / yearly

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



Fr. Adolfo Nicolás: To the formees

Fr. Adolfo Nicolás our former Superior General had much to say to the formees. In his letters he pointed out specifically what it means to be a Jesuit today. I would like to cull out three thoughts from his writings and interactions for our consideration:

Inculturated Universality: Having spent many years of his life working in Japan and in the Philippines, Fr. Nicolás advised the formees to have a multicultural perspective. He believed that a multicultural perspective could bring about a larger framework of the universal nature of the Society of Jesus.

Depth and Creativity: One of the letters Fr. Nicolás wrote to the Society of Jesus was entitled "From Distraction to Dedication: An Invitation to the Centre." In it, he enjoined Jesuits to avoid superficiality and go deeper into true spiritual and academic depth. Repeatedly, he insisted on the need to combat superficiality, working from depth and creativity.

Call to be Happy Jesuits : When he spoke to the Jesuit novices of Indonesia in 2009, Fr. Nicolás said, "I hope you'll be happy Jesuits, because you'll be useless as unhappy Jesuits." He invited Jesuit formees to "be happy, be free, be centred on God and Jesus Christ."

Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, the humble man from Spain who spent most of his time in Asia was a man of God, ever wise, ever simple, and ever true. May Fr. Adolfo Nicolás Rest in Peace.

| Sch. Anush D'Cunha, SJ | Bengaluru

The Kohima Reductions!!

Within a short span of 50 years the Jesuits of the Kohima Region have brought about a truly amazing social and economic transformation in the lives of the poorest tribals of North-East India (JIVAN, April, 2020). Moreover, they have succeeded in establishing vibrant Christian communities wherever they have ventured - from remote villages like Palizi, Trizino and Buragaon in Arunachal Pradesh, to Jakhama and Phesama in Nagaland, to Dawagre and Denggagre in Meghalaya. Their extraordinary achievements are reminiscent of the near-miraculous transformation brought about by the Jesuits, over 300 years ago, in the Reductions of Paraguay, among the abandoned Indian tribes in the jungles of South America.

The manner in which they have gone about implementing the faith-justice option of GC 32, throughout the seven States of the North-East, in very challenging circumstances, is truly exemplary. It is persistence in establishing primary and secondary schools everywhere, in places where people could not even dream of getting the most basic education that helped them achieve this phenomenal success. As Nelson Mandela said, "Our most powerful tool to bring about social transformation is education." From primary schools to university colleges and research institutes, like the NESRC for social science research and the LCHR for legal aid to the poor, the Region has done it all in typical Jesuit fashion. Hearty congratulations to the pioneering Jesuits of the Kohima Region who had this far-sighted vision, and their successors who worked tirelessly to make the vision a reality with the active involvement of the local people everywhere!

| Joseph M. Dias, SJ | Mumbai

JESWITS



Are you migrant labourers?
No, we call it annual transfers!!



If these on-line masses go on for too long,
what about our collections?



Now that there's no TikTok,
how are we to pass our time?"



You know what I like most of Covid-19?
It has kept the whole community at home!!



POSA Speaks

GEORGE PATTERY, SJ

Pandemic lessons for Apostolic Religious Life

The pandemic is not leaving us soon. It looks like Covid-19 is defying science and religion! Four features mark the pandemic experience: i) the entire humankind/creation is inter-connected and inter-dependent; ii) human life is fragile on planet earth; iii) uncertainty seems most certain today; and iv) the pandemic has occasioned the best in humanity to shine forth.

The recognition that humans on the planet are **inter-connected** vibrates well with religious perception. The apostolic religious in the Church belong to a particular religious tradition. However, this belongingness to a particular tradition is so absolutized that the larger belongingness is often forgotten. Covid-19 reminds religious of our fundamental connectedness with all and everything. Covid-19 challenges the religious to recognize the bigger world and expand our horizon accordingly.

The **fragility** of human life hits us from nowhere, as never before. Covid-19 makes us pause, wonder and reflect over life. Religious life is expected to distinguish between the permanent and the transient, and live according to the lasting values. It is an invitation to join the enterprise of the kingdom of justice, peace and joy. Over the years, 'small is beautiful' has given way to 'bigger is better'. The desire for unsatiating consumerism eclipsed our questioning and our doubts. The many deaths and the fear of infection radically questions our accustomed ways.

Uncertainty can be wholesome. Religious life recognizes that our grip on power, pleasure and wealth gives us a false sense of certainty. Competition and consumerism got us into prisons of our own making (Tagore). "The storm/ (pandemic) exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities" - Pope Francis. Religious life implies relentless seeking after the Absolute. Uncertainty unsettles our certainties. As religious, are we settlers or seekers of the Ultimate?

Covid-19, with all its devastating power, also brings out **the noblest** in people. There are stories of men and women reaching out to people beyond the borders of caste, religion and language. The incredible stories of courage of the migrants on the road in spite of the odds, and the narratives of bravery among Covid-19 warriors are the signals of transcendence - hopefully this is the future of the post-Covid-19 world!



Editor's Desk

VINAYAK JADAV, SJ

The 'Encounter' of Truth amidst a Pandemic of Untruth

The outrageous saga of Vikas Dubey ended leaving a sizable section of India's citizenry encountered by the bullets of untruth. The extrajudicial settlement of all four accused of the Telangana doctor's rape-murder stunned us as to how close untruth can go to humanity. We still are not able to figure out clearly the truth behind the 'finger pointing' and the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Galwan Valley. India barely escaped the 'Coronil' cure for Corona!

The media has long ago divorced its marriage to 'truth-telling' and kept changing loyalties earning the bad name of 'presstitute'. The pre-election promises of politicians prove only a joke on the masses. Spokespersons of political parties are shameless in arguing out party positions mocking brazenly the common sense of the viewers, leave alone their intelligence. The statistics of Corona testing make us wonder if there is a difference at all between what we have distinctly known as positive and negative. The phenomenon of rampant conspiracy theories is yet another question on the world's 'Truth quotient.'

Thanks to the 'fake news' culture of the media, we have spoonerisms like 'Modia' or 'Godi Media!' The virus of untruth has struck pan-globally. Be it Trump's political stance against George Floyd, or Erdogan's converting Istanbul's Hagia Sophia Museum (originally a Byzantine Cathedral) back into a mosque, untruth reigns across the world. Speaking the truth is beginning to be the aberration or an anomaly and uttering 'naked' lies is now the 'new normal'. Political leaders across the world have exploited the art of 'post-truth'* for mesmerizing their vote banks. The interconnectedness of Religion, Politics, Industry, Media, Judiciary, Executive, Legislative, Bureaucracy, Election machinery and the latest, Military is salutary!!!

We have reasons to be alarmed that out of over 6 billion people in the world, 13 million are affected by the Corona virus; but we seem to have fewer reasons to be aghast that the virus of untruth is spreading at the speed of light. We are desolate that scientists have still not found the medicine and vaccine for Corona. But we are not desolate enough that there are fewer people interested in the remedy to untruth. Instead, we have learnt to live with this latter!

No wonder Gandhi appears increasingly 'alien', 'out of date' and 'irrelevant'. His vaccine of Truth and Non-violence seems ineffective against the huge viral load of untruth today.

During the Gujarat genocide, I witnessed the mockery of truth like never before. Medha Patkar was physically assaulted by a pro-Narmada mob in Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad. To shield her, we hurriedly pulled the only available wooden board placed nearby and only later realized that on it was ironically written in Gandhi's own handwriting "Leave not Truth even to the point of death."

In a pandemic of fake news and fake encounters, fake witnesses and fake testimonies we need to protect ourselves against a virus far worse than Sars CoV2. When the masses do not care to protect themselves from the virus of untruth, and the immunity of those combating it is gradually diminishing, we need to chant the sacred prayer of the Upanishads "Asatoma Sadgamaya" (Lead us from untruth to truth) perhaps louder than the hysterical "Bharat Mata ki Jay" (Hail mother India). This will make our Independence Day (15th August) truly the day of Independence from the rule of untruth. Who knows? Just as Corona will be conquered one day, so too will untruth be. Satyamev Jayate (Truth alone triumphs)!

*Culture of argument based on emotions and beliefs rather than facts.



Transforming Education after Covid-19

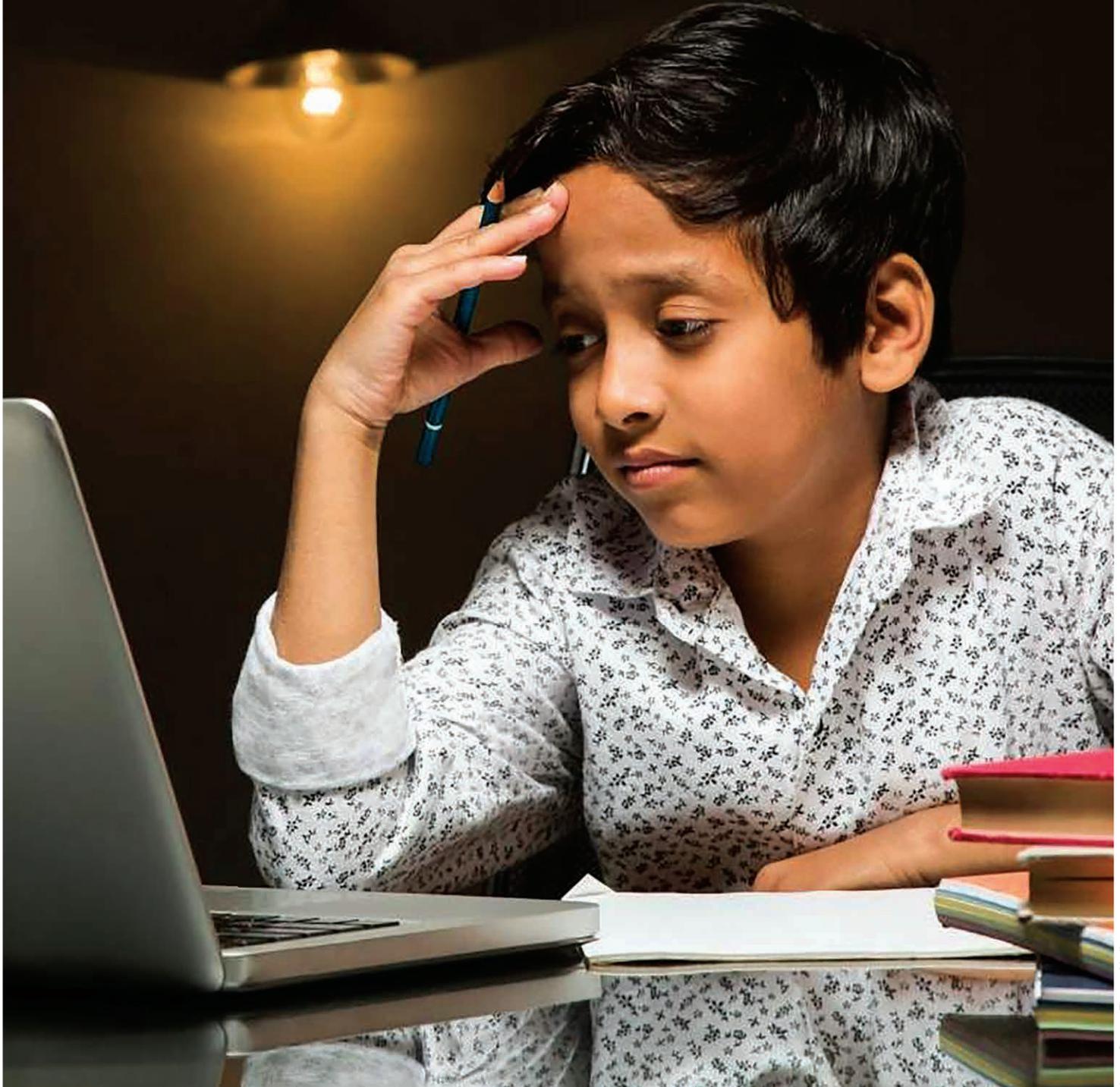


Image Source: Times of India

Defining moments strike us when we least expect them, especially during times of uncertainties and crises. They trigger our imagination and propel us into action. On a casual evening walk a few days back, I happened to see one of my acquaintances waving out to me and then come walking towards me. He narrated to me the story of his daughter Preema who studies in Std. VI in one of the local schools. The father did not have any idea of online classes. He had managed to buy a second hand mobile phone from his neighbour for the purpose. Preema was initially excited about having a mobile but as the online classes and assignments continued her initial zeal and fervour diminished. The father who was uneducated was a mute witness to the inexplicable efforts of the daughter grappling with the issues.

Preema complained of boredom; she felt anxious about her level of learning. She found the online classes monotonous; there was no sense of excitement. She went about with a long face all day long. She missed her classmates with whom she was interacting earlier on a daily basis, sharing moments of the little joys of life. The poor father shared about his daughter's woes and preoccupations with me. I could empathize with him but I was sure that like any other issue, the root of all this was neither in the student nor in the online mode of teaching. But the parents and their daughter manifested signs of helplessness with regard to this new challenge.

The case of Preema and her parents is just the tip of the iceberg. How long can we keep our children within the four walls of our homes? In fact, our children learn the values of co-existence and cooperation in the school. We are poised between a paradox-like situation where, on the one hand we have children who are digital natives, and on the other, there are parents who are digital migrants.

The pandemic has posed umpteen challenges to teachers, school administration, students, and parents with respect to the new lifestyle of their wards with gadgets, extreme poverty, lack of employment, desperate attempts to make ends meet! The list is unending. Well, the time has come to think beyond the pandemic and its impact. If we, as leaders in education, don't respond to this challenge quickly and become catalysts in evolving a pragmatic and futuristic educational model we will be leaving millions of Preemas victims of boredom, anxiety and confusion. Covid-19 is here to stay for some time and we need to live with it; the world cannot stop its onward movement, and we need to evolve. I am reminded of what Charles Darwin wrote: "It is neither the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one that is most adaptable to change."

Covid-19 is much more than a health crisis. It is a human, psychological, economic, political and social crisis. It is attacking societies at the very core. The outbreak of the pandemic has affected all segments of the global population and proved detrimental to the most vulnerable sections of the society. It continues to affect especially those living below the poverty line, those without access to clean drinking water, senior citizens, people with disabilities, youth and indigenous people. Refugees, migrants and the displaced also stand to suffer disproportionately both from the pandemic and from its debilitating impact. Every disaster, natural or man-made, poses a challenge to the core values of all educational institutions and their espoused educational paradigms.

Power to adapt

One of the predominant questions that the pandemic poses is about the level of resilience that our educational institutions demonstrate in the face of the disaster. Resilience is not just the capacity to bounce back or return to the status quo. It is the temper, adaptability and power to stand the pressure and the shock unleashed by the pandemic. In fact, it is the level of preparedness with which the educational institutions look forward to the future during the post-Covid-19 era. Every model of education has its strengths and vulnerabilities. When we are hit at the core of our educational endeavour, we need to quickly adapt ourselves to the already available modes of educational technology. We need to move on to a model that is inspired by 'blended' learning that goes beyond the normal, text-driven curriculum to an inclusive, diverse and expansive learning.

A new pedagogy

We need to graduate from the text-obsessed pedagogy to a con-text driven curriculum where life itself becomes the text. This paradigm shift could also mean a quantum leap from the 'normal' text-based teaching-learning and assessment model to a 'process' driven open education. The future of any sensible educational endeavour lies in adapting to the new context quickly and evolving a blended teaching-learning paradigm in tune with the vision and mission of the institution. Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational opportunities along with the traditional classroom-based methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and students, with some elements of student control over time, place, and pace. This process requires a participative enterprise involving all stakeholders making them accountable for the systemic change we envisage.

Blended learning – a hybridised approach

Obviously, there are serious implications to primary, secondary and higher education institutions when we adopt this novel model. As schools look for ways to give their students a personalized learning experience, blended learning can be an effective option. This hybridised approach of offline-online modes of learning combines face-to-face instruction with online learning, and ensures flexibility in terms of learning space and pace for the learners. In fact, the blended learning model augments the level of individualisation of learning experiences. The initial objective is to ensure that children like Preema continue to access learning even if it means online learning. But a complete cessation of learning would amount to loss of the learning rhythm of the child. It does not mean that migration to an online ecosystem amounts to just placing a webcam in front of the teacher. The online sessions, discussions and evaluation must be supervised with equal precision as in the offline setup.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the students' way of life as in the case of Preema. In India alone around 32 crore students across the Primary, Secondary, Tertiary and Higher education levels are hit by the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. Staying home itself has severe social and economic implications for all stakeholders. Preparing our youth for the



Image Source: The Hindu

The future of any sensible educational endeavour lies in adapting to the new context quickly and evolving a blended teaching-learning paradigm in tune with the vision and mission of the institution. Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational opportunities along with the traditional classroom-based methods.”

challenges of the post-Covid-19 scenario demands that we keep them at the centre of all our educational endeavours.

Possibilities for Primary and Secondary Education

The entire teaching-learning process must engage students in creative tasks and activities. The internalization of concepts and learning outcomes will depend on the creative and imaginative tasks and activities that the online/offline pedagogies will provide to students. In fact, learning in this mode will be a collaborative venture between the teacher and the students. The learning model itself will be essentially a peer learning model - a model that inspires learning by ‘doing’ the tasks and activities together on a common and equal platform. Any deep learning model requires this characteristic of collaborative learning.

It is said that values are not taught but caught. While accepting that this is true we find that the pandemic has struck at the very roots of our value system. As providers of value-based education, we need to create a viable partnership with all stakeholders, especially the parents, and form an alliance of individuals promoting social solidarity rather than social distancing - the watchword today. The system is getting used to an idiom that promotes isolation, hatred and distancing in the face of the pandemic. We, as educators, have the responsibility to create an alternative vocabulary for our children. In this endeavour, parents will play a crucial role. Blended learning model will bring to the fore the real experience of children and create a space for discussion and critical thinking to posit enduring values that will be drivers of social change.

Implications for Higher Education

It is high time institutions of Higher Education create a consortium for collaborative ventures in terms of sharing learning resources, and making space for credit transfers wherein students can move from one institution to another according to the graduate or research outcomes. Our futuristic model must accommodate a seamless vertical as well as horizontal academic movement. The blended model will

provide multiple entries and exits for students so that they earn credits from various modes of learning from different institutions and graduate on their own terms.

In the past, most of our investment has been on building infrastructure but with this new paradigm, we need to focus on investing a great deal in terms of procuring technologies and bandwidth. We are required to create an exclusive institutional e-learning portal of our own so that all academic programmes and activities can be launched from the same. Higher Education institutions need to take recourse to placements and internships on a digital mode and encourage research and innovation. Facilitating start ups through incubation centres and harnessing the power of entrepreneurship that the digital world has to offer us will go a long way in attaining the ultimate goal of higher education.

The challenges ahead

The model that we are envisaging may sound exciting and preferable at this moment. But any over-valuation of technology driven endeavour has its own vulnerabilities. The new experiment has to evolve concrete and strict guidelines regarding the optimum but judicious use of the online time and resources. The utilization of the screen time and adoption of safe practices appropriate to the age of the students need to be regulated closely. Each institution must make a thorough study of their respective context, student demography, socio-economic backgrounds, quantum of students, their varied aptitudes and learning styles before venturing into adopting the model. In fact, a proactive approach that is future driven and learner centric is the need of the hour. The future of our education depends on collaboration, sharing of educational resources, technologies and networking among institutions for bringing in the much needed educational innovations and reforms. Post-Covid-19 epoch has presented us with that opportunity.

To read more, visit www.jivanmagazine.com

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Social Media: The Indefatigable Host of Corona Content

A few years after twitter was launched, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) had issued a justifiable guideline to its newsroom: Break news first on our platforms before tweeting. It's no secret that today there are journalists who have more followers on the social media than readers or viewers of their publications or channels! With surface

are not a reservoir of expertise. In a marketplace of public perception, buoyed by herd mentality or the need to sound politically correct, impulse can eclipse reason, particularly during an evolving news story. A frenzied urge to share or retweet information without even reading content or checking the source, triggers an inevitable side effect - fake news and

rumours, that trend with hashtags. From an overnight magic pill for Corona to misleading claims on vaccines, from photoshopped research findings to conspiracy theories and an endless debate over whether it is a laboratory manufactured or natural virus, the social media plays an indefatigable host. The saving grace is that there are experts in every field who are more than willing to part with their domain knowledge on these platforms.

The classic force multiplier effect has enabled the social media to be a saviour too. It has transformed ordinary folks into Citizen Journalists. We have seen crowd sourcing and funding during natural disasters in the not too recent past. When the State has failed its citizens, or fallen short, 'We The People' have risen to be Good Samaritans, armed just with twitter handles or Facebook accounts and, of course, large hearts.

transmission of Covid-19 still feared, the template routine of starting the day with a crisply folded newspaper in one hand and a steaming cup of coffee in the other, has changed. News updates on the pandemic are read off smart phones, predominantly from social media sites. And all news organisations maintain a robust social media presence as it guarantees more traction for their stories. The accent is clear. Get the word out.

The social media is here to stay. With its pivotal position in public discourse, it may as well be termed the 'Fifth Estate' in our democracy. However, despite its reach and impact, it cannot cannibalise the mindspace that the mainstream media commands. Facebook or twitter or LinkedIn or WhatsApp

This Corona scourge is no different. Blood donor or plasma requests, information about the availability of hospital beds, SOS appeals from stranded folks, the heart-rending plight of migrant workers, daily updates of new cases, the death toll, figures on testing and discharge of patients are invariably seen first on these social networking sites.

The power to hold a mirror to the mainstream media can never be over-emphasised.

When sections of the 'national' media suffers from the tyranny of distance, often turning a Nelson's Eye to the North East or Down South, like a recent case of Delhi and Mumbai centric



Image Source: The Conversation

newsrooms going overboard about Amitabh Bachchan's family testing positive for Corona, neglecting floods in Assam, it is the social media that calls them out. When prime time tv news anchors, often accused of being cheer leaders, fight shy of asking the powers that be the tough questions – be it relief funds or lockdown violations by bigwigs, or inexplicable diktats to light lamps and clang plates, it's the social media that fills in with that adversarial role and speaks truth to power. One must concede that there are planted tweets and posts and anonymous sniper attacks and vituperative trolling. But the inherent nature of the social media is that unlike the mainstream media, there is no piper to call the tune!

The downside is often offset by the present need to adapt during the pandemic. With smart phones now almost a part of our anatomy, fuelled by a series of lockdowns, hospitals and health authorities have jumped in with online awareness campaigns and myth busting - masks to social distancing to hand washing to home consultation and treatment. The live video element makes it a ready reckoner. While the social media has helped home alone senior citizens stay connected with their sons or daughters abroad, there is the flip side of addiction, leading to depression and mental health issues.

Governments of the day have an instantaneous and free tool to disseminate public health and Covid-19 related information. Most departments have their own accounts whose timelines are veritable bulletin boards. With officials also maintaining their own handles, redressal of public grievances is now just a click away – through tweets, posts, WhatsApp calls or video conferencing. Frankly, these measures were in vogue well before the pandemic but they seem like life savers now more than ever before. In lieu of regular face to face meetings with the public, the new Chennai Police Commissioner Mahesh Aggarwal has started WhatsApp video calls to interact with petitioners.

Egregious administrative lapses; whether it is a video of insensitive officials, or the shocking interference by a mob denying a medical martyr Dr. Simon Hercules a decent burial in Chennai, or pathetic hospital facilities, like a case of rain water pouring through a gaping hole in the ceiling of a hospital ward in North India or Shylockian private hospital bills for Corona treatment, are effortlessly flagged on the social media. Public pressure is then built, galvanising the authorities to act. This includes the judiciary taking suo motu notice of news reports that go viral. The sacrifices of unsung Covid warriors – doctors, nurses, para-medical staff get duly highlighted and applauded. The videos and images of doctors after removing their Personal Protection Equipment were moving, to say the least.

Serving as a potent barometer of public opinion, the social media outcry, for instance over the proposed conduct of school examinations, was instrumental in making State governments retrace their steps. With a mobile camera in the hands of many citizens, police excesses can be quickly publicised. The macabre custodial torture of a father-son duo in Sathankulam in Tamil Nadu and their subsequent death led to a collective clamour for justice and a parallel drawn with the police killing of George Floyd in America. The angst over inflated Covid treatment bills resulted in the government capping these packages. Social media activism is the new thorn in the establishment's flesh.

Should maids be allowed into homes during the lockdown? Can Residents Welfare Associations prevent people from walking inside gated communities? Can animal lovers be stopped from feeding stray dogs? Are landlords entitled to claim full rent during the lockdown? Are tenants justified in seeking rental waivers? Are parents justified in holding back school fees despite online classes being conducted? What is the ideal screen time exposure for kids? Can companies sack employees without severance packages? Are airlines bound to refund air fare for cancelled tickets? Do you need an e-pass to travel within a district? You can get credible replies to almost all these legitimate queries on the social media? Ask and you shall receive!

If boredom stares you in the face, you know where to turn. The meme factory works overtime during the lockdown. The sheer creativity on display that is so willingly shared with no copyright strings attached, are sure shot stress busters. The improvised lyrics of the Corona version of 'Do Re Mi' still rings in our ears. Not to miss the flurry of Do It Yourself tasks like haircuts to dish washing. Scrolling down a timeline can be therapeutic. As long as one is not bogged down by negativity and Prophets of Doom that jostle for space here.

Converting a stumbling block into a stepping stone, there are neighbourhood newspapers like Mylapore Times that have had to suspend their print versions but managed to reinvent themselves. Its Founder -Editor Vincent D'Souza has been using the newspaper's social media pages to build a bridge with readers. So an elderly parent staying alone can get a doctor to visit with a simple post on Facebook tagging the newspaper. The mainstream media has been forced to adopt similar outreach strategies to stay relevant during the pandemic.

The good news quotient has been quite high. Ordinary citizens have been motivated to take up volunteering, with a gentle nudge and the potential to have their good deeds go viral. A socially conscious resident Baskar Seshadri crowd funds the regular supply of tea and snacks to sanitary workers in his locality. An ardent animal welfare activist Abhinaya Devaraj plays Doctor Dolittle by criss-crossing Chennai every day to feed hundreds of street dogs, cats and cattle, rescue abandoned pets, put them up for adoption, administer first aid to injured animals, and have them neutered. Two 'Mask-eteers' – school boys Rohan Mecheri and Tejas Narayan collect money to manufacture and distribute masks to people. The social media has an insatiable appetite and no space constraint for such stories that often end up having a cascading effect.

From the earlier viral content like a wink scene in a regional movie to weird events like ice bucket or bottle cap challenges, the social media has held its own during this pandemic. If the Original Sins, as it were, of anonymity and abuse are forgiven, the years of Social Media Distancing, as propounded by its critics, seem far fetched today!

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Baptism by Covid-19

Has it changed the Church?



Image Courtesy: The Statesman

I don't know whether Covid-19 will change our theology or our churches, but it has certainly changed our homes. Today we are thinking of God and the Church differently, and expressing our thoughts differently.

Rituals, and what was once considered essential for the faith, have taken a back seat to what is now essential to life. 'Physical distancing' has become the obligation that has shut the doors on Sunday Mass and the sacraments, and 'virtual closeness' has become the norm.

Authentically Christian

Yet, paradoxically, we have grown closer as a human community, reaching out to our neighbours - the old, the isolated, the starving - and those we usually took for granted

(our domestic workers, building staff, the '*istriwallah*', the '*raddiwallah*').

Instead of putting money into the collection box to be disbursed by the clergy, we paid salaries to our absent staff and made collections for service providers. We chose our own charities, funding protective equipment for healthcare workers, donating provisions and hot meals for slum-dwellers and migrant workers, and even provided food for stray cats and dogs.

We joined hands with people of all faiths to build a network of caring, animated by different faith traditions and deities but united in one common humanity. And as the virus spreads, running roughshod over the haves and have-nots, we are forced to recognise our interconnectedness and take responsibility for the health of all.



Image Courtesy: Matters India

“Ultimately, it is not the physical church that matters, but being church that does. As a friend put it, “If the Church contributes to make the world a better place I will get involved. But if I get the same opportunity through a non-church organization I will also take it.””

House churches

Confined to their homes, families are realising that a church is not four walls. Like the first Christians, we too are gathering in ‘house churches’ to pray and sing, and reflect on life in the light of Scripture. “Work-from-home routines have started but this time together has remained sacred,” one woman shared.

More often than not, it is the woman of the house who presides at these services. Considered unworthy by the Church establishment to say the sacred words “This is my Body, this is my Blood”, it is the woman nevertheless who now gathers the ‘community’ around the table to make holy the Sabbath.

In the cities her house church is a virtual church with all the choices that brings. As a cousin remarked, “I love the fact that I can switch channels, pause or rewind if I am distracted, and fast-forward boring sermons. The closing of our churches allows me to tune in to the best of any given religious topic, listen to different interpretations of the Gospel, and compare sermons.”

The variety of online catechesis also has many women hooked. Like my sister pointed out, “Many of us have a yearning to know more about the Word. This is an ideal way to fulfil this need.” Another 79-year-old, admitted that she was “getting more insight into the Scriptures and the different methods of praying” than she had ever had before.

Reinventing liturgy

Like many others, I too missed the comfort of familiar rituals, singing in the choir and the warmth of my faith community. But in its place, I discovered that the lockdown had inspired a new kind of liturgical service, one in which the cries of despair and fear of migrant workers unable to reach their native homes, elicited liturgical responses from people and their priests.

The altars were the mattresses laid out in schools and parishes.

On these the ‘outsiders’ rested their tired bodies, spent in labouring to raise our skyscrapers, run our factories and restaurants, deliver our little luxuries to our doorsteps, maintain our homes, and do all the menial, manual jobs we cannot, or will not do. Our sacrificial lambs?

Priests and people took to them the cup of life and called upon God’s name. The blessing cup was offered, holding shelter, health, hygiene, and nourishment for the body and the spirit. Bread has been broken here, multiplied and shared.

Holy Week this year was a challenge. The faithful found themselves without the usual props - the solemn masses, the veneration of the Cross, the communion service, the mood enhancing hymns. Like the disciples during the first Holy week, we too were locked in, afraid of what might happen if we stepped out.

On Maundy Thursday I missed the ‘washing of the feet’ ritual, the highpoint of the liturgy because of what it symbolises - the challenge of a servant leadership - and the pain of the exclusion of women from that leadership. Weeks later, however, I got my ‘aha-moment’ when I saw an image of a line of Sikhs, sitting by the roadside, binding the blistered feet of labourers who were making the long journey home on foot.

On Good Friday, at the lunch table, my family of four - a literature teacher, a young corporate strategist, a Hindu and a Christian - reflected on the meaning of the words, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” My Christian experience was enriched by the unexpected insights from the perspectives of literature, psychology, politics and spirituality.

On Easter Sunday I joined women around the globe in a virtual liturgy. We met again on Pentecost, praying in ‘tongues’, sharing our visions and celebrating our gifts of prophecy, just as the Spirit intended. We will gather once more, on the feast of St. Mary of Magdala.

Post-Covid-19 Church

So what do we look for in a “Post-Covid-19” Church?

Our starting premise is that church-goers will not abandon their faith just because they cannot go to church. Instead their faith will help them to deal with new situations. Church-goers will also likely agree with Pope Francis that they are living their “familiarity with the Lord” apart from each other in order to “get out of the tunnel, not to stay in it.”

Women, who form the majority of church-goers, miss the serene atmosphere conducive to prayer and meditation, the communitarian dimension of worship, and the fellowship of parish activities. They also long to receive Holy Communion.

On the other hand, the lockdown gave them the flexibility of timings. They could celebrate the virtual Eucharist at their own convenience. One even admitted that before Covid-19 she went to church infrequently; now she has acquired the daily Eucharist habit.

Virtual services

Therefore, continuing to relay the Eucharist live from our parishes, in addition to the regular services in Church, may be a good move. Jesus, after all, went out to the people, to their towns and homes.

But it also brings risks. What if the numbers in the physical church decline and the numbers online increase? What about the danger that Pope Francis warns of - living one’s relationship with God “for just myself, detached from the people of God”? What about church collections, so essential for the survival of the institution and its good works?

Virtual religious services, moreover, demand more preparation and professionalism, and therefore resources, because they are scrutinised and discussed everywhere, not just in local parishes. Online, they serve a global community.

Inclusive services

If we move the virtual way we need also to be less clergy centred. To right the current gender imbalance, women have been meeting in cyberspace, under the banner of the ‘Indian Christian Women’s Movement’, to discuss women in the Bible. They are learning with astonishment about the presence and authority of women at Pentecost, and of Mary Magdalene, falsely labelled a prostitute. They are looking forward to reclaiming women prophets and deacons, who are missing in church discourse. International online resources like Catholic

Women Preach are being offered as alternatives to traditional male homilists. In WhatsApp communities women are creating awareness of increasing domestic violence due to the lockdown, and providing support networks for trapped survivors.

Human Communities

Covid-19 has caused new communities to emerge. In my building complex of 300 families of all faiths, a group called “Planet Godrej cares - Feed the Migrants,” coordinated various outreach programmes. This was my home community in a time of crisis. Individuals have worked closely with NGOs to adopt slums and offer support to the police. This was their community. We need to foster these communities. Ultimately, it is not the physical church that matters, but being church that does. As a friend put it, “If the Church contributes to make the world a better place I will get involved. But if I get the same opportunity through a non-church organization I will also take it.”

The Challenge

Covid-19 opened our eyes to society’s deep inequalities, the deprivations that reduce the capacity of the poor to prevent the spread, or fight the disease. The sad reality is that while the poor live among us in our parishes, they are not always one of us. Post-Covid-19, will we, the privileged, go back to ‘business as usual’ or have we changed? What form will our concern for the oppressed millions in this country take?

In Mumbai, the Labour Commission is stepping up to meet the crisis. On its agenda are just wages and work contracts for Church employees, job portals and re-skilling to address unemployment, and prevention of sexual harassment and exploitation in the new workplace – home.

As individuals, will we be willing, as Pope Francis asks, “to change a style of life that submerges so many in poverty, by promoting and encouraging a more simple and humane lifestyle, that makes possible a more equitable sharing of resources?” Will we continue to join “the entire human family in the search for a sustainable and integral development?”

These are pre-Covid-19 questions that Covid-19 has brought into sharper focus, hopefully serving as a catalyst in a Church that is *semper reformanda*.

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**Intention For
August 2020**

The Maritime World

We pray for all those who work and live from the sea, among them sailors, fishermen and their families.



**Pope's Worldwide
Prayer Network**





Post-Corona Governance

Compassion, Connection and Reconstruction



Image Source : Forbes

One image that has disturbed me for the last two months is that of a migrant labourer, Ramu, who wheeled his pregnant wife Dhanwanta and little daughter Anuragini, from Hyderabad to their hometown in Balaghat, (MP). Since they couldn't find a bus or truck for the journey, he made his own cart from waste material to make the 700-km journey home.

This is a tough year for most people. Covid-19 has spread to most countries. People are anxious about the safety of loved ones, poor internet connectivity, online classes, loans to be repaid, food at table. State governments are confused and make and remake SOPs. Nations are struggling with insecure economies and rising unemployment. How can Jesuit leadership help people to cope with this change and prevent getting paralyzed with fear?

Jesuit leadership has an important role to play at this crucial time. The mission of the Society of Jesus is to build human communities based on the Gospel values of Justice, Peace, and Love and to motivate our mission partners in this noble enterprise. Spiritual conversations and discernment in

common are our main tools to plan for apostolic effectiveness. Thus, our leadership becomes mission-oriented and deeply rooted in Jesuit identity. We value humans as persons with intrinsic dignity while responding to the signs of the times, and aligning people, resources, and goals for greater efficacy in the mission of the Church.

I shall focus on just three inter-related facets of Jesuit leadership and mission: compassion, connection, and reconstruction.

Compassion, Care, and Rediscovering humanness

Jesuit leadership is challenged to re-view the human person in these times of uncertainty and crisis. David Kessler, who worked with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, says that people may be emotionally responding to the corona pandemic in various ways: denying that the virus can truly affect us; angry about working from home or being unable to open churches; bargaining with the idea that quarantining ourselves will change things; sad/depressed about the uncertainty of life at

this time; and finally, accepting reality - this is real. Once we get people to reach a stage of acceptance, then they can tap into their own power and abilities to face this storm.

Jesuit leadership is about helping people to cope with change, giving people hope, and supporting them when they falter. When things do not go as planned, our tendency is often to propose more laws. Covid-19 has taught us that we don't need more laws; rather, we need rules that bend. Yes, certain norms and laws are essential to live as social beings, respecting the rights of others, and yet we keep in mind Jesus' maxim: The Sabbath is made for human beings, not the other way round.

When we take away our many labels, at the very core, we are all human - and vulnerable. Our mission becomes possible when we discover this humanity and care for people. The corona virus lockdown and un-lockdown periods have provided us opportunities to introspect and to change our attitudes and behaviour. In our relentless search for high productivity we drive people to sometimes lose sight of themselves leaving little time to relish art, literature, music, and culture. Effective Jesuit leadership promotes a consistent seeking for the better, and time to "smell the flowers."

Connectedness: Mission and Relationships

Compassion and caring helps people connect. Jesuits, however, sometimes take their ministries so seriously that they forget that community is mission. The lockdown brought a pleasant surprise: Jesuits maintaining silence and praying together during Holy Week, when otherwise they may have been helping out at different parishes. Jesuits helping migrants and daily wage labourers during the day, and spending more time with others at community prayer and at table. The malignant virus made us realize: we can get so preoccupied with positions, administration, dealing with government officials, maintenance of properties and buildings, that we have little time and energy for our Jesuit brother who needs our presence. The good ol' hardworking Jesuit is sometimes a lonely Jesuit.

More than before, Pope Francis' message is relevant: get connected with people; smell of the sheep. He has challenged Vatican officials to "initiate processes and not occupy spaces," i.e., improve relations with others - churches, religions, and cultures; work with the labouring God present in this time; see with eyes of faith the signs of the times; and, "give priority to actions that give birth to new historical dynamics" (To the Roman Curia, 2019). We are called to promote processes of liberation, justice, peace, and interdependence.

We are connected to others. We understand that the mission of the Society, as Father Arrupe reminded us, is the mission of Christ that has been entrusted to the Church. And the mission of the Church is evangelization (not to be confused

with proselytization) or "new evangelization" (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 1990). "Evangelizing is, in fact, the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize" (Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 1975). Crisis-time saw Jesuits use technology to bring Jesus' Good News into human history - with online retreats, spiritual helplines, daily reflections, online conferences, etc. - so as to transform individuals, and society's aims, values, and systems.

Loving Service: Mission and Reconstruction

A group of faithful, reflecting on the question: "What did you learn during this Covid-19 lockdown?" almost unanimously answered, "I missed Mass." One of the participants sadly reflected: "The Eucharist should move us to loving service." Perhaps Church leaders have not given the faithful an adult faith. We have kept people where we can control them. We refuse to give women their rightful place in the Church. The "new normal" may teach women religious that the male bastion can no longer threaten to keep them away from the sacraments if they don't obey their parish priest's diktats. The laity have also realized that the Lord is not restricted to just the four walls of a church.

Father Arturo Sosa, in a recent interview, helps us to reflect on the fact that the corona virus provides us with an opportunity not to reconstruct the past, but to self-critique. Our reconstruction looks at new and improved socio-economic models that will enable a more equitable society. Our Jesuit leadership and governance must be able to critique unjust structures and work towards solutions in tune with *Laudato Si* - better safety, health, education, economy, and ecology for all.

Every Jesuit leader needs to remember Jesus' challenge (Mt.25): How much did you love? In this time of crisis, were we interested in reaching out to unfortunate migrants or the homeless because "whatever you did to the least of my brothers and sisters..." or because we love to write impressive reports and get public acclaim? A post-corona ethic ought to disturb us.

To conclude, never waste a crisis! Covid-19 has helped us to take a fresh look at ourselves, others, and our mission of building God's family. In this time of uncertainty, the mission gives us a sense of purpose, a balanced sense of urgency. We look to reconstruct a world where people care about others and where we experience justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity, as enshrined in the Preamble to our Constitution.



Image Source : Matters India

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THOUSAND WORDS

**In Commemoration of
International Day of the World's
Indigenous Peoples - 9th August**

"Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every humming insect; all are holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know the sap which courses through the trees as we know the blood that courses through our veins. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters. The bear, the deer, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in the meadow, the body heat of a pony, and man, all belong to the same family.

The shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water, but the blood of our ancestors."

- From a letter popularly attributed to Chief Seattle of the Suwamish Indian Tribe, addressed to the President of the United States when he attempted to buy their land in 1854.







A Psychological perspective on the Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic may be best described as a disaster which began in Wuhan China and has now spread to many countries in the world. A disaster is a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, economic and environmental losses that exceed the community's or society's ability to cope using its own resources. During the Covid-19 pandemic, India had to also cope with the devastating effects of the Amphan super-cyclone on its east coast and Nisarga cyclone on the west coast with the south-west monsoon approaching. This has led to terming the present Indian situation by some as a compound, cascading or complex disaster. Tensions on the Indo-China, Indo-Nepal and also Indo-Pakistan borders, are also adding distress to the already disturbing events.

If an effective vaccine against Covid-19 becomes available or the community develops 'herd immunity,' the chances of coming back to a 'real normal' are very high. Till then, one has to 'live with the virus' which does not mean giving up or taking it easy, but stepping up efforts to combat and eradicate Covid-19. This would mean living in a different apparent unusual way, implementing all the preventive measures against the Corona virus which would become the 'new normal'. The devastation and damage Covid-19 has already done are predicted to be enormous; but there are also views that India will come out as a 'self-reliant' or an 'atmanirbar Bharat'.

Psychological management of disasters are usually neglected, and more importance is given to relief work. The vulnerable groups are children, pregnant women, elders with co-morbidities, the poor, homeless, handicapped, those with medical illness and psychiatric disorders. The sudden lockdown brought our attention to the pitiable and shocking state of migrants in India. Migrant men, women and children, were shown trudging extraordinary distances back home with blisters on their feet - bruised, broken, hungry, and some even

dying in the process.

Covid-19 is contagious and at times fatal, with no curative or specific medical treatment. This has led to the 'stigmatization' of patients, care-givers and frontline healthcare workers of Covid-19. Many have ended their lives by committing suicide. This stigmatization of frontline healthcare workers due to



Image Source: The Forbes

ignorance and fear of Covid-19 is manifested in verbal abuse, violence and ostracizing. Some frontline healthcare workers have not been receiving their regular stipends and salaries. But they still continue to work amidst silent protests.

The Covid-19 pandemic, as seen around the world, may be

described in a series of stages each of which has its own characteristics. They are the: 1) Pre-impact stage, 2) Impact stage, and 3) Post-impact stage. There is much variation in each stage and they may overlap. Covid-19 has affected countries differently as also various States in India. So, psychological interventions will have to be customized depending on the needs of each situation during the various stages.

The Pre-impact stage is the days before the exponential rise of infected cases of Covid-19. Rumours, predictions and fear among people are usually on the rise. The identification of the first patients leads to contact tracing, quarantine and isolation. The buzz words are 'Be prepared and don't panic.'

The Impact stage is the time when there is the exponential rise of cases. Hospitals get full with patients leading to lack of beds, shortage of ventilators and difficulties faced by healthcare workers to deal with the extraordinary large number of patients. There is also a surge of deaths, leaving morgues, crematoriums and burial grounds full and working beyond their capacity. Patients and survivors will be grieving the loss of their loved ones who had not received a formal burial, etc. Most relief activity is focused on getting patients to receive medical treatment and trying to stabilize the situation. Patients must be isolated, given medication, oxygen support and some may require ventilator support. Psychic numbing, heightened arousal, diffuse anxiety, survivor guilt, conflicts over nurturance, ambivalence, affective and cognitive instability, confusion, various types of grief reactions and burn-out are some of the terms used to describe the psychological distress of patients, caregivers and healthcare workers.

The Post-impact stage is seen once the situation has been stabilized. This may take months to years. The attention turns to longer-term solutions. Heroic rescue efforts give way to bureaucratized forms of help. Organized assistance from outside gradually diminishes and the reality of their losses dawn on victims. Victims have to make a more realistic appraisal of the lasting consequences of the Covid-19. Due to the effects of long lockdowns, recession may set in and many will lose their jobs and have financial problems even leading to bankruptcy. During this stage, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Abnormal Bereavement and Post Traumatic Depression will be observed. The natural processes of cohesion based on caste, language, ethnicity, caste, religion, etc. will also happen. Frustration, anger, disillusionment sets in when outside help stops. Dependency, loss of confidence can get aggravated if material aid flows disproportionately.

What is our response to psychological effects of Covid-19? All psychological interventions will have to be conducted within the basic preventive measures such as social distancing, sanitization, use of masks and personal protective equipment (PPE), according to Government guidelines. One must take care of one's personal safety so that one does not contract Covid-19, as many healthcare workers have contracted and died. Telemedicine and the use of digital platforms such as Zoom, Google meet, Google classroom, WhatsApp, etc. will help a great deal in implementing the psychological interventions along with the preventive measures. Needs must be met in a culturally appropriate manner.

During the Pre-impact stage the focus is mainly on preventive measures and up-grading the healthcare infrastructure.

During the Impact stage victims will require Psychological First Aid (PFA). PFA describes a humane, supportive response to a fellow human being who is suffering and who may need support. It can be done even by non-professionals. The action principles of PFA are: Prepare, Look, Listen and Link personal safety. This implies preparing oneself for the task, looking for the needs of victims, listening to them, helping them to get help and at the same time taking care of self.

During the Post-impact stage the emphasis is on Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR). SPR is an evidence-informed modular approach, to help children, adolescents, adults, and families in the weeks and months following disaster and trauma, after the period where PFA has been given. It helps to identify problem areas in the victims' life following the disaster and then finding realistic solutions. It may be necessary at times to support and initiate group activities and liaison with administrative and health services. We need to focus on high risk groups and also train community leaders and significant others. During all these stages referral for psychiatric treatment will be needed for those who develop psychiatric disorders.

Jesuits all over the world have made a great contribution to relief work and have been searching the 'magis' in such situations in their imitation of Jesus Christ. I had the privilege of visiting Afghanistan as a resource person and in a small way participating in the JRS (Jesuit Relief Services) work. JRS, CRS and Caritas India have contributed a great deal to war ravaged countries and those with disasters. Fr Peter Damien who contracted leprosy while working with lepers in Molakai islands and many priests, religious and laypersons who died in a Christ-like manner as frontline workers during this Covid-19 pandemic stand as heroic role models to encourage us. I have given below the three reference guides or 'Coping with disaster', 'PFA' and 'SPR' which will be useful to all who would like to get seriously involved in psychological relief work in the Covid-19 pandemic. I am willing to help any Jesuit organization which needs me for online webinars, etc. for the psychological management of Covid-19.

Dr Joseph Neettil reports in Vidya Jyoti that the Church has done marvellous relief work during Covid-19 which has not been well communicated by the Church. But he also recommends a prophetic public stand on behalf of justice in favour of the millions who suffered injustice due to the unjust and discriminatory policies imposed on them during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our psychological interventions should also take these issues into consideration.

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The Virus of Hate



In his recent message calling for “responsibility and solidarity”, Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, said that we all face one common threat – the Corona virus. However, he said that together we can change the course of this pandemic by addressing inaction. The UN Department of Global Communication further stated, “The community is also implementing an initiative to help each other. Calling for volunteerism, its residential management company started pulling together a list of volunteers who can be called upon to carry out tasks such as administering wellness checks for seniors and people with disabilities, food/water delivery and pet assistance.” These reassuring statements highlight a sense of humanism, human solidarity and common destiny.

However, in the midst of human tragedy and migrants’ crisis of gargantuan proportion, seeds of discord and divisiveness continue to be sown in our country. Expressing grave concern over this, Anand Neelakantan (Indian Express, 26th April, 2020) notes: “Sooner

or later, we will conquer corona too. The relentless progress of science will ensure that. However, science will not be able to cure the communal virus that is spreading faster than the corona. Religious bigots keep injecting hate in society. All countries are prone to such bigotry, but in India, much of this hatred stems from the way history is being taught in school.” At a recent webinar, Aruna Roy, who led the movement that gave us the right to information, voiced the same concern. We will be able to deal with the corona virus but we are not sure whether we will be able to eliminate the hate virus from our society.

Much has been written about the pandemic and how it is being handled. But what has not been adequately highlighted is the discrimination, demonization and the hate that is unleashed on the minority Muslim community. One oft-cited instance is the Tablighi Jamaat, an Islamic revivalist movement, which met in Nizamuddin Markaz in Delhi. It is a fact that many of them tested positive and were quarantined. But what is worrying and deplorable is that COVID-19 spread

has been attributed to the Muslims as a community.

Payal Mohta (Equal Times, 6th May, 2020) reports that at the end of March this year, a new trending hashtag emerged on Twitter known as #CoronaJihad, which blames Muslims for the spread of COVID-19 in India. It had appeared over 3,00,000 times on Twitter by the beginning of April and was potentially seen by 165 million people according to Equality Labs, a digital human rights group based in United States. Even though India registered its first confirmed case of COVID-19 on 30th January, “it was only after the Jamaat incident came into the public domain that one was seeing communally-charged disinformation spreading in India.” (Quote attributed to Rakesh Dubbudu, founder of the Hyderabad-based fact-checking website Faculty).

Commenting on the rapid spread of the virus of hate, Dr. T. Sundararaman, the global coordinator of the People’s Health Movement said that stigmatisation of the Muslim community has been high-profile, blatant and vitriolic. The



“Sooner or later, we will conquer corona too. The relentless progress of science will ensure that. However, science will not be able to cure the communal virus that is spreading faster than the corona.”

idea that the Jamaat congregation contributed to the doubling India's virus cases, he says, paints “a very misleading picture.” This in a normal time at least could be countered by verification, presenting the facts and figures, asking the administration to institute an independent inquiry, etc. But in this time of crisis none of these could be done and this left the field open for the hate mongers.

The Wire Analysis (31st March, 2020) reported that on 18th March the Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath insisted that a large Mela (fair), planned for Ayodhya on the occasion of Ram Navami from 25th March to 2nd April would proceed as usual, while Acharya Paramhans said that “Lord Ram would protect devotees from the corona virus”. However, when Modi gave a call for a Janata curfew the following day, the Chief Minister back-tracked and urged people to celebrate Ram Navami at home. But one day after Modi announced the national lockdown on 24th March, the Chief Minister violated the official social distancing guidelines to take part in a religious ceremony in Ayodhya along with dozens of people. This goes to prove that there are different rules for Hindus and Muslims and if you are a Chief Minister, no rules apply.

Journalist Javed Anand (Indian Express on 4th April, 2020) acknowledged the positive and proactive response of Chief Ministers of Kerala and West Bengal to the virus of hate being spread across the country by the communal forces. They caution against “sensationalising corona virus” by giving it a communal complexion. Unfortunately, the virus of hate against the Muslims is existential, substantial, structural and systematic. Other minority communities are also affected by it. It has been reported that a Christian priest advised another who was going to a Muslim basti (locality) to provide relief that he should not go there

“because they are spreading the virus.” Thanks to some of the media, chiefly social media, there is wide-spread belief among many Catholics that certain Muslim groups are responsible for exacerbating the crisis.

In contrast to the ruling caste and class of this country who are spreading communal virus, the migrant labourers have been seen practising brotherhood and secularism. For instance, news headlines talked about two migrant labourers whose only identity was of being lockdown-affected. It was reported that a 24-year-old migrant worker Amrit Kumar was dumped on the roadside by fellow travellers in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district after falling sick during a journey from Gujarat to Uttar Pradesh in a truck. There was no one to take care of him, except his friend Mohammad Yaqoob who also got down with Amrit to take care of him. It was reported that when Amrit finally passed out, Yaqoob wept for his friend.

Every conscientious citizen must bow his/her head and salute the likes of Amrits and Yaqoobs who have held this country together. These and many others whose names history will not know or remember have repeatedly established this fact that Indians are basically secular and communitarian, and will continue to voice and live oneness, unity and humanism.

For the Church and the Jesuits in particular, the journey ahead is not only long but arduous. We have to contend not only with the present crises, which is not seen to be abating just yet, but also the ones created by the sudden and forced lockdown. The latter has created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, which could have been avoided had the people and their representatives been taken into confidence. The task of reconstruction of lives and livelihoods of migrant populations will continue to

pose huge problems, with the hate virus lurking and striking at will. Are we prepared for the long haul?

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Republic (2020)

Till the last flame of freedom
Is smothered,
Till the prophets of liberty
Crushed,
The Republic still lives
In spaces unknown,
Its voices though stifled and hushed.

And yet it will cry
In the silence,
To bring forth a world
That is just,
That cry will be strong
To right the wrong,
And the tyrant will fall into rust.

Celebrate the Republic
Whoever you are,
The spirit of freedom will heave.
That the call may arise
From the depths to the skies,
To strive for a humane reprieve.
And the day will draw near
When the heart without fear,
Will rebuild on the ruins of hate.
A nation of hope, a nation of love,
And no one abandoned to fate.

|| Godfrey D'Lima, SJ



Violence against the Dalits in Nepal



Photo Courtesy: The Kathmandu Post

On 23rd May reports broke out in Nepal about the lynching of Navaraj BK and five of his friends. Navaraj, a 21-year-old Dalit, along with his companions had gone to the village of his “upper-caste” girlfriend (at her request) to take her as his wife. A mob led by the girl’s family and the village chairman, chased down the aspiring husband and his group, killed six of them and threw their bodies into a nearby river.

Navaraj’s is not an isolated case of gruesome, barbarous brutality against Dalits in Nepal. At least 30 Dalits have been killed due to caste-based violence in the past 8 years. In fact, there is a “culture of normalcy” regarding caste-based discrimination and violence against Dalits in Nepal. Dalit abuse is woven into the very social fabric of the country; it is taken as a ‘cultural normal’. The culture of normalcy veils the fact that over 205 types of caste-based discriminatory practices exist in Nepali society.

Obstacles to Dalit Emancipation in Nepal

First of all, in contrast to India, there have been no Ambedkar-like Dalit awakening movements in Nepal. The ambiguities in Dalit identity have traditionally weakened the mobilization and lobbying efforts of the Nepali Dalit community. According to the 2011 census, Dalits constituted 13.6% of the 26.5 million people in Nepal. However, various reports say that Dalits make up about 20% to 25% of the population. While the government says that there are 22 Dalit sub-groups, Nepal’s Dalit Commission divided them into 27 sub-groups in 2019. Moreover, there is no one common Dalit experience in the country.

The more a region or a community is Hinduized and Sanskritized, the greater the practice of caste-based untouchability against

Dalits. As a result Dalits living in the higher hills (with weaker Hinduization and Sanskritization) and those living in the mid-hills and the terai (with stronger Hinduization and Sanskritization) have different experiences. To make matters more complicated, there is a hierarchy within the various Dalit groups and they practise caste-based untouchability among themselves.

Secondly, State legitimization of the caste system and untouchability continues to remain a reality in Nepal. Legal support to casteism began in 1854 when Nepal’s first Civil Code was promulgated. The Code used the caste matrix to formulate the State structure which in turn incorporated, formalized and reinforced the same matrix in all spheres of Nepali life. Although Nepal’s first democratic Constitution came into existence in 1959 and the 1854 Civil Code was replaced by a new Civil Code that proclaimed all citizens to be equal before the law in 1963, these legislations did not explicitly abolish caste hierarchy. Even the more inclusive Constitution of 1990 did not manage to get rid of the status quo of “the Hindu nation.” It means that the statutory backing for caste-based discrimination continues in the 21st century.

The ten-year Maoist Insurgency (1996-2006) did manage to bring caste and ethnicity issues to the national consciousness. The abolition of monarchy in 2006, a direct result of the armed conflict, removed the most visible State actor of caste-based practices from the national scene. The Untouchability and Discrimination Act that criminalized caste-based discriminations was promulgated in 2011. In the 2015 Constitution special provisions were included to protect Dalit rights.

However, the vestiges of caste-based discrimination linger in the primary legal document of the nation. For, although the 2015 Constitution declared Nepal a Secular State, the explicitly sanctioned provision for the protection of Hinduism, the ambiguities involved in the model of secularism that needs to be adopted and practiced, and the mention of “preservation of traditional Dalit occupations” among the special provisions for the Dalit community are seen by many analysts as a way to continue State support to the prevailing caste-based discrimination. The attempt of the present government to pass an Act in March 2020 which sought to compel all the schools in the country to teach Sanskrit at all levels shows that caste protection still constitutes the primary decision making framework in Nepal.

Another major hurdle in improving the situation of the Dalit community is the poor enforcement of special provisions granted to them. As a result, Dalits have always had the least representation in all spheres of life. They have the lowest level of political participation, 3.03 % in the hills and 1.16% in the terai. While the hill “upper-caste” occupied 82% of all positions in the public sector in 2013, Dalits had a mere 2%. The same was true for political (93% v/s 1%), private (21% v/s 0%) and civil (94% v/s 1%) representation. Of the 20% Dalit students who enrol in the lower basic level of schooling only 4% make it through to the higher secondary level. There is a 1% lowering of the total school enrolment every year in the Dalit community. Dalits make up just over 4% of the teachers in all levels of schooling.

Way forward for the Dalits in Nepal

Firstly, Dalits have to unite to form an impact force politically. Secondly, the implicit and explicit State sanctions to caste-based discrimination at all levels must be delegitimized constitutionally once and for all. Thirdly, with a strong political will, the existing special provisions for Dalits at all sectors must be enforced.

However, this is easier said than done. In a democratic political system that is deeply engrained with caste-based discrimination, legal provisions on their own will bring little change in the existing situation even with non-partisan constitutional mechanisms to implement them. In other words, Dalit emancipation in Nepal will not take place unless there is a substantial transformation in the collective consciousness of the “upper-castes”. They will then not only join the Dalits in their efforts for equal citizenship but also help to obliterate casteism from society at large. Such a fundamental transformation is hard for the “upper-castes” because for them the Dalits are their alter-ego, their second self, the toxic extension of their own selves without whose enforced ‘impurity’ their perceived ‘purity’ cannot be sustained. For the “upper-castes” the Dalits are indispensable social tools to be used as garbage bins where they can dump their physical, cultural and political failures. Hence, the Dalits must be kept as ‘quarantined and neutralized’ subjects.

Will caste-based discrimination and violence against the Dalits never end? Not until there is a national and international conscious sharing of Dalit subjectivity (much like the global sharing of the African-American subjectivity in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd). Such a sharing can happen through a model of education tailored to engage all the actors

at all levels in a process of caste-critique much in the line of race-critique practised by multicultural educationists in the US. For caste-based discrimination and violence against the Dalits is evil. Evil cannot be destroyed; it can only be overcome by evoking and harnessing the power of love inherent in all humans.

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The Pandemic and the Illusion of Change

Nothing will change, nothing at all,
We are the very same people, after all;
Literate we may be, but not educated, really
We are, at the same time, both gullible and delusional.

We do not get the message, we simply can't afford it,
We will continue to litter and dirty the whole place up;
Force migrants to clean up the shit and fill the pit,
Letting everyone know that we are doing them a favour.

We will continue to find opportunity in other people's adversity,
Like those who have gone about sowing the virus of hate and bigotry;
Before and during the Pandemic, with cunning and criminal audacity,
Harvesting popular anger in order to target the vulnerable 'Other'

We will continue to throng the Mandirs, Masjids, Gurdwaras and Churches,
Because we are a people who have always believed in quick fixes;
Superstition is in our DNA and don't the priestly classes know this, eh?!
They will continue to prey and laugh their way, to the bank next to the bay.

Politicians will continue to bow before the Trumps and the Putins,
Who do the 'Namaste' only to load us with Subs and Tomahawks
To use against our enemy next door - whether real or imagined,
And continue to spend on weapons of war than on food for the hungry.

Nothing will change after so many infections, quarantine and death,
Because we are the same people, now and until our very last breath;
And we will continue to vote for the very same party and politician,
Who will continue to sell his soul in order to reach his goal.

We will continue to savage eco-systems and ravage all of Nature,
Learning no lesson from the Katrinas, the Tsunamis, and the Coronas;
Like the politicians we adore, short-term gain is also part of our DNA,
And short-term memory part of our defensive armoury.

We prefer to create, and live, in our very own little utopias,
Where we can hide and live without too many worries and phobias;
It is terrifying to live in the real world full of despair, deceit and rumour,
Where dreams come apart, and in stark relief is Black Humour!

■ Anthony Dias, SJ



Marching with the Migrants



Image Source: The Guardian

For the Jesuits 'Road is Home' and, therefore, journeying with the needy is their primary vocation and mission. In addition to serving the Dalits, the rural poor, and the Tribals, Jesuits felt the need, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown, of serving the migrants.

A migrant is a person who moves from one place to another, either within his/her country or abroad, either temporarily or permanently seeking work or looking for better living conditions. Migration can be free or forced. The global migrant population is 272 million (48% of them women) and make up 3.5% of the global population. There are 71 million forcibly displaced people (due to political discrimination or natural calamities) with 41 million of them internally displaced. We also have 26 million refugees and 3.5 million asylum seekers.

There seems to be a migration gene in all of us! 1.75 million years ago, homo-erectus started moving from Africa across

Eurasia. About 1750 BCE Joseph was taken to Egypt. In the 13th century BCE the Israelites wandered in the wilderness about 40 years before they could reach their promised land of Canaan. The diaspora of the Jews, namely the Assyrian exile (722 BCE) and the Babylonian exile (597-538 BCE), scattered them all over the world. The greatest migration is Jesus coming down from heaven to earth (4 BCE) to be with us.

We are also part of the migration history: In 1500 BCE the Aryan migrants entered India via the Indu Kush Mountains; and in 10,000 BCE the Dravidian migration moved to South India. There has been migration everywhere! South American colonisation and migration began in the 15th century. Migration to the USA began with the Mayflower ship landing at Plymouth (1620). When we look at ourselves we realize that we were born in a particular place, educated somewhere else, employed/missioned elsewhere, and settled in yet another place. We are not sure whether we will continue moving.

We do not know when our life situation will change. In the mid 20th century refugees started moving around the world. Migrants are not mere unwanted or unnecessary elements of the society; they make huge contribution to society. Just think of some of the migrants who made a tremendous contribution to society at large: Einstein, Mother Teresa, Tesla, Pulitzer, etc. The migrants engaged in construction work have built our skyscrapers and our cities.

The Jesuits are always at the service of the needy. In November 1980, the then Superior General of the Society, Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ, founded the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). The purpose of JRS has been to accompany, serve and advocate for the refugees - to take care of the humanitarian aspects. The Jesuit Worldwide Learning (JWL), another Jesuit initiative since 2010, offers online higher education. Though initially started in the refugee camps in Africa, later people at the margins were accommodated. Today the JWL service is offered in Asia, Europe, and Africa in collaboration with Jesuit universities in Europe, the USA, and India.

Receiving in giving

Jesuit education holds that we receive in giving. We have a lot to learn from the migrants. Some took the hard decision of walking back to their homes thousands of kilometres away. They did not know the way but decided to go on foot. They walked along the highways and the railroads. Some were crushed to death by the traffic or trains; but they still kept moving. Some, with the help of their families and friends, got bicycles which they rode all the way.

What is amazing is their togetherness. The bond of love and affection among them was very strong. We could see them carrying their elderly and little children on their shoulders. We can learn resilience from them - how to go through tough times and hardships. They have the inner strength to hope for the better. We are educated but they are learned. They have learnt a lot in life and that is why they are able to handle their obstacle-filled life better. They have a purpose to live.

We offered material help, spoke consoling words, and provided them with medical facility. We, in turn, received from them life-lessons: how to live a contented life with very little comfort. We have acquired knowledge from books but they have learnt from life - the teacher. The migrants might be economically utterly poor but when it comes to love and affection, they are very rich!

Marching with the migrants

We learn patience and hope from the migrants who keep marching - an ignoring Government on one side, and the silent God on the other. We have also learnt from our lockdown experience that we can live with fewer things. When we search for meaning in life, we feel we need people and life-sustaining communication with them. We need meaningful and lasting relationship with them for our growth. We learn from the migrants how to move smoothly from panic to peace of mind.

As academicians we need to come up with preventive research. We need to study the root causes of the migrants' problem as well as the origin and spread of Covid-19. We have to come

up with viable solutions to empower the shattered migrants and the battered Covid-19 affected. Here, sciences and humanities should come together to find effective solution in real time. We need to restructure, in our educational institutions, our outreach programmes on general hygiene and entrepreneurship. We need to become familiar with new perspectives to understand our students when they return to the classrooms after the lockdown period ends. We need to see their world from their perspectives.

We need to build solidarity with the migrants. Socially we all are migrants, either temporarily or permanently. Economically most of us seek greener pastures and some have already found them. As citizens of the world we are not walking alone - no problem is an individual problem. As people of faith, we are convinced that all of us are co-pilgrims here on earth moving towards God/happiness. We learn contentment of life and gratitude towards others from the migrants.

Jesuit education does not stymie one to be a silent spectator to anything that affects people. As Einstein said, "The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil but by those who watch them without doing anything." Jesuit education makes one walk with the marginalized, whether migrants or economically impoverished, politically discriminated or religiously ignored. Jesuit education forms one to help the needy. It teaches that when you give, you get back more in return.

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The author is the Rector of Loyola Institutions in Chennai and the Convener of Disaster Management Committee for Chennai Province.

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NEW APPOINTMENT



Fr. General has appointed **Fr. Jerome (Jerry) Cutinha, SJ** born on February 10, 1964, as the new Provincial of the Jamshedpur Province. After his Tertianship, he was involved in formation and then completed a doctorate in Economics in Chennai. Since 2014, he is associated with the XLRI University (Jamshedpur) as the Dean of Administration & Finance and Superior of XLRI Jesuit Community. He is also the Province Consultor since 2014. He delegated the Jamshedpur Province at GC 35 and GC 36. He will take up his new responsibility on July 31, 2020. JIVAN extends prayerful wishes to Fr. Jerome (Jerry) Cutinha, SJ for his new ministry as Provincial.



'Thatha Sami' Fr. Louis Lèveil

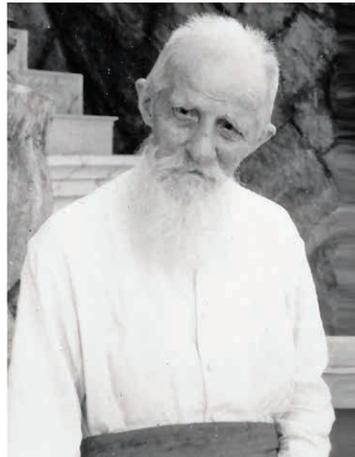
Born on 6th April 1884 at Laille, France, Louis Marie Lèveil was the youngest of ten children. Next to his mother, Julianee Lebine, Lèveil was very close to his sister Victoire, who sowed the seed of priestly vocation in his heart. When Lèveil was 14, he felt the Lord's voice deep within his heart: "Louis Priest". On completing his secondary schooling in Sainte Croix de Vitre, he answered the Lord's call. Although he joined the Seminary of the Archdiocese of Rennes in 1904, he left and joined the Jesuit novitiate in Limburg Province, Belgium, on 6th October 1906 after hearing about the Jesuit Madura Mission. Having completed his novitiate he left for India in September 1908.

After reaching Bombay he continued his Jesuit formation doing his Juniorate and Philosophy at Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, Kodaikanal. He then did his regency at St Xavier's High School, Palayamkottai from 1912 to 1916 teaching and taking care of the hostellers. He was creative in teaching and administration. Whenever there was an outbreak of skin disease or other contagious diseases in the boys' hostel, he jumped to their rescue by providing medical assistance and spiritual support. In 1916, he successfully completed his theological studies in Kurseong and was ordained a priest on 13th January 1920. Then, he completed his Tertianship at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Fr. Lèveil, the young priest, returned to Madura Mission and took charge as the Parish Priest of Andavoorani in June 1921. He rooted himself in the Marava soil, living and preaching among the 60,000 ordinary people of Andavoorani. On 2nd February 1922, he pronounced his final vows in the Society. In 1925 when cholera hit the region, he acted as the Good Samaritan. Even when he was weary or hurt or discouraged, he gave himself without counting the cost. As a sign of unity and peace, he erected the Church of Our Lady of Mercy in 1928. Besides, he begged for money from his friends and built schools for boys and girls. Many of the children who benefitted from his spiritual and financial aid testify to his good works. Oriyur, the place of John de Britto's martyrdom, was one of the sub-stations of Andavoorani. Fr. Lèveil desired to give it a facelift by transforming it into a centre of Christian confession to hasten the canonisation process of John de Britto. So, he organized the first pilgrimage from Andavoorani to Oriyur in 1929. This spiritual pilgrimage continues even today.

After 22 years of tireless missionary work in Andavoorani, Fr. Lèveil was transferred to Ramnad in 1943 as Parish Priest. He was a pastor to all men and women of goodwill transcending the boundaries of caste, creed, colour and age. He did not care about his food, transport or the weather. He did not remain confined to urban Ramnad but reached out to the traders and fisherfolk in coastal areas. In 1953, he teamed up well with Fr. Arango his assistant, and established some houses for the poor, a library and a few trade schools. Then Ramnad was hit by a massive invasion of rats and insects, drought and floods. Undeterred by the unexpected turn of events, Fr. Lèveil was with the poor and he did all that he could to lessen their burden.

In 1956, after 14 years in Ramnad Fr Lèveil was transferred to Sarugani. On 13th January 1970, he celebrated his golden jubilee as a priest. Soon Fr Lèveil's health began deteriorating. On his 88th birthday he foretold that he would die on 21st March 1973. He chose the place of his grave, dug the first sod, and blessed the grave. On 20th March 1973, he celebrated his final Mass and was completely exhausted. The next day, he received the sacrament of the sick. At 5.00 pm, when he heard and recognised the voice of Fr. Veaux, he opened his eyes for one last time and sighed with great difficulty. Then, Fr. Veaux whispered into Fr. Lèveil's ear: "Jésus, Marie, Joseph." Hearing those farewell words, he died peacefully. The next day at the funeral Mass in the presence of Fr. Douglas M. Gordon, the then Jesuit Provincial of Madurai Province, Most Rev. Justin Diraviam, Archbishop of Madurai, presided and preached a soul-stirring homily. Then Fr. Lèveil's body was laid to rest in the grave he himself had chosen and blessed.



In December 2015, Most Rev. Dr. J. Susaimanickam, Bishop of Sivagangai declared open the holy cause of Fr. Lèveil. Following this, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints (henceforth, CCS) has acknowledged Fr. Lèveil as Servant of God and delivered the Nihil Obstat on 9th August 2016 to begin the process of sainthood. Fr. James Anthuvan Dass (Postulator, Sivagangai Diocese) and Fr Y S Yagoo, SJ (Member, Historical Commission, Lèveil Cause) submitted two boxes containing the documents of the Diocesan inquiry to the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Giambattista Diquattro in New Delhi on 9th July 2019. The boxes safely reached the CCS in August 2019. Fr. Pascual Cebollada (General Postulator, Jesuit Curia Generalizia, Rome) began the beatification process in September 2019. The documents were verified at the Vatican Office by the Secretary to the CCS on 11th November 2019. To mark the 100th year of priesthood of Fr. Lèveil, on 13 January 2020, Fr. Yagoo presided at a concelebrated Mass in Sarugani.

Fr. Lèveil, the priceless gift of France to India, remains unforgotten for his Christian simplicity and priestly holiness. Hailing from an agrarian family, he rightly understood the importance of agriculture and cattle rearing. He felt one with the farmers and brought God's healing touch and blessings to them and their domestic animals through his prayers. Not only did he attract vocations to the Church and the Society during his lifetime, he continues to draw pilgrims to Sarugani, especially on the feast of the Annunciation, popularly called Lèveil Day. They participate in Samapandhi (common fellowship meal) joyously. Even today, he is fondly remembered as the bullock-cart priest, the friend of the poor, the helper of the needy and the beloved of children. As we celebrate his 100th year of priesthood, it is right and just that we pray for the speedy canonisation of this dynamic Servant of God. May our persecutors realise that missionaries are not imperialists in disguise but ordinary human beings with an extraordinary sense of love and service.

The author was an altar boy and close aide to 'Thatha Sami' (the grandfather priest) Fr. Louis Lèveil.

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Protecting Earth - our Common Home: Reviving Agro Ecology

“Global pandemic Covid-19 has made us humans recognise our inter-relatedness and inter-dependence at the cost of millions of lives and thousands of migrant labourers’ livelihood,” said Dr. George Pattery, President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (JCSA). He emphasised that the Gandhian philosophy of imaginative thinking and the Ignatian principle of ‘loving the Earth’ are the need of the hour to live anew. There is inter-relatedness in our DNA. Dr. Pattery proposed that South Asia being one single geographical unit, has deep cultural heritages and we should work towards functioning with great collaboration. He was speaking at the webinar “Protecting Earth - our Common Home: Reviving Agro Ecology” conducted by the Jesuit Resource and Response Hub (JRH) in collaboration with the Eco-Jesuit Network of JCSA on 4th July 2020.

Panelist Dr. Vandana Shiva, Founder of Navdanya, and the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Natural Resource Policy (RFSTN), shared that there is an urgent need for using our hands, heads and hearts to protect the farmers who grow the Holy Sacrament of Food. She stated unequivocally that due to chemical farming and industrial agriculture 75% soil, 75% land, 75% water and 90% biodiversity have been destroyed.



Further, 50% of the Green House Gases (GHGs) destroying the climate come from industrial agriculture. There is greater recognition now that the way forward is agro-ecology. Instead of becoming prey to the business of industrial agriculture, we need to be collectively responsible for the rights and the care of the farmers, she added.

Panelist Dr. Pedro Walpole, Coordinator - Ecology, Global Ignatian Advocacy Network, and Director of Research, Institute of Environmental Science for Social Change, Philippines, shared that farmers are ‘professionals’ and they are born environmentalists. They know the land and how to work on it. But greed and power have taken them out of the economy and made them dependent. Dr. Walpole reiterated that there is need to act at the local and community levels

to bring forward the rich value of the land and society, by being sensitive to care for biodiversity.

Dr. Lancelot D’Cruz, Principal, St. Xavier’s College, Ahmedabad, moderated the webinar that was attended by more than 1000 participants.

| Ms. Elsy Samuel | New Delhi

Maharashtra Prabodhan Seva Mandal’s (MPSM) Response to Covid-19

MPSM, an organisation of the Bombay Jesuit Province, has been working towards developing rural communities through sustainable agro-ecology and education since the early 1960s. The outbreak and spread of Covid-19 and the subsequent nationwide lockdown witnessed many migrants stranded in cities without basic provisions for food. MPSM, under the guidance of Frs. Joel Noronha and Patrick Vaz got registered with the Nashik Municipal Corporation and other Rural Government Authorities through the Tehsildar offices to get involved in relief work.

Immediate relief efforts: 4111 families of migrants in Nashik, and Adivasis living in the rural areas of Nashik Dist. benefitted from the distribution of food and dry ration by MPSM. Thirteen people from Chhattisgarh with two small children were struggling to move out of Mohadari, Sinnar Taluka. MPSM in collaboration with an NGO called ‘YUVA’, finally succeeded in sending them back to their native village. PPE kits were distributed to the medical staff of a government hospital in Dondaicha (Dhule) with the help of Shirpur Vishwa Mandal Sevashram. Tarpaulin sheets were distributed to 52 cyclone affected families at Aurangabad Naka and Pathardi Gaon, Nashik.

Long-term rehabilitation measures: In order to address the rural agrarian distress intensified by the Covid-19 crisis due to reverse migration of people to villages, MPSM planned and executed a few programs such as the implementation of Livelihood Enhancement among 2000 Adivasi women and their families in Peth and Trimbakeshwar Tehsils of Nashik Dist. MPSM, in collaboration with Himai FPO distributed fruit and forest saplings and parasbag (kitchen garden) kits to tribal families with the aim of food and nutritional security. The distribution of agri-inputs on farm bunds was carried out by Himai FPO with guidance and financial support from MPSM to help the Adivasi farmers plan their kharif season, and offer logistical convenience to help reduce their cost of cultivation. MPSM conceived the idea of a mobile application, the MPSM Krishi, ensuring easy distribution and procurement operations of agri-commodities by small and marginal farmers. They could thus access markets that they couldn’t earlier due to lack of logistical support in the corona crisis.

| Wesley D’Costa, SJ | MPSM, Nashik



Fr. Petrus Kerketta, SJ (MAP)

(Enter the house of God, O my soul! Alleluia!) is one of the beautiful and appealing compositions of Fr. Petrus Kerketta for Hindi liturgy. It is quite popular and devotionally sung by the faithful, - a hymn suited well on his entry into the heavenly temple of God on 9th March, 2020. He passed away at Holy Cross Hospital, Ambikapur, after a battle of more than a month. He was a simple person with an intense longing for knowledge and wisdom featuring the Jesuit characteristic of intellectual pursuit. This longing grew more intense after he met with a fatal accident and went into coma for several days in 1989 just before the priestly ordination of Fr. Blacius Kerketta, SJ, his younger brother. Surviving a severe head injury could not stop him from his quest for knowledge; in fact it made him more passionate about learning and study.



His expertise in Hindi and Tribal Culture opened a wide avenue for him in the field of education. Throughout his

life he served in the field of education. He was a hostel prefect and Apostolic School Director besides being a well versed Hindi teacher in St. Xavier's Ambikapur, Loyola Higher Secondary School, Kunkuri and Prakash School, Pathalgaon. His study tour, by the historic Samjhauta Express, to Mohenjo Daro and Harappa, the Sindhu Valley Civilization in Pakistan, and to the Holy Land empowered him with more experiential and realistic knowledge of the subject which ultimately made his teaching very illustrative and catchy. His collection of Kurukh/Oraon folklore and his publication of a Hindi-Kurukh Dictionary during his Doctoral and D. Litt. Studies are a good contribution to future generations. His knack in teaching Hindi kept students always alive and alert in class. They affectionately called him "Master". May God grant him eternal peace in His heavenly abode.

Henry Lakra, SJ



Fr. Jose Javier Aizpun, SJ (ARU)

Fr. Jose Javier Aizpun, (Gujarat Province but transcribed to the Argentina-Uruguay Province), was called to eternal life on Good Friday (April 10) at the ripe age of ninety. He was a Jesuit for 72 years and a priest for 59 years.

Joe (as he was fondly called) held several responsible positions in the Society. These included Novice Master, Provincial Superior of Gujarat, Director of Sadhana, Tertian Instructor, General Councillor and the Delegate for Formation in Rome. However, his forte was as Spiritual Father and Retreat Director - a ministry he did till the very end. Joe was a man of prayer; he radiated this throughout his life. He was Novice Master when the reforms of Vatican II were sweeping the Church. In keeping with the signs of the times, he stopped the study of Latin in the novitiate and was also a strong advocate in ensuring that the novitiate moved from the seclusion of Mount Abu to the hustle and bustle of Ahmedabad. He made sure that the novices imbibed the spirit of the Society in the changed circumstances and in the spirit of Vatican II. His novices



loved him and several of them kept in close touch with him over the years. On hearing of his death one of them wrote: "for me a light has gone out."

On April 1, just about eight days before his death, Joe sent an email to one of his friends: "I go out for Sunday Mass, I give an occasional retreat, and a number of diocesan priests (very good fellows and very good priests) come for a bit of spiritual direction. And quite often I'm called for confessions of people in the surrounding area. For the rest in my room, reading, seeing movies, writing and praying."

Joe was a man for others who had fully imbibed the spirit of the Society and went out of his way to ensure that the basic charism of the Society is applied and made relevant, according to the changing contexts. In his death the Universal Society has lost a stalwart!

Gujarat Jesuit Samachar



Fr. Jerome D'Souza, SJ (BOM)

Jerry was a companion who over the years became a friend, confidant and brother with whom I shared a deep level of trust and love. My mother referred to him as her third son and my sister treated him like a brother. Our friendship of 45 years began and deepened during our formation. Those were years of some studying besides the usual mischief and sharing. Every night a cup of coffee lasted for over an hour of bakwas. We'd share about everything - community living, relationships, plan our mustis for the next days, our ministries and also our studies.

At Holy Family Parish, the people Jerry worked with felt respected and valued because they received much from him through his gentle yet firm ways. He had a way of winning over people. It was the same at Seva Niketan where he gave CLC members from all over India practical applications of the Spiritual Exercises. Getting a Master's in Pastoral Counselling at Loyola University, Chicago opened up a new resource in him. It was a delight when

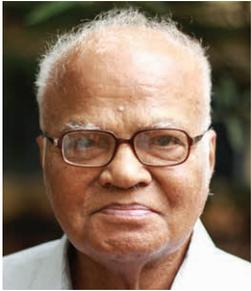


he would share how he had helped people through psycho-spiritual accompaniment to engage in their inner healing and to grow into freer and happier persons. He continued the same ministry in St. Pius X Seminary, Goregaon.

Jerry had a gift which used to draw people to him for help. That skill was his capacity for "empathy" - the ability to 'feel' what his counselees were going through and to mirror it back to them so they would gradually get rid of those emotions and go away feeling lighter, experiencing the loving peaceful presence of God within them.

Spending time with Jerry during his final days was a gift for me. I was able to hear and see his suffering in its various forms. When he died, I was startled at first with the news but later felt a quiet joy because his suffering had ended, and he had entered the afterlife.

Dudley Mendonca, SJ



Fr. Thomas Anthraper, SJ (KER)

Fr. Thomas Anthraper left for his eternal reward on 6th May after a brief period of illness. Born on 6th November 1929 at Kadakkarapally in Alleppey district of Kerala, he joined the Society in 1949 after his degree studies at St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli. After his ordination on 19th March 1962 at Kurseong, he chose school education as his future apostolic field.

Fr. Anthraper was a popular teacher and able Headmaster in many Jesuit schools in Kerala - Loyola High School, Trivandrum, St. Michael's Anglo-Indian School, Kannur, Leo XIII High School, Alleppey, and St. Joseph's Boys High School, Kozhikode. For 12 years he was the Headmaster of St. Joseph's School, Kozhikode, which has a 200-year long history. In 1984, the Kerala Government honoured him with the State award for the best teacher of the year. With his charming and magnetic personality, he made an impact on every institution that he was entrusted with. Even after his retirement from school education, he continued to serve as Rector/Superior and Manager

of various educational institutions. His wholehearted commitment to the ministry of education did not deter him from taking interest in pastoral and spiritual fields; he was a much sought-after retreat guide too.

What Fr. General wrote on the occasion of Fr. Anthraper's Golden Jubilee in the Society aptly summarizes the man: "a popular teacher and a successful academic administrator, creating a healthy atmosphere of commitment, hard work, responsibility, accountability, co-operation and team work; reaching out to the parents through the students; instilling discipline by means of personal care of each student; helping the young people under your care to find a definite orientation in life; motivating and inspiring them." Fr. Anthraper lived his deep faith through his unwavering commitment to Christ's mission. Memories of his warm smile and affectionate gaze remain ever fresh in our minds.

I Anto Muringathery, SJ



Fr. Juan J. Morondo, SJ (SPA)

Juan Jose Morondo was born in Puente la Reina, a quaint little village of Navarra-Spain. He came to India in 1949 after his Novitiate in Spain. His entire religious formation was in India with his most memorable days of Theology in Kurseong.

He was ordained in Loyola Hall, Ahmedabad, and made his final profession there where he then spent over 48 years teaching, guiding, encouraging and loving the students whom he affectionately called "My kids". He taught Science, History, French and English, and in the final years only Biology. He would prepare his classes meticulously, teach innovatively and prepare such creative exam papers that it was a joy to answer. That was the teacher Morondo who did not just teach but inspired and created in his students a love for the subject. Many who had him as their Biology teacher went on to study medicine because they had understood the subject so well, and had fallen in love with it.

visit him. He prayed over him and when Morondo opened his eyes, he placed a lotus flower near his pillow. It was a get-well symbol from a Hindu saint to his school guru. The Swamiji visited Morondo in Javier (Spain) at least twice and stayed in our Jesuit house which had to turn vegetarian during his visit. But our Jesuits were pleased to have 'El Papa del Swaminarayan' as their guest in the castle of St. Francis Xavier, and did not mind the inconvenience of going vegetarian.

Morondo's charming personality, his loving nature and amazing repartee won the hearts of thousands of students and when he returned to Spain after serving almost five decades in the same school, his students were heartbroken. He always believed that teaching from a text book was too ordinary and one had to learn a different ball-game to teach differently. His motto was to love his students and to make them feel loved.

In fact, one of his most illustrious students was Swami Tejandraprasadji, virtually the 'Pope' of the Swaminarayan Sect. When Morondo was hospitalized, Swamiji went to

Adios dear Captain Padre Morondo, Adios.

I Hector Pinto, SJ

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Fr. Pulparambil K. George, SJ (MDU)

Fr. Pulparambil K. George - known to all as Fr. P.K. George - was born on 2nd February 1929 in Vazhakulam, Ernakulam Dist, Kerala. After his school education, he joined St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli, for to pursue his B.A. in Economics (Hons). But he discontinued in order to join the Society of Jesus. After his ordination a few years he taught Latin to Novices and Juniors at Dindigul, logic to college students and worked as the Parish Priest at St. Joseph's College, Trichy. He then did his Master's degree followed by Ph.D. in Tamil Literature from Annamalai University, Chidambaram (1970 to 1976).

Fr. George was a man of strong convictions and one of his convictions was that in the Post- Vatican II Church the dogmas of the Church and Christian morality were under attack by the 'progressive' forces within the Church. He served as the spiritual guide of the All India Laity Congress (AIRC) for nearly 20 years.

He was one of the judges of the Apostolic Tribunal in Bharananganam for the beatification of Sr. Alphonsa and he assisted in translating texts from Malayalam to Latin. He retired to Beschillam, Dindigul in 2012. Fr. P.K. George quietly passed away on 22nd May. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown Fr. George was laid to rest after a simple funeral Mass the following day.

In his condolence message, George Cardinal Alencherry, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church expressed his gratitude for the dedication with which Fr. P.K. George "translated the liturgical texts of the Syro-Malabar Church from Malayalam to Tamil. The faithful and the clergy of the Diocese of Thuckalay will always be indebted to him for the great help he rendered to the Diocese."

I Michael Doss, SJ





Arun de Souza, SJ

At the JCSA in Kathmandu the General reminded us that the annual visitation and its related manifestation of conscience are non-negotiable practices. I have found it useful to send out a letter with a specific topical theme and a related set of questions for ours to reflect and respond to. This way the manifestation is usually done

in a systematic way. Two extremes seem to be the norm. There are some Jesuits who take the manifestation as a time to catalogue a set of grievances in the present and past, especially with regard to their superiors. Others truly make of this an occasion to set out ways in which they have been unfaithful to their Jesuit vocation, and times in which the Spirit has moved them to act in an apostolically fruitful manner. Through their humility and transparency one can see how God has become their everything. At the end of such manifestations I am left with the feeling of awe, and once I spontaneously knelt down before one such person and sought his blessing.

These extremes usually manifest themselves in community and apostolic life too. Bitterness consumes some, making them stingy in their contribution to the community and the ministry - they do the bare minimum, and grumble a lot. Then there are those who give of themselves continually to the community and ministry. They volunteer for mass when somebody falls ill, they clean up the table after all go, they give their opinions humbly and in deference, they volunteer to implement a new creative venture... the list can be endless.



And what about the Provincial, whom does he manifest to? With Fr. Sosa, all of us have a manifestation at least once a year. I have caught myself grumbling - about my appointment as Provincial for instance! And, at times I have been transparent about my weaknesses as a leader. ”

A parallel situation takes place at the time of transfers. There are those who come to the Provincial after having done their discernment - they then expect the Provincial to rubber stamp this desire of theirs and are very upset when this does not take place. They usually tell all and sundry how the Provincial is incapable

of listening. Others, come with a well prepared set of reasons for and against a particular transfer, then they usually end by saying, “Father, now you decide what is best.” Even if the decision goes totally contrary to their proposal, they go in peace and do a wonderful job with joy in their hearts.

And what about the Provincial, whom does he manifest to? With Fr. Sosa, all of us have a manifestation at least once a year. I have caught myself grumbling - about my appointment as Provincial for instance! And, at times I have been transparent about my weaknesses as a leader. Most of all in front of God, I find that I have already found the best way to resolve a problem. The Lord, on the other hand, smiles and much to my annoyance resolves it in a totally different way, and most often in His own good time, not the immediacy I think a good leader should display!

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A. Irudayaraj, SJ

I was once talking with one of my diocesan friends. Listening to his way of life, dreams and anxieties, I told him that I would not have been happy if I had joined any diocese or any other religious order except the Society of Jesus. I feel proud to say that the Society has given me a lot of freedom coupled with responsibility. Jesuit governance in the person of the Superior General, Provincial, superior and team leader has shaped me into who I am today. What are my expectations of Jesuit leadership?

I believe a Jesuit leader should possess six qualities to make his life and the life of others happy. Chris Lowney in his book, *Heroic Leadership* mentions four pillars of leadership: *self-awareness, ingenuity, love and heroism*. I would like to add two more: *humility and a sense of humour*.

Self-awareness is the key to success. My superior should be aware of his own lights and shadows. If he is aware of his strengths, he can build on them. I have seen superiors who, having greater self-awareness, understood their subjects better and brought life to the community. At times, I have had some unpleasant experiences with superiors who lacked self-awareness; they failed to understand the members in the community.



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Ingenuity is nothing but being creative and innovative. I want my superior to be able to embrace newness, consciously avoiding the same ways of speaking and doing things in daily life. This needs a mindset that is ready to learn and adopt newer thoughts and ideas. A superior's innovative mindset can foster an engaging experience within the community. In my experience, creativity has bridged the gap between the members and superior.

Love should be quality of an effective leader. I expect the superior to love his community members before he expects love from them. Love creates positive energy. My love for others will ultimately create a positive environment. I have learnt from my superiors that I must always do things out of love, not fear. This has given me more happiness and a sense of satisfaction.

Heroism signifies greater desires and higher goals. It is the courage to do what others have not done - reaching where others have not reached. When we were engaged in relief during the tsunami, our team chose newer areas to work. I want my superior to dream of an inspiring future and walk with me to reach it.

Humility is a virtue to be developed by all Jesuit superiors. I have taken humble Jesuits as my role models. They have helped me shape my perception and perspective. Finally, in this stressful world a sense of humour has a spiritual value. A leader with a sense of humour is happy and makes others happy as well.

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Loretos turn green



Image Source: Google

The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM), known as Loreto Sisters, was founded by Mary Ward in 1609. She was a resilient person of great faith and strength of character. She was labelled a heretic in her day for simply wanting to answer God's call to serve in the Ignatian spirit in an uncommonly feminine charism of freedom, justice and integrity. Today, we live and work with the energy, leadership, spirituality and courage of women.

The Loreto Congregation runs 17 schools and 2 Colleges in India. They have embraced the goals of JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation).

JPIC Vision - All Creation will be cared for

Mission - Each one actualizes this Vision, and inspires others to do the same

Right after accepting the JPIC goals in 2016, the Loretos worked out their

'actionable goals' in 2017 - Planting a hundred thousand trees in their schools, and making all of them carbon neutral by 2020. By early 2020 they had planted nearly 1,40,000 trees, and installed 435 Kwh of solar electricity in their schools and Colleges.

This made considerable contribution to the health of Mother Earth - water recharging of the earth, increased rainfall, reduced soil erosion, decreased pollution, etc.

But the most significant and durable impact of this 3-year plan is experienced by the participants - thousands of students, hundreds of teachers, thousands of families, and other people/institutions involved in the whole venture. Could the ripples of the Loreto Eco Venture go beyond Loreto to other congregations to cover India, Asia and beyond? The experience of Tarumitra, Patna and Gujarat confirms that the 'seeds' of environmental awareness-through-



action, scattered among students, especially girls, take deep roots and spread wide.

The worldwide IBVM Network, along with the Congregation of Jesus, is present at the United Nations in New York. They work to promote a more humane, just and sustainable world. The Archbishop of Kolkata conferred the "Green Congregation," award on the Loreto Sisters on 13th December, 2019.

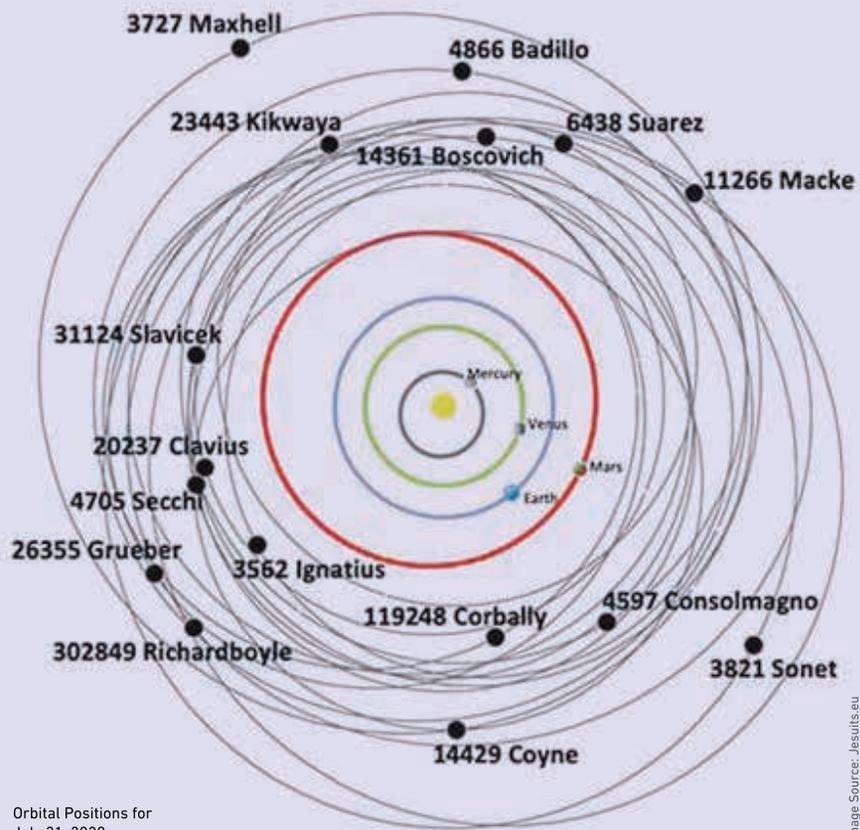
May this Loreto Eco Venture inspire and involve many more Religious communities/schools, congregations, and people of good will to care for and nurture Mother Earth.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

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Jesuit Community among the Planets

Pope Benedict XVI, addressing the 35th General Congregation in 2008, praised Jesuits as those who reach “those physical and spiritual places which others do not reach or have difficulty in reaching.” This is best illustrated by the unique 11-member Jesuit Community among the asteroids. 11 outstanding Jesuits have been honoured by the International Astronomical Society by naming asteroids after them. The last one, Christopher Corbally of the Vatican Observatory, was added in mid-June 2020. Asteroids are planetlets which circle around the Sun in the Asteroid Belt between Mars and Jupiter. The ‘Superior’ of this community is “3562 Ignatius,” whose *Contemplatio ad amorem* inspired Jesuits to engage in science for the greater glory of God and service of fellow-humans. The 2nd is “0237 Clavius.” Christopher Clavius (1538-1612), acclaimed the “Euclid of Europe,” is deservedly called the “Father of Jesuit Science.”



Orbital Positions for
July 31, 2020

Image Source: _jesuits.eu

The 3rd is “14361 Boscovich.” Roger Boscovich (1711-1787) is considered the precursor of modern atomic theory. The 4th is “3727 Maxhell.” Maximilian Hell (1720-1792) determined accurately the parallax of the Sun. The 5th is “4705 Secchi.” Angelo Secchi (1818-1878) is honoured as the Father of Stellar Spectroscopy. The 6th is “14429 Coyne.” George Coyne (1933-2020), former director of the Vatican Observatory, is called the “Second Founder of the Observatory.” The 7th is “302849 Richardboyle.” Richard Boyle (b. 1943) of the Vatican Observatory specializes in high-precision photometry of stars and stellar clusters.

The 8th is “119248 Corbally.” Christopher Corbally (b. 1946) works on multiple stellar systems. The 9th is “4597 Consolmagno.” Guy Consolmagno (b. 1952) is the current Director of the Vatican Observatory. The 10th is “23443 Kikwaya.” Jean Baptiste Kikwaya Eluo (b. 1965) from

Congo brings an African touch to the community. He specializes in the study of meteors. The 11th is “11266 Macke.” Robert Macke (b. 1974) is the meteorite curator at the Vatican Observatory.

Isn't it a contradiction that these Jesuits, members of the largest religious order in the Church, are engaged in the mundane field of empirical science? This query betrays a narrow or even an incorrect understanding of God and Revelation. Already in the time of St. Augustine it was known that God's revelation comes to us through two Books: Book of Nature and Book of Scripture. Great scientists like Kepler were convinced that scientists were “ministers of the Book of Nature” just as ordinary priests were of the Book of Scripture. The members of this “celestial Jesuit community” are, in a way, privileged to be ministers of both The Book of Nature and The Book of Scripture.