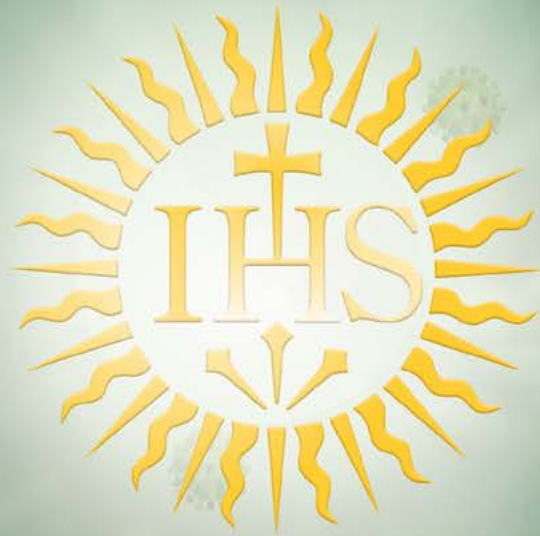


June - July, 2021

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA



**THE PANDEMIC
AND THE BIG CHALLENGES**
Are we equal to the tasks?

FOOTPRINTS

Lead Us On

*If Ignatius were to state today
New Exercises for God's Grace
That human life transformed for change
Would make the world a better place*

*Would he once more a cave select
To pray and think with God alone
Or would he walk the market ways
To sense God's ever widening zone*

*His following were those baptized
And clerical a state desired
Ignatius now would find his team
From varied callings yet inspired*

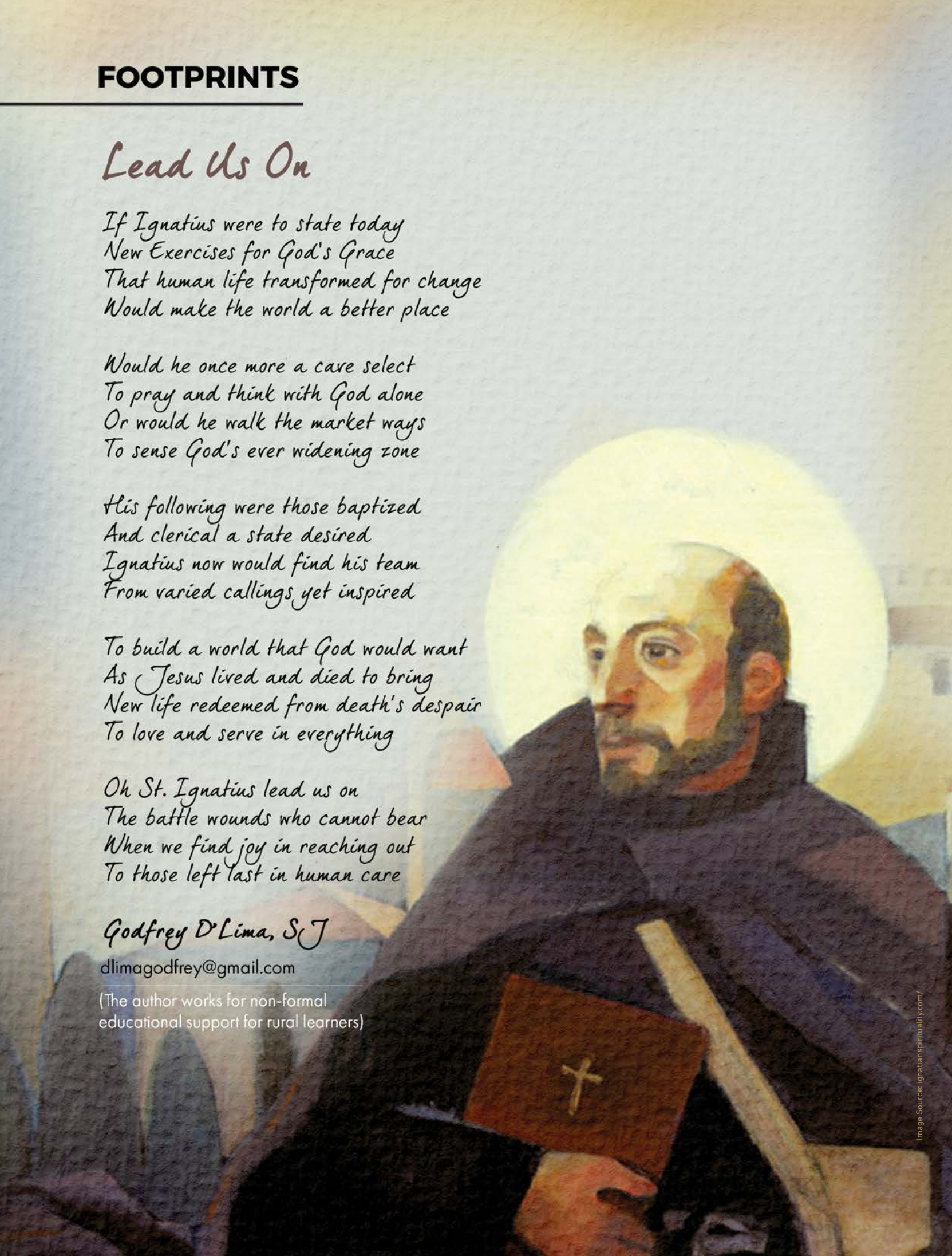
*To build a world that God would want
As Jesus lived and died to bring
New life redeemed from death's despair
To love and serve in everything*

*Oh St. Ignatius lead us on
The battle wounds who cannot bear
When we find joy in reaching out
To those left last in human care*

Godfrey D'Lima, S.J.

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(The author works for non-formal
educational support for rural learners)



JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA

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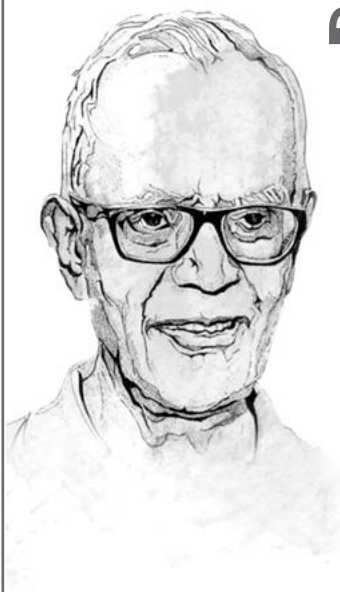
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As a service of information for the South Asian Jesuit Assistancy, JIVAN is sent to Jesuits and their colleagues, collaborators and friends. Articles appearing in JIVAN express the views of the authors and not of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia.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

WISHES



“ I am Stan Swamy. Yesterday, I was examined in several places. But what I want to say is that I was brought here eight months ago. When I came to Taloja, whole systems of my body were very functional, but during these eight months there has been a steady by slow regression of whatever my body functions were.

Eight months ago, I would eat by myself, do some writing, walk, I could take bath by myself, but all these are disappearing one after another. So Taloja Jail has brought me to a situation where I can neither write nor go for a walk by myself. Someone has to feed me. In other words, I am requesting you to consider why and how this deterioration of myself happened. Yesterday I was taken to JJ Hospital, so I got an opportunity to explain what I should be given. My deterioration is more powerful than the small tablets that they give.”

(Stan Swamy in his recent appearance before the Bombay High Court via video conferencing.)
www.livelaw.in



JIVAN wishes speedy recovery to **Fr. Stan Swamy, SJ** admitted in the Holy Family Hospital, Mumbai.



JIVAN

wishes all

*Jesuits and their Mission Partners
a Blessed Feast
of their founder,
St. Ignatius of Loyola.*

JESWITS

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



13 whole years to be a Jesuit priest?
Just right for my son.
He is a slow learner!



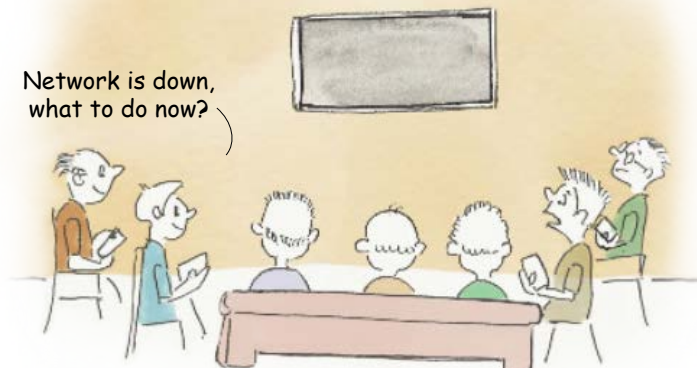
No Billy, sins can't be deleted
using Photoshop!



Thanks to the lockdown,
no transfers this year.
We're to work from home!



Network is down,
what to do now?





POSA Speaks

STANY D' SOUZA, SJ

In the face of the COVID Tsunami

You may call them by whatever name you wish, but the times we live in are dreadfully difficult. They are unprecedented, unparalleled and of course, once in a lifetime. Are they bags filled with miseries? I see this differently. There have been signs of love and joy, faith and hope amidst and despite all the pain and misery.

The COVID-19 Tsunami has been paralysing life. We have heard of and mourned for the dead, including the 34 Jesuits, who have succumbed.

Many say that the Corona Tsunami has not happened just like that. It is the inefficiency, incompetency and indifference of the rulers that have engineered the tragedy. Amidst the rising COVID crisis they organized huge election rallies and boasted of the huge numbers; allowed the Kumbh mela, where thousands gathered to have a dip in the Ganga. However, the most unkind cut of all, and also the most unpardonable, was the utter unpreparedness in terms of health care, whether it was the shortage of oxygen and medicines or the scarcity of beds in hospitals, of ICUs, of doctors. Hence, people had to run from pillar to post to save their lives. It was a heart-rending scene.

However, it was not only COVID-19! We had other viruses to fight as well. Communal polarisation! Hate politics! Politics of exclusion! When life was becoming unbearable, something like lightning appeared the dark sky. A single woman in a wheelchair stood for inclusive and cohesive India and won a decisive victory over the might - money, muscle, media, and government agencies - of the divisive forces. It was a victory of equality and unity between Hindus and others, men and women, the rich and the poor.

The message of Mamata's Bengal victory is that in the midst of darkness, light persists; in the midst of hatred, love persists; and in the midst of deliberate injustice, the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation persists. It states emphatically that a young David without arms can win against the mighty, well-armed Goliath. All that we need to do is to put our positive energies together and fight persistently till the end.

This is what many did in the face of the COVID Tsunami. They ventured out. The overworked and exhausted medical fraternity sacrificed all including their families, and have been saving many lives. As usual, the Sikh community on their own started oxygen langars. Many Good Samaritans contributed their mite despite, and amidst, all the pain and misery.

And we Jesuits will recognize that all this is happening when the Ignatian Year is at our door step. Fr. General formally inaugurated it in May. Fr. Ignatius was also a relentless fighter, wasn't he? He was an incorrigible optimist. Hence, as we celebrate the Ignatian Year, let us resolve to fight all types of viruses. Let us not allow them to claim our lives and the lives of others. Thankfully, many Provinces have already charted plans to save Jesuits and others. May our dreams and desires bear fruit!



Editor's Desk

VINAYAK JADAV, SJ

Nearer, My God, to Thee Finding God in the Second Wave

The first wave of Covid-19 in South Asia was still a matter of numbers. The second wave became a dreadful list of names upon names. The first wave affected those out there in the streets, whom we knew only from the newspapers. The second wave came right to our doorstep, entered our homes and snatched away our very near and dear ones. The first wave asked us to reach out in charity. The second wave made us cry out for mercy.

Among the thousands that died, 170 were Catholic priests (among them, 34 Jesuits), and 116 women religious in India alone.

One cloud of sorrow had hardly vanished when another overshadowed us, leaving no time to even grieve. We witnessed a dance of death in our own congregations, communities, institutions and among our staff. We were numbed by the fear of Dracula - the deadly virus hovering over us, and sucking away our blood. We came face to face with the value of life and the place of its Giver. We felt in our bones the fragility of human life and the sole steadfastness of an Ultimate. The living and the dead, both came "nearer" to the beyond.

I remember a line of dialogue from the play, *A Man for all Seasons*. Thomas More is addressing Chancellor Cromwell:

"Death comes for us all, my Lord. Even for kings he comes, before whom amidst all their royalty and brute strength, he will neither kneel, nor desire them to come forth, but roughly grasp them by their very breast and rattle them until they be stark dead, and so cause their bodies to be buried in a pit."

We too realize that the reins of life are in the hands of a Power before whom all are equal.

"Father, where is your bloody God?" The wife of the man dead from COVID shrieked to the priest before his coffin. And that has ever been the problem - the silence and absence of God in times of pain, grief and destruction: *where is your God?* Yet, in our utter helplessness, watching our near and dear ones being snatched away from us, we have realized that there is nothing worth relying upon in life except this Ultimate Power.

Tagore's prayer "Strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart" helps fortify us in our abject vulnerability. Though our emotions be drained, our logic exhausted and spirits impoverished, we may still find the ugly black shard of suffering and loss being fitted into the giant mosaic of our life that God is still busy fashioning. A kaleidoscope then? - Something incredibly beautiful out of the broken pieces of life? Perhaps.

In the vast panorama of the mystery of life, everything finds its place, even if it does not fit into our small minds.

When Nature loses its equilibrium, pandemics take place. But God's majesty and power is far greater still, as He answers Job out of the tempest: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38) And this force is "subtle, not malicious" (as Einstein would say). Even more, it is the power of love, as Paul will cry,

"I am certain that nothing can separate us from His love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below - there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8: 38-39).

When the Titanic was sinking and those aboard faced the imminence of their death, the ship's orchestra chose to play the melody of faith: "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Our boats may be small and puny, amidst the vast ocean of the pandemic, and yet we dare to sing a melody to the mystery of life, no matter when or where we may be afloat.

For the Lord we believe in, has the power to still the stormy waves. (Mt. 14:31)

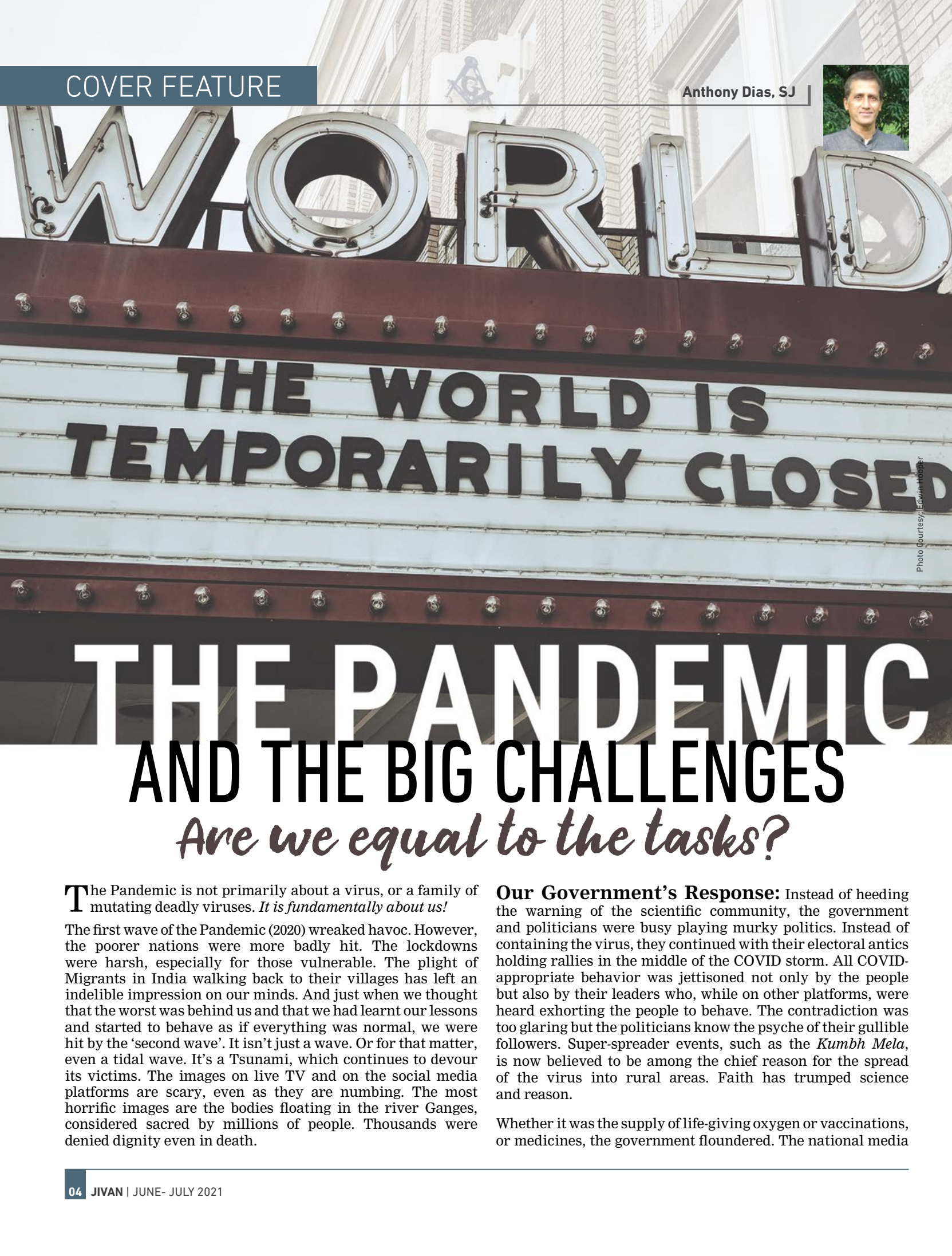


Photo Courtesy: Edwin Hooper

THE PANDEMIC

AND THE BIG CHALLENGES

Are we equal to the tasks?

The Pandemic is not primarily about a virus, or a family of mutating deadly viruses. *It is fundamentally about us!*

The first wave of the Pandemic (2020) wreaked havoc. However, the poorer nations were more badly hit. The lockdowns were harsh, especially for those vulnerable. The plight of Migrants in India walking back to their villages has left an indelible impression on our minds. And just when we thought that the worst was behind us and that we had learnt our lessons and started to behave as if everything was normal, we were hit by the 'second wave'. It isn't just a wave. Or for that matter, even a tidal wave. It's a Tsunami, which continues to devour its victims. The images on live TV and on the social media platforms are scary, even as they are numbing. The most horrific images are the bodies floating in the river Ganges, considered sacred by millions of people. Thousands were denied dignity even in death.

Our Government's Response: Instead of heeding the warning of the scientific community, the government and politicians were busy playing murky politics. Instead of containing the virus, they continued with their electoral antics holding rallies in the middle of the COVID storm. All COVID-appropriate behavior was jettisoned not only by the people but also by their leaders who, while on other platforms, were heard exhorting the people to behave. The contradiction was too glaring but the politicians know the psyche of their gullible followers. Super-spreader events, such as the *Kumbh Mela*, is now believed to be among the chief reason for the spread of the virus into rural areas. Faith has trumped science and reason.

Whether it was the supply of life-giving oxygen or vaccinations, or medicines, the government floundered. The national media

was forced to take note of this even as the international media drew the attention of the world to the horrors embarrassing the incumbent government. Instead of accepting the truth, the messengers were attacked and accused of conspiracy to malign the country. Instead of going after hoarders and profiteers, the government is going after those trying to help. Instead of allowing people to express their grievances and dissent, the government is coming down heavily on them. Attempts were also made to communalize the tragedy.

Critical Observations: The Pandemic has shown us the true nature and intent of our State. In the first wave, the enormity of the migrants' suffering did not stir its conscience. It looked the other way even as millions started to walk back to their villages, facing uncertainty, deprivation and even death. The Apex court allied with the government and failed to do justice to the poor and when the High Courts were hauling up the governments, it was trying to curb them. The Election Commission capitulated, thereby harming free and fair elections and democracy itself.

Furthermore, under the cover of the Pandemic, the government pushed through laws detrimental to people's interest in an undemocratic way. The environmental legislation (EIA) and the farm laws are an instance of this. In the pursuit of its goal of winning elections, it put the lives of millions at risk. The loss of lives and human suffering is merely 'collateral damage'. When voluntary and non-profit organizations and groups started to help the needy, they were brought under the scanner and their work restricted. During the first wave and now, it was the NGOs who reached the people before the government. Despite this, the present government has systematically tried to block their work or stop their funding. All this reeks of fascism and the imminent demise of a democracy gasping for breath.

Response of other Constituents: As the *dance macabre* continues, there are voices that demand accountability. The High Courts of the country took *suo motu* cognizance of the situation and/or acted swiftly when PILs were filed. The Delhi High Court asked the Central government to provide oxygen to Delhi. The High Courts of Madras and Calcutta hauled up the Election Commission for dereliction of duty and held it responsible for the spread of the virus. It also ordered that free food be given to stranded migrants in Delhi. Civil society also rose to the occasion. Charities and aid workers cutting across religious divides began to provide relief to those suffering. The Sikh community, including the protesting farmers, came up with a novel idea called '*Oxygen Langar*' by providing free oxygen. PIL with respect to the floating bodies has been filed. They are also holding the governments responsible for causing murder by not providing oxygen to the critically ill. Given the millions of avoidable deaths, there is a talk of holding the government responsible for genocide, or mass killing. The Church has responded to the situation by providing various

services ranging from arranging food and medical facilities to offering its spaces for treatment and care of patients.

A Critique of the Jesuit Response: Individual Jesuits, communities and provinces have done a lot of good work. Many have made personal sacrifices and have risked their lives. There has been an enormous amount of networking and collaboration with civil society groups. There has been a great deal of inter-ministerial collaboration. Having said that, and given the challenges of the present and the future, we need to ask ourselves whether this is enough. As men of the *Magis*, and as Jesuits on a Mission wanting to heed the call of King to "row into the deep" (GC36), we cannot delay.

Hence, we need to pay heed to the feedback coming from those among us who are self-critical and our fiercely secular friends. They tell us that it is true that a lot of good work is being done but that merely 'good' is not enough. They tell us we are generally good at 'relief or charity works' but that too to a limited degree compared to our huge resources.

We are also told that not all Provinces are responding, that some are generally on 'auto-pilot mode'! We are reminded that we never challenge the government and the authorities; that we fail to recognize the deeper causes of the state irresponsibility and culpability. The fear of losing our FCRA seems to be preventing us from speaking up.

There are examples of some communities not doing anything to alleviate suffering. There is hardly any determined corporate or coordinated response, hardly any policy or disaster management plan. Each Province is left to itself and each community in the Province does its own thing. This is a *laissez-faire* approach that cannot operate

during troubled and apocalyptic times. It is therefore no surprise that some discover their culinary skills and others find new hobbies. Last but not the least: many find solace in 'retreating', literally, from the harsh realities of the world!

We disappoint our well-wishers when we fail to call out the powers that oppress people. These could be civil or ecclesiastical. We do not challenge the latter when in the name of religion, superstition is promoted and in the name of God, women are subjugated. We wake up only when some of 'ours' are attacked. Many of us are politically naïve and disengaged. This has impact on the kind of students we produce. A former Bihar Assembly Speaker told the Jesuits gathered at the SJES-SA Convention in 2019 thus: "Your institutions produce 90% educated fools." We look on helplessly when fascist forces make inroads into our institutions. Instead of leveraging our institutional soft power to take up people's causes, we submit meekly to the authorities and in the process lose our inner freedom to act according to our conscience.

The Tasks Before us: The immediate task is to heed the feedback from within and from other friends. Chris Lowney, ('Heroic Leadership'), has observed that Jesuits do not like 'evaluations'! Secondly, we should not only have

“

Each Province is left to itself and each community in the Province does its own thing. This is a *laissez-faire* approach that cannot operate during troubled and apocalyptic times. It is therefore no surprise that some discover their culinary skills and others find new hobbies.”



Photo Courtesy: Danish Siddiqui

disaster management units set up in each Province, but also make sure they are functional. Natural and human-made disasters are only going to increase, and so the need to be in a state of preparedness. But it is infinitely more important to prevent disasters. There is a big agenda for research here. Thirdly, we must promote a scientific temper and develop a spirituality that takes science seriously. Here the need for critical thinking has to be emphasized. Fourthly, we must align ourselves with all democratic movements such as the farmers' movement and the National Alliance of People's Movement (NAPM).

Finally, the most important task before us is to actively promote DEMOCRACY – constitutional, electoral and substantive. This is crucial because our Republic itself is in danger. It is being pushed towards fascism. If Stan Swamy and other Rights' defenders are in jail, and many on the watch-list; if our voluntary organizations are constantly harassed; if draconian anti-conversion laws and laws such as the UAPA are being enacted and abused; if nuns are heckled and de-boarded from a train in Uttar Pradesh; if churches are attacked and the *dalits* and *tribals* continue to be oppressed; if Muslims are being labeled as terrorists and lynched; if the Pandemic and the tragedy of our people is used by nationalist forces to expand their ideological influence for hegemonic purposes and for nationalism, it is because we are losing our democracy. We cannot see events, laws and attacks on our rights freedoms in isolation. There is a cynical pattern, a diabolical design to all these.

In Conclusion: The Pandemic and the Lockdowns are more about ourselves and less about the virus! It is about our behavior, individually and collectively. It is definitely about the Government we elect and about the politicians we adore. It is also about those among us who do not care to vote! During

Elections 2014, we were warned about rise of fascist forces. We did not care. In the 2019 General Elections, we were told that it was the last chance for Indian democracy. Very few understood what that meant. The whole nation is now reaping the bitter harvest. For fascist forces, epidemics and pandemics, and other human tragedies are an opportunity to further their ends.

But we cannot lose hope. We must keep the memories of this Holocaust alive in order to learn our lessons and to book the guilty. We do need to speak truth to power and, as one writer pointed out, we need to also 'speak science to power' because blind belief and superstition has exacerbated the tragedy. The scientific community is challenging blind faith. Thousands of health workers and doctors have laid down their lives. Their sacrifices will not go in vain. Many are waking up. People rising together, collectively, and in solidarity have overthrown despotic rulers. That is the hope. We cannot afford to lose that.

The author is the Secretary of Social Justice and Ecology (SJES) South Asia, and Convener of the JCSA Think Tank. Contact: jesasecretariat20@gmail.com

The Genesis of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK)

An Interview with the Vice-Chancellor **Fr. Felix Raj, SJ**



Fr. Felix Raj, SJ with Mamata Banerjee, the Hon. Chief Minister of West Bengal

Photo Courtesy: Aritra Das

Thank you for accepting the interview for JIVAN, dear Fr. Felix Raj. You are the Vice-Chancellor of one of the first Jesuit universities in the South Asian Conference. Given the short period of time since it has begun, its progress is clearly visible. Congratulations for this achievement. What are your topmost consolations about St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK) as its first Vice-Chancellor?

My topmost consolations are:

- (i) As we began the journey, I deeply felt that God was with us and I kept telling everyone "this is God's work and so it will definitely continue whatever be the problems, whether human or natural".
- (ii) On our way we found very many good people who

encouraged us: they said that a Jesuit University was something that was long due in Kolkata, in West Bengal and in this country. Our Xaverian alumni came forward to support this mission in the spirit of Nihil Ultra.

- (iii) My provincial, Fr. Jeyaraj Velluswamy understood the project and wholeheartedly supported it, but expressed his inability to help with funds.
- (iii) The government was with us, particularly, the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. In fact, it was she who suggested to us to start a university. She was also instrumental in giving us the land.

The clarion call was 'We are Xaverians, once a Xaverian, always a Xaverian.' I shared the project details with many of them especially LN Mittal, Sudhir Maheswari, Firdausal Hasan, Snehasis Sur and GP Gupta, and found everyone supportive of this mission. Today what the university is, is because of the efforts of these people.

You are also the founding Vice-Chancellor of SXUK. Can you speak to us about the genesis of SXUK? The idea of starting it? The steps it grew in with?

In 2012, when Mamata Banerjee was the Chief Guest at the Convocation of St. Xavier's College, Kolkata (SXCK), she suddenly asked whether the Jesuits could start a university. That was the spark.

I responded that if she gave us land, we would definitely start a university. She instantly agreed, and herself handed over the land lease document to me in December 2012.

Finance was a challenge, but the Alumni Association and many individual alumni helped generously. Many Jesuits, alumni, political leaders, educationists, and industrialists joined in, to complete the project.

A committee of Jesuits and educationists prepared the draft document of the St. Xavier's University Act 2016 that the State Assembly unanimously passed in December 2016, with minor changes. With the Governor's assent, the Bengal government notified it on 8th February 2017, which is observed as the Foundation Day since then.

Can you single out the difficulties you faced in founding it and bringing it to its present firm stage?

Not difficulties, rather they were challenges. Frankly, I faced many and felt that they made me stronger and more convinced of the mission.

In the initial stage, I had to look after both the College and the University.

I had to constantly negotiate with the Government with regard to land, passing of the Act, exemption from fees and other duties, corporation permission for construction of buildings and various other permissions.

Even, acquisition of the land was another big challenge because, as per the prevailing rates at that time, the entire land would have cost us around ₹187 crores. But, the generous Santa Mamata Banerjee provided it to us at a nominal rate.

Management of a university is unlike managing a college. Universities, whether public or private, can only be established by the Government, Central or State, after the passage of the relevant acts.

Mobilisation of financial resources was a major challenge. I deeply believed that if the mission is for common good and divinely blessed, it will draw its donors like a magnet.

We faced some problems from the local political leaders, but they were resolved amicably. It was also important to build a team of committed people in the institution.

Meanwhile, I had to undergo some health-related issues because of the toll that all the work was taking on me. But it was all for the good, and so it's better left unsaid.

You have succeeded immensely in raising funds for it, from what we know. Would you be comfortable to share the journey of this - the most important aspect of any mega enterprise?

For any project, mobilisation of funds is an important task.

Firstly, we mobilised the alumni of SXCKAA within and outside the country through national and international chapters and conventions and identified people who could participate in the project in a big way. We initiated various types of sponsorship programmes like 'brick-sponsorship', 'room-sponsorship', 'floor-sponsorship', 'laksha project' and 'building-sponsorship'.

We are grateful to a number of individual Xaverian and non-Xaverian sponsors and companies like Sanjiv Goenka of RPG, LN Mittal of Arcelor-Mittal Group; RS Agarwal of Emami Group; Exide Industries, the Jalan group, the Rungta group and many others. However, I must mention with pride that within four years we are now self-reliant and able to generate our own funds.

We are sure you have taken care to ensure Jesuit identity or character of SXUK. Would you like to throw some light on how you realize the ideal of Jesuit education in SXUK?

Jesuits have always been in the forefront as educators across the globe through the past 450 years. St. Xavier's is a well sought out brand, and Jesuit education is in great demand.

SXUK is yet another initiative where we have ensured that the Jesuit presence and identity are maintained in the composition of administrative boards and committees, characteristics of the education imparted, orientation and value system and public image and manifestation of the university. As per the SXUK Act, the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor will only be Jesuits.

We try to practice the Jesuit pedagogy based on the Jesuit reputation cultivated over the past four centuries. We promote the pillars of the Jesuit charism namely – AMDG, Magis, Cura personalis, option for the poor, service rooted in faith and justice, social conscience and so on.

At the commencement of every academic year, we have an orientation for students, faculty and staff where we introduce them to the Jesuit history, spirituality, characteristics, pedagogy, charism and all that is associated with the Jesuits.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of SXUK, according to you?

Our topmost strength is our conviction that we are led by God's providence and that our Patron, St. Francis Xavier, continues to shower his blessings on us.

With the support of our alumni, we have developed sufficient infrastructure and facilities for our faculty and students. The sense of belongingness that we promote also defines our strength.

Our challenges are in the form of finding competent numbers of Jesuits and non-Jesuit personnel.

Another challenge is to focus on research, consultancy and innovation. This is in view of accreditations that set the benchmark for qualitative output and efficiency.

We are sure you have 'miles to go and promises to keep'. What are they, especially in the context of NEP?

We are just a 4-year-old infant and have 'promises to keep and miles to go' before 'St. Xavier's must attain the status of Oxford and Stanford Universities', as desired by the Chief minister, Mamata Banerjee.

As a university community we made an in-depth study of the NEP 2020 and reflected upon it. We had sent our reflections and suggestions to the education ministry. The policy aims to pave the path for major transformational reforms in the higher education system in the country. It is a framework to guide the development of education in the country, aimed to make India a global knowledge superpower ensuring equity, access and inclusion.

The policy envisions quality universities and colleges and points out some of the major problems currently faced by the higher education system in India. Its thrust is to build vibrant communities of scholars and peers, break down harmful silos and enable students to become well-rounded across disciplines, with an emphasis on Internationalization.

The policy is 'old wine in a new bottle.' Most of the programmes and initiatives are either already in practice in many institutions or are being discussed among academicians. Many of the proposed programmes are not time-bound.

As observed by some critics, the policy recommends the need for better teaching and learning, better training of teachers and more meaningful evaluation system, but it does not provide a realistic way by which private or minority institutions can raise resources to meet their needs to maintain quality.

It is ironic to note that the policy, on the one hand, lays the foundation for privatization of higher education, but on the other, claims to provide education for the marginalized and underprivileged groups.

India spent 2.8% of its GDP on education in 2019-20. Our economy, going through the doldrums at the moment, how are we going to fund education? Can we realise the target of 6% of GDP as projected in the new policy?

What lesson do you wish to convey to those dreaming universities in their Provinces of the South Asian Conference?

We have two Jesuit universities in India at present – XUB and SXUK. A third one is coming up in Meghalaya. Some provinces like Madurai, Karnataka and Patna are mulling over the idea of starting universities.

A time will soon come when all colleges will be told to become self-financing. Provinces must start prospective planning for

2050. In the present times, we Jesuits are very much dependent on our past glory; we are lacking visionary leadership in our Provinces. Sometimes, heroic initiatives are derailed by religious bureaucracies.

Universities have wider advantages over colleges, with greater autonomy. State Governments and the NEP 2020 are advocating private initiatives and participation in higher education. We need to upgrade our public relations and build close rapport with government officials.

As a veteran educationist, what message do you wish to give to those in education, particularly higher education?

The Jesuit contribution to Indian higher education, with around 74 higher educational institutions of various types, has been significant.

Higher education must focus on quality outcomes in terms of access, pedagogy, research, consultancy and innovation, excellence, enrolment, equity and employability. A Jesuit institution is for all and so it should reach out to everyone. My simple advice is that in the spirit of our 'option for the poor', we must introduce beneficial scholarship and fee-waiver schemes to benefit the poorer sections of our society. No one should turn back from our institutions for lack of money.

Although, Jesuit institutions are among the best in the country there is no effective network at the Assistancy level except for one or two meetings which have hardly any follow-ups. Such narrowness and self-complacency are major hurdles to our national network and collaborations.

A vibrant network of higher education institutions at the South Asian Assistancy is the need of the hour for constructive outcomes and academic leadership.



Inset: Fr. Felix Raj, SJ with Industrialist LN Mittal

Photo Courtesy: Anitra Das



Image Source: Maktoobmedia.com

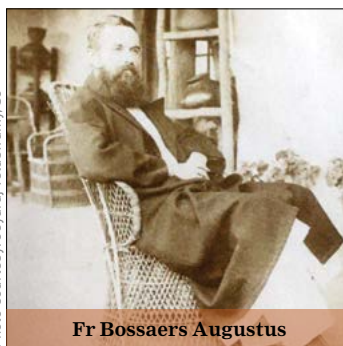
When tribal land matters and their lives do not, what happens!

It happened in 1921....

‘Traders from other parts of India, knowing the improvidence of these simple aboriginals, have settled among them to exploit it and trade upon it. Their stocks are always well provided with paddy which they are willing to give out as loan for 100 per cent., or two measures of rice from the new crop for every measure given. ...The Sharpers buy all they can get at a cheap rate, send a good deal out of the country where they can get a good price for it, and keep in stock only just enough so as to make sure that after six or seven months there would be a shortage in the country. This, of course, will double the price and the poor people will have to buy at a rate enhanced by 100 per cent, the

very rice which they had sold six months before. Then they have to contract debts, mortgage the fields they are cultivating and become the victim of the moneylender, until perhaps one day when they disappear to go and find a living elsewhere. This is the economic history of every aboriginal tribe in India.’ This extract from a 1921 account of the Jashpur Jesuit mission history (now in Chhattisgarh State), gives us today a glimpse into the plight and systemic exploitation of the tribal people or Adivasis at the hands of money lenders and traders.

This was the modus operandi that Jesuit missionaries came face to face with, when they entered Chota Nagpur tribal land in the second half of the 19th century. Fr Bossaers Augustus SJ, who arrived in India on 11 October 1910 and was assigned



Fr Bossaers Augustus

to work in Chotanagpur missions, managed to obtain from the Rajah of Jashpur Kingdom, Rajah Bishan Pratap Singh Deo, the necessary permission on 12th March 1917, to build a chapel at Gholeng in the northern part of his kingdom. The presence of Father Bossaers among the tribal people not only brought them to the way of the Gospel but opened a pathway for

them to be freed from the clutches of the landlords, greedy moneylenders and unscrupulous businessmen.

In defence of Tribal land and Tribal lives

Father Bossaers, coming to labour in the Chotanagpur mission 30 years after Father Constant Lievens had worked for the liberation and welfare of the tribal people, could easily understand and sympathize with their plight. So, he worked out a plan to defeat the exploiters at their own game, by starting a kind of agricultural 'Produce Bank' for the tribal people. Getting together some capital he bought a large supply of rice when the harvest was being gathered in and when rice was cheap. When the sowing time came, he called a 'Bara Panchayat' or a general meeting and proposed his plan. He told them he would give them seed-paddy at a low rate so that they would no longer need to go to the businessmen or moneylenders who would charge them a 100 per cent interest for any loan. He further told them whatever would come as profit, would go to the upkeep of the school, for their children. The plan was of course adopted with great enthusiasm. This little rural 'produce bank' began to spread to all principal villages and became a big success. Father Bossaers also introduced an insurance system against the losses of cattle - another initiative to prevent the simple tribals from falling into the debt traps of the exploiters.

It happens now in 2021.....

Fr Stan Swamy, 84 year-old Jesuit, had been living and working among the same tribals in Jharkhand and Odisha for the past 40 years and more. His lifetime mission has been to conscientize the simple and unsuspecting tribal folk about their basic rights to *Jal, Jangal and Jameen*. Fr Stan had been a frontline activist for the tribal cause and had been very much part and parcel of many dharnas, rallies, meetings, seminars etc, defending the tribal rights and dignity.

Fr Stan was arrested on 8th October 2020, on charges of having links with the outlawed Maoist organizations, and has also been accused along with 15 other rights' activists of planning and inciting the violence in the Bhima Koregaon case of 1st January 2018. Defending himself against the charges levelled by the NIA (National Investigation Agency), what Fr Stan himself spoke about as a possible reason for his arrest were the dozens of cases Fr Stan had filed against the State government for arresting scores of innocent Adivasi youth on flimsy charges and dumping them into jails only to keep them languishing for years without any trial.

Fr Stan's own detention in Taloja prison is running into 230 days today (May 25)!

When Tribal lives do not matter!

According to the Indigenous World 2019, on 23rd January 2019, four tribal teenagers aged between 13 and 17, were illegally detained in police lock-up and tortured at Kamla Nagar Police Station in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The teenagers accused the police of framing them in a jewelry theft case. In another incidence, on 8th February 2019, Abinash Munda, from Bhalupali village in Sambalpur district of Odisha, died at Ainthapalli police station, following his arrest the previous day in a theft case. Police claimed that his body was found hanging with a bed sheet inside the Ainthapalli police station. However, Munda's family members alleged custodial torture. On 9 February, local groups burned the Ainthapalli police station, accusing the police of killing Munda.

Numerous cases of such unjust arrests and inhuman treatment of Adivasi youth by the state, led Fr Stan to start a movement to save them. In 2014-15, he formed the Persecuted Prisoners Solidarity Committee (PPSC), following the indiscriminate arrest of hundreds of Adivasi and Dalit youths. The committee also includes Sudha Bharadwaj, a lawyer who has also been arrested in connection with Bhima Koregaon. The group's main purpose was to intervene on behalf of hundreds of undertrials seeking immediate bail and a speedy trial. Fr Stan asks, 'When has it become unconstitutional in India to help and speak for the undertrials? Undertrials are citizens, not criminals before the law.'

Why Tribal land always matters..!

According to the Annual report of the Ministry of Rural Development 2004-2005, it is said that Jharkhand is the state where most of the tribal land alienation has happened. Over 26 lakh people have lost their land, all in the name of development and housing projects since Independence. The continued alienation has not only intensified their poverty, but also seriously threatened their tribal identity in their own homeland (Sharan Ramesh 2005).

Fr Stan had been forcibly voicing his opposition to an amendment in the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, which he said would lead to the decimation of the Adivasis in Jharkhand. The Act had clauses that seemed to allow tribal people to gift their land for 'development'. Fr Stan is said to have meticulously documented all the violations committed, and profits gained by mining companies. He had even calculated how much natural wealth the Adivasis had lost when their natural habitat was taken over by government-corporate alliances. Fr Stan was critical on several forums about the Adani group acquiring land at throwaway prices for a power plant in Godda, Jharkhand. He seems to have remarked that not only did Adani's company get immediate environmental clearances, but it bulldozed large tracts of standing crops in the process. '*A caged bird can still sing*', Fr Stan writes from his Taloja prison cell.

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Response to COVID-19

Jesuits and the Church of Varanasi



The blood donation camp at Varanasi.

Photo Courtesy: Prakash Louis, SJ

The onslaught of the second wave of COVID-19 and its impact in an unprecedented manner has led to disease, devastation and death. On the one hand, the impact of this virus on the physical, emotional, psychological, economic, educational and social life of the people, has taken such a bad beating that they will not be able to spring back to life. On the other hand, total lack of proper and genuine information and lack of health care facilities, has taken us, Indian citizens into a total state of anxiety, fear, depression and death. After more than a year, the citizens, especially 60% of the population from the most vulnerable and marginalized communities, have suffered untold misery and hardships. Instead of this depressing situation coming to an end, it is prolonging, leading to a further debilitating impact on the masses.

Realising the seriousness of the situation, the Jesuits in Varanasi along with the IMS priests initiated an online meet to take stock of the situation and see how, as the Church of Varanasi, we can respond to this grim situation. We organized

a zoom meeting with the CRI Varanasi unit and also an online meeting with the Bishop. Once all of us realized that as members of the Church, we - though affected by the death and sickness of our own people - should respond to the cry of the people for assistance. In the first phase, the Church of Varanasi along with civil society, provided relief to thousands of affected families. But this time, we realize that it is medical relief that is the foremost need of the people.

Our objective was: a) To make people aware of the protocols and invite them to follow whatever is possible; b) To provide appropriate and genuine information from a sea of information that is bombarded; c) To inform them about the home remedies which are easily available; d) To connect those who need assistance, to the right source; and e) To try to explore some medical assistance with our limited resources.

To protect and promote holistic health at this time of the second wave of the pandemic, we kept these focuses in mind.

The Church under the Diocese of Varanasi works in 8 districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, which is the most backward area in Uttar Pradesh. We are trying to address the poorest in the slums of the towns and villages in rural areas. With some assistance, many of the people and their families can be saved from the virus or death. Most of the families have only one room with 5 members, and for them to follow social distance becomes a huge issue. Toilet and bathing rooms and lack of facilities for hot water, add to these problems.

The following assistances were and are provided: Awareness creation in the form of following the Protocols to protect oneself and family members and others from the spread and effect of the virus. This awareness creation was carried out among the workers, labourers, vegetable vendors, and construction workers, etc., who do not have reliable information on the protocols. One of the important protocols that was communicated was to get vaccination done at the nearest government health centre. In addition, it was also communicated to be careful and protect oneself and their families.

The handbill also had information on Home Remedies. These home remedies are user-friendly and easily available at home. For some poor families, these were purchased and reached. Around 50,000 hand bills were printed and made available to rural and poor masses for information. It is being translated into 6 regional languages. This hand bill was brought out because of counter medical prescription, and also to know the actual price of the medicine. We are grateful to the Bishop of Varanasi, Rt. Rev. Eugene Joseph for taking care of this expense.

Over 6,000 masks have been distributed to those who cannot afford to purchase masks. These masks were double layered to protect people from the virus, washable and reusable. Some of these masks were stitched in the prison, due to which the prisoners also earned some income. With handbills and masks, the awareness level has increased.

In the first phase, people were not very careful about wearing masks. Now they are ready to wear masks. They cannot afford to purchase a mask as the shops have raised their price. The assistance that we provided was handy at this crucial time. Vegetable vendors and cycle rickshaw-pullers were also provided with masks. Since these are part of the labour union, it is easy to distribute medical relief materials through them.

Blood Donation Camps were organized. Realising the crisis of lack of blood for covid and other patients at this critical

juncture, we approached the priests and religious to take the lead in donating blood. Many young persons from other faiths also joined us in this venture. We organized blood donation camps at 5 different locations and over 50 units were collected. These are used for the poorest of the poor affected by Covid and also for those who need blood but cannot get it. From the blood bank we are able to provide for some at least. Since we organized the blood donation camp through Popular Hospital, we have some access with that hospital now.



Women animators distributing handbills and masks.

Photo Courtesy: Prakash Louis, SJ

As we proceeded with providing assistance, we realized the need to provide basic medicine for those who have symptoms or tested positive or as a preventive. We also became aware of the fact that the prices of essential medicines to treat the virus has gone up, and the poor cannot afford to buy them. We checked the guidelines provided by the Central, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh governments and also checked with doctors to arrive at a list which is beneficial for people. We negotiated

with wholesale suppliers, got the price reduced and mobilized resources to procure them. Many volunteers worked on writing the mode of taking the medicine, the prescription and packed in small bags and distributed these to the most needy people. These medicine kits proved to be a great solace for the people.

Over 1,000 medicine kits have been distributed so far, mostly to the poor and vulnerable, women-headed households, vegetable vendors, rickshaw pullers, daily labourers etc. We are planning to continue this with the support of many benefactors who are willing to help in this time of crisis.

Inhalation has been suggested as one of the measures to protect oneself and to do away with the virus. For this, Eucalyptus oil was found to be very effective. Some of our family members and friends were generous enough to make available eucalyptus oil which is very useful for inhalation. We acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of Bishop of Varanasi, Rt. Rev. Eugene Joseph for procuring this in big quantities.

From our experience, we realized that when a person becomes positive, gets treated in a hospital and comes home, he or she comes back to the same small house. This results in the spread of the virus. Hence, we undertook to sanitize the houses of the patient.

The Author is the Coordinator of the Church's Response to COVID in Varanasi, and the Patna Jesuit Migrant Service.
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THOUSAND WORDS

In Commemoration of the World
Blood Donor Day - 14th June



Plasma, which is
90 percent water,
makes up 55 percent
of blood volume.

**DONATE
PLASMA,
DEFEAT
CORONA.**





The Spiritual Exercises

A Handbook for Lay Spirituality



Cave of Saint Ignatius,
Manresa, Spain

Photo Courtesy: Aleleia

Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ, the Jesuit General, has called this year, 2021-2022, “the Ignatian Year”, as it marks the 500th anniversary of the conversion of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Fr. General invites us *‘to see all things new in Christ’*. After he recovered from his injury received at the battle of Pamplona, on May 21st, 1521, Ignatius set out towards Barcelona hoping to go to the Holy Land. On the way, he stopped at Manresa where he had a number of transformative, spiritual experiences so that *“all things looked (or seemed) new to him”* (Auto.N.30).

It was here at Manresa that Ignatius put down his spiritual experiences in such a way that it took the form of the “Spiritual Exercises” and he started sharing his experiences with pious women who came to him for advice (Auto. N.34). Hence, the Ignatian year is also an invitation to take a closer look at “The Spiritual Exercises” of St. Ignatius which Jesuits, throughout history, claim to be the source of Jesuit spirituality. But how accurate is this Jesuit claim? Let’s investigate!

When were “The Spiritual Exercises” composed?

Fr. George E. Ganss, S.J., in his “The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius”, maintains that Ignatius began the composition of the Exercises *shortly after his outstanding mystical illumination at Manresa*. He had already begun recording what he had experienced in his own soul after his conversion. Now he *started writing notes intended as aids for himself* in his spiritual conversions with others, encouraging them to a more intensive spiritual life.

Ignatius himself placed the first origins of the book at Manresa in 1522, as does Nadal and Lainez, his close friends. Lainez maintains that “The Spiritual Exercises” was written at Manresa *“at least in its substance”*. Such were the notes he used in 1527 at Alcala and Salamanca ‘where he was engaged in giving spiritual exercises’ and which he submitted to Bachelor Frias for examination (Auto. N.67). His experience here with

the Inquisition made Ignatius realize that he could not help souls spiritually unless he became a priest.

All agree that the “Spiritual Exercises” reflect “*in substance*” the period of Ignatius’ Conversion from a ‘man of the world’ to a ‘man of God’. During this time Ignatius was a layman, who shared his spiritual experience with the few who approached him. His only desire was to go and spend the rest of his life in the Holy Land in penance and service (Auto. No.11).

While convalescing at Loyola, Ignatius read “Life of Christ” and “The Lives of the Saints”. He also reflected on his former life of worldly chivalry and service. He realized that the *worldly dreams* left him “dry and ill at ease”. But when he thought of *imitating the saints* in the service of Christ, he felt “happy and content”. Thus, he was introduced to the ‘discernment of spirits’ (Auto. N.8). Ignatius now developed a desire to do “outstanding service” to Christ, the Chief of the “knights of God”.

Ignatius called this period of his life at Manresa his “*primitive church*”, as God dealt with him “*as a school teacher deals with a child, teaching him*” (Auto. N.27). Initially at Manresa, he lived an ascetic life, fasted, assisted at Mass and the Office, and gave many hours to prayer. He remained in one same interior state with a great uniformity of joy (Auto. Nos.19, 20). This period was soon followed by a *period of stormy alternations of desolation and consolation, a tempest of intensive scruples* which swept him on to the temptation of suicide, and finally a *series of signal graces* at the Cardoner River which transformed him into “another man”. (Auto. N.30).

Purpose and Dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises:

In his Annotations, Ignatius clearly states that “*The Spiritual Exercises*” is a means to help one *discard all disordered attachments* so that after their removal one can seek and find God’s will in the ordering of one’s life for one’s salvation (Sp. Ex. Nos. 1, 21). This method of decision making could be applied to other choices too. If one was already in an unchangeable state of life, this process could be used to reform oneself within the state of life already chosen (Sp. Ex. Nos. 169, 171, 172).

Ignatius structures ‘the Spiritual Exercises’ as a ‘*tool for conversion*’, but he does not specify as to what one is to be converted to, except in a general sought of way as ‘doing God’s will after the example of Jesus Christ’. He sees the conversion process as a *spiral, conical* movement that is *life-long* and gradually purifies the deeper levels of a person through various Exercises.

Ignatius begins his Exercises by stating his basic plan in what is called the Principle and Foundation (no 23). It is a positive statement of the whole purpose of the Spiritual Exercises and is meant to be internalized by the Retreatant through the Preparatory Prayer made at the start of each prayer period (No.46). The Principle and Foundation is so important that Ignatius himself suggests that the retreatant spend 3 or 4 days reflecting on it.

The Principle and Foundation sketches the worldview of Christian faith, as enunciated in our catechism books, and articulates the 1st Commandment. Man is created by God for himself and man has to use the created world in accordance with God’s plans so that he and all creation may one day find fulfilment in God alone. In order to use God’s created gifts

rightly and wisely, man must cultivate an inner disposition of ‘*indifference*’ so that all his choices are based on the norm ‘what gives greater glory to God’.

Ignatius focuses his attention on the primary disposition of ‘generosity’ in the retreatant. By recalling God’s goodness towards man, even in the face of man’s lack of response (as shown in the First Week), Ignatius leads the retreatant to ‘a cry of wonder and a colloquy of mercy’ (Sp. Ex. Nos. 60, 61). He keeps deepening and purifying this disposition, even as he leads the retreatant to contemplate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, until the retreatant is ready to do anything out of love for Jesus as expressed in his offering, “Take and Receive”. Yet nowhere does Ignatius concretely specify what God is calling the individual to do! He tells us quite plainly that God will deal directly with the retreatant and reveal His will to him (Sp. Ex. No.15)! The living out of God’s will in daily life will be the ‘spirituality of the retreatant’!

Thus, it can be said that the purpose of the Spiritual Exercises is to transform the Principle and Foundation – the summary of all Christian Spirituality – into a lived experience, culminating in the ‘Contemplation to attain love’, so that the retreatant now finds God present in all things and all things in God!

Conclusion:

Ignatius himself tells us that the purpose of his “Spiritual Exercises” was to help souls that approached him. He saw it as the principal means of sanctification for all – laymen and ecclesiastics. Even later, he would encourage Jesuits to give the exercises of the First Week to as many as possible, to those who wanted to reform their lives, in whatever state of life they were. The ‘whole’ Exercises were meant for those ready to place God first in everything.

Because of its effectiveness in transforming people from all walks of life, Pope Paul III, at the request of Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandia, entrusted the Spiritual Exercises to a group of Bishops to examine and study them in the light of Catholic doctrine. This resulted in the Brief “*Pastoralis Officii*” in favour of the “Spiritual Exercises” on 31st July 1548. Thus, from the beginning, the Spiritual Exercises were seen as a spiritual instrument for the entire Church and not just for a Congregation!

The spirituality of the Spiritual Exercises is actually the spirituality of 2 active lay organizations: the Christian Life Communities (CLCs/ Marian Sodality) and the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer). Members of both organizations draw their strength from regular Retreats and inputs based on the Spiritual Exercises.

Thus, it must be affirmed that the “Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius” were written by the layman, Ignatius of Loyola, after his conversion, to help all Christians (the Laity) undergo a similar conversion so as to place God freely and cheerfully at the center of their lives. Thus, it forms the basis of all Catholic/ Christian Spirituality. This is what, I believe, lies at the center of its universal appeal to people of all walks of life.

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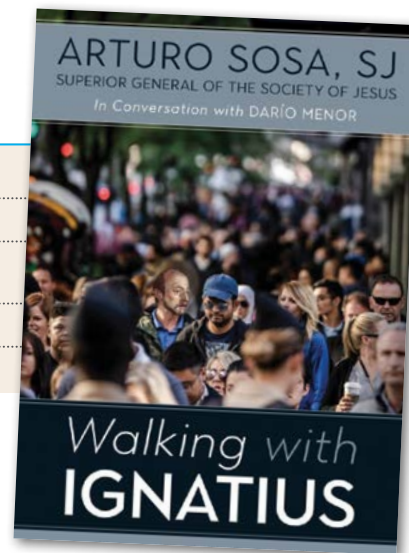
THE DESIRED FRUIT *of the* IGNATIAN YEAR

On May 21, 1521, IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA received a wound at the Battle of Pamplona that would lead to a deep transformation of his life. Inspired by the 500th anniversary of this event, the journalist Darío Menor has conducted a substantial and detailed interview with Fr. Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, who reflects here in depth on the desired fruit of the “Year of Ignatius.”

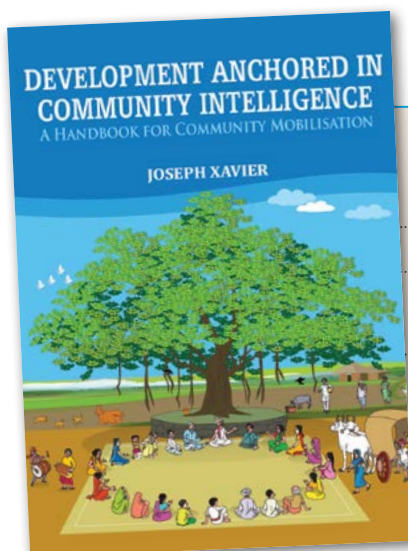
Fr. Sosa’s observations about the situation of today’s world, the Catholic Church, and the commitment of the Society of Jesus to a mission of reconciliation and justice shaped by the Universal Apostolic Preferences, seek to do more than commemorate a particular date in history. Their aim is to point to the experience of St. Ignatius as an inspiration for the deep conversion process vital for any individual, group, or institution who longs to make the joyful news of the Gospel present in our time.

┆ Courtesy: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash

TITLE: Walking with Ignatius
AUTHOR: Arturo Sosa, SJ
PUBLISHER: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand
PAGES: 270
PRICE: ₹ 300



Development and Community Mobilization



TITLE: Development Anchored in Community Intelligence: A handbook for community mobilization
AUTHOR: Joseph Xavier, SJ
PUBLISHER: Indian Social Institute, Bengaluru; Caritas India, New Delhi
PAGES: 128

The field of community organization is a civilizational concept. With the advent of modern development, systems and processes were altered to prioritize individual needs over the community. It is in this context that the book ‘Development Anchored in Community Intelligence’ should be seen.

This handbook for community mobilization comes to fill the void of literature in the area of community organization and social action. It consciously and cautiously dwells on the sensitive topics of caste and religion, with regard to their role in social change, when attempts are made to mobilize communities. It offers a textured approach to the assertion of rights that is embedded in development, and can be a prescribed handbook for institutions of social work, social dynamics, community development, and anyone interested in gaining an understanding of working with communities.

On a process based 12-step approach to community mobilization the book sets out to create a practical template. With a minimal dosage of theoretical foundation, true to its nature, the book serves as a handbook filled with do’s and don’ts grounding itself on field realities. Each chapter has a specific title followed by the purpose, time duration, ways to proceed, helpful tips, useful conditions, indicators, questions and reflections and a case study to substantiate the claims.

Link: https://isibangalore.com/images/researchPdfs/Development_Anchored_in_Community_Intelligence.pdf

┆ G. Gladston Xavier

Intention For
June 2021

Intention for evangelization - The beauty of Marriage

Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.



Pope's Worldwide
Prayer Network



COVID Centre at SXUK

St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, has started an isolation-cum pre-hospitalization centre for COVID patients on its campus for people in the vicinity who test positive for COVID-19 and lack facilities to isolate at home. The facility, set up in collaboration with Hidco, will be operational from May 10th. It will have 40 beds, oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders, nebulizers, doctors and allied support.

Two government hospitals have pledged support with doctors and medical facilities.

The Chairman of the New Town Kolkata Development Authority, Debashis Sen, and the district administration of North 24 Parganas have promised to provide all support.

The ground floor of the Arrupe Building — named after Fr. Pedro Arrupe — which is 3,000 sq. ft. in area, has been converted into the medical facility for COVID patients.

"We cannot sit idle and be mute spectators to what is unfolding in our neighbourhood amid a raging pandemic. St Xavier's University has always reached out to people in their hours of distress. At a time like this, those in our neighbourhood need a healthcare facility the most," said Father Felix Raj, Vice-Chancellor of the University.



He said the university will wall off the Academic Block for the safety of the administrative staff who go for duty. The university will hire ambulances to transport patients.

We have a doctor on call, and two trained nurses. More will be engaged from the government hospitals. The doctors will monitor the patients' condition and if necessary, recommend hospitalization.

"We are starting with 40 beds but have plans to add more. Our Alumni Association is actively helping us in this endeavour," said Father Felix Raj.

— Aritra Das, Kolkata

Virtual Interfaith Iftar

Iftar (breaking fast) by Muslims often brings people of different faiths joining fasting Muslims in spiritual solidarity. Kombai S Anwar, a Documentary film maker and historian has been organizing such iftars with people of different faiths at the historic Wallajah Mosque, Chennai, since 2017. This year owing to the pandemic, he organized an interfaith iftar on a virtual platform and streamed it live on 15th May 2021.

At the outset, Prof. Abdul Rahman, head of the Centre for Islamic Studies at the University of Madras, spoke about the significance of the month of Ramzan in the lives of Muslims. Following him, Joseph Victor Edwin SJ shared his insights on Christian-Muslim Relations in the context of the Holy month of Ramadan, drawing from the Annual Letter of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to the Muslim brothers and sisters around the world. Mr. Kumar, a Sindhi Hindu, member of the Sufidar Trust, who has been serving iftar at the historic Wallajah mosque for well over three decades, spoke about the vision behind their Hindu community serving fasting Muslims every year and how they missed it amidst the pandemic.



This was followed by a soul stirring rendering of a Punjabi Sufi song by Ms Izza Ahsan, a musician from Calicut. Ms. Tasneem Akbari Kutubuddin, a journalist, spoke about the Shias practices of the Gujarati speaking Bohra Muslim community in Chennai in the month of Ramzan. Writer Shazia Andaleeb, an Urdu Muslim from Bangalore living now in Chennai, shared her experience of Ramzan. The interesting part was a discussion between Huda Ahsan, a researcher in Gender, Sexuality, and Inclusivity in Islam, along with Shazia and Tasneem, on the treatment of women in Islam and how culture is disguised as religion and presented at times.

Virtual iftar was truly an interfaith celebration of the spirit of Ramzan in these difficult times.

— Tasneem Kutubuddin, Chennai

Intention For
July 2021

Universal intention - Social friendship

We pray that, in social, economic and political situations of conflict, we may be courageous and passionate architects of dialogue and friendship.



Pope's Worldwide
Prayer Network





Fr. John Joseph Amaladoss, SJ (AND)

Fr. John Joseph Amaladoss, SJ was my companion from Novitiate to Philosophy days for a duration of eight years. We were together during our pilgrimage experiment to Sarugani to live with the saintly priest Fr. Leveil, SJ.

An exemplary Jesuit indeed; deep attachment to mother Society was noticeable from the novitiate days onwards. We, his companions used to fool him “novice master in the making” in those days itself, which became true in the year 1997.

Most of his life was spent in forming Jesuits and guiding Religious men and women in their discerning process. Seven years as Director of Pre-novices, twelve years as Novice Master, four years as Tertian Instructor, four years as PCF and three years as Socius to the Provincial, speak volumes of his spirituality.

Everything went on well with him till he realised about his heart problem in the year 2014, which apparently

put him down a little bit. But that never deterred him from helping the Religious Sisters in their spiritual formation till the last breath of his life on earth.

A jovial person by nature, he won the hearts of many; a holy person in the making, he never appeared to leave the presence of Jesus in his life. When such a person leaves this temporal abode for his permanent residence with God, should we mourn for his loss in our midst or rejoice that he has finally reached his heavenly abode? He left us all on 14th April 2021 at the age of 75 having lived in the Society of Jesus for 58 years. His mortal remains were laid to rest at 6.30 PM on the same day, in Andhra Loyola College Cemetery, Vijayawada, surrounded by Jesuits and some Religious men and women. May his soul rest in peace.

Fr. S. Gnanadevan, SJ



Fr. Erwin Lazrado, SJ (GUJ)

Seventeenth was a date destined by God for Fr. Erwin Lazrado. God chose it to give him life in July of 1962 and chose it to call him back in the April of 2021. In between, a life just three months short of 59 years was lived with a spirit of a sportsman that he was, and with a spirit of a warrior that he turned into, in the last eight years of his bone myeloma.

Erwin kept climbing tough hikes of missionary life leaving behind the city-bred softness. The Bandra boy who walked into the pre-novitiate in 1980 in jeans and guitar, later clearly defined his priesthood by closeness to people. He chose to get ordained not in his native Mumbai but in a parish in the heart of Gujarat in December 1996. This missionary spirit developed in him a style of ministry which emphasized lay collaboration and participation.

The seeds of befriending youth at Novitiate Sunday ministry flowered in his regency at Ashadeep Youth Centre. His orientation to the ministry of youth bloomed into his active involvement in AICUF and later

becoming the National Coordinator of the Jesuit Youth Ministry in South Asia (JYMSA).

Coming in touch with renowned lawyers, he allowed himself to be groomed into the area of social justice. He took a degree in Law as an external student and oriented himself to the Dalits and women of Central Gujarat who came for legal aid to Ashadeep.

Erwin's straightforward or sometimes upfront demeanor were only part and parcel of this simplicity. He could befriend people young and old, urban and rural, elite and poor, all alike. Erwin knew no ethnicity.

A man of music, sports, commerce and law, who shouldered the responsibilities as social activist, youth director, pastor, Revisor Arcarum (Internal finance auditor), Erwin was a 'man for all seasons.' Due to COVID protocol, we could not have his last parting memory. Thankfully, Erwin will continue in our memories as one who still lives, in Spirit!

Vinayak Jadav, SJ



Fr. Francis Guntipilly, SJ (KAR)

A great social activist, pioneer of a number of social work projects in the Karnataka Province, Fr Francis Guntipilly was in the frontline of the Covid Relief Work during the first wave of COVID-19. In April this year he tested positive to Coronavirus, suffered a cardiac arrest and died on 18th April in Bengaluru.

In his commitment to the service of the poor, Fr Francis was daring, even reckless at times. Besides St Joseph's Community College which he was instrumental in founding, he pioneered and supported a number of initiatives at Ashirvaad, almost all of them in favour of the poor and the marginalized. His commitment and availability took him to the lengths and breadths of Karnataka. He was Parish Priest at Mundgod and Anekal, Director of Social Centre, Mundgod, and Coordinator of Human Rights and Legal Service Cell at ISI, Bengaluru. In the last six years of his life, Francis served also as the Secretary to the Labour Commission of Karnataka Bishops.

Francis' competence, availability and service adorned various apostolic sectors in which he filled multiple roles as lawyer, social activist, human rights advocate and family counselor. Francis' outward appearance was that of a rough and tough person, but concealed beneath the deceptive exterior, was a heart that was deeply sensitive, reaching out in solidarity to people in need, regardless of caste or creed or ideology.

Francis had many ailments: diabetes, heart, cancer, among them. He was consuming heavy doses of medicine every day. He had many accidents, some major ones as well. Yet he bounced back to life, displaying endless energy. However, when the Lord his God called him to his eternal reward, Francis, in obedience, yielded his spirit. Adieu, Fr Francis – till we meet again!

Jerome D'Souza, SJ



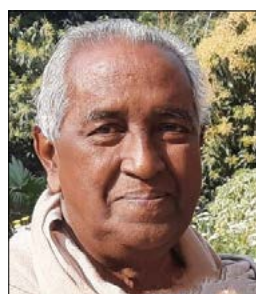


Fr. Sylvester Kerketta, SJ (DUM)

Sylvester Kerketta was born on 11th August 1958, at Agharma in Gumla District of Chotanagpur in Jharkhand State. He joined the Society of Jesus for the Santal Region on 9th September 1978 at Jisu Jaher, Dudhani, Dumka, in Jharkhand State. He was ordained priest on 9th May 1994. Fr Sylvester was of a quiet nature, unassuming demeanour, soft-spoken, mild-mannered, unobtrusive, courteous and ever ready to oblige with a smile. His first priestly assignment was as assistant pastor in Mariampahar parish where he stayed for five years. Here he learnt the ropes for what was to be his life-long ministry of shepherding the people of God. He loved to be with rural people in their villages and regularly toured the villages to preach the Word and administer the sacraments to the faithful, mostly Santals and Mahlis. Hailing from a different culture, Fr Sylvester inculturated himself and felt at home among the people. In the Jubilee Year 2000, he pursued

his third year of Jesuit formation, after which he was appointed Father in-Charge of the recently established mission of Deopur, detached from Hathimara. As Father-in-Charge, he endeavoured with zeal to build up the Christian community. He visited his flock regularly in the villages. From 2007 onwards, Fr Sylvester served, ever faithfully, as assistant pastor in the parishes of Majlispur in West Bengal, then in Mariampahar, and lastly in Chilimpur parish. Fr Sylvester had been suffering from kidney trouble for the last few years. On 10th April, feeling unwell, he was taken to Dakaita Mission Hospital where he was diagnosed positive with COVID-19. He seemed to respond well to treatment. However, his health deteriorated and on 19th April, he rendered his soul to the Lord. May he enjoy Eternal Rest!

I Paul Aquilina, SJ



Fr. George Karamayil, SJ (PAT)

In the beginning of his priestly life, for about twelve years, Fr. George Karamayil SJ was engaged in the early stages of formation such as Mission Home, Palai (Apostolic School) and Xavier Hall, Bangalore (Candidates' House). He was very endearing to youngsters and they experienced in him a very humane yet God-centered person. In the second and last part of his priestly life, for about thirty years, Fr. George was a zealous preacher of the Word. In Kurji parish and Fatima Mata Susamachar Kendra (Charismatic Retreat Centre), Patna, in numerous parishes to which he was invited, and in personal accompaniment with those who sought his help, Fr. George preached the Word of God relentlessly. His short stint of two years as Vice-Principal at St. Xavier's, Jaipur and three years as Rector of St. Xavier's, Patna were the only other 'digressions' in his life.

Fr. George was a genuine disciple of Jesus 'in whom there was no guile' (Jn 1:47). His charming smile in all

situations of life reflected his innocence. In success and failure, in favourable as well as adverse environments, in relating to people of different age groups and varying cultural backgrounds, his indomitable spirit and optimism was unwavering, and his joy, contagious. He remained a simple missionary, who was never attracted to or distracted by comfort zones of life.

Like St. Paul, Fr. George was a zealous apostle who preached 'in season and out of season' (2 Tim 4:2). When he could not preach from the pulpit or could not preach to people in person, he preached through his mobile phone. Neither language barrier nor ill health could dampen his zeal for the ministry. Thank you Fr. George for being a shining example as a 'Minister of the Word'. Intercede for us that we may ever grow in love and zeal for the Word of God.

I Susai Raj, SJ



Fr. Panoor C. Joseph, SJ (MDU)

Fr. Panoor, after his Ordination in 1969, spent most of his life in the parishes, engaging in the integral Socio-Pastoral and Spiritual ministries. When he took over as Parish Priest of Alavanthankulam in 1973, the people in and around the village were worst affected by a severe drought. With the support of the Tirunelveli Social Service Society, he distributed wheat and oil for work to people, and protected them from hunger and malnutrition. He helped them all to become economically independent through his innovative ideas such as the introduction of Jasmine flower cultivation in and around the village.

Twice he was the parish priest of Alavanthankulam for a total of 30 years. He built there the second biggest church in Palayamkottai Diocese with the generous contributions of parishioners. Practically every day before Mass, he used to sit in the confessional and help people experience the love and mercy of God. Through his simplicity and holiness of life, he promoted nearly 50 vocations from Alavanthankulam to different religious congregations (including eight Jesuit vocations).

He strived hard to empower the poor, particularly the Dalits, through education. He upgraded the Middle School in Alavanthankulam to High School in 1996, and to Higher Secondary in 1999.

Today, the people look up to him as a great prophet, missionary and visionary who promoted self-sufficiency, self-respect and self-governance.

He passed away on 22nd April 2021 at Beschi, Dindigul, where he was in retirement since 2018. Months before his death, the parishioners of Alavanthankulam had submitted a memorandum signed by all requesting that at his death his mortal remains should be given to them for burial in front of the Church built by him. And so it was done on 23rd April, after a solemn funeral Mass celebrated by the Most Rev. Dr. Antonysamy, Bishop of Palayamkottai.

I John Michael, SJ and Vargheesh Antony, SJ



Fr. Srinivasan T. Joseph, SJ (MDU)

Fr. Joe Srinivasan was born on 19th September 1931 in Tiruchirappalli. His father was Prof. Thomas Srinivasan of the Economics Department of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchi. Fr. Joe was an alumnus of St. Joseph's, Tiruchi (secondary and Bachelor's level), Loyola, Chennai (PG studies), St. Xavier's College of Education, Palayamkottai (B.Ed.), Boston, Massachusetts (Masters and Ph.D.).

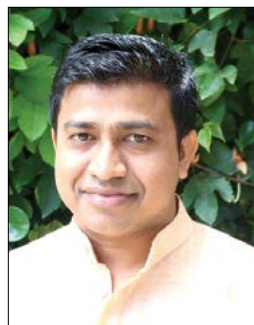
His first assignment, after his ordination in 1965, was to teach in St. Xavier's College of Education (SXCE), Palayamkottai, from 1971 to 1973. He then became the Principal of the College and served there till 1985. He was also the Rector of St. Xavier's, Palayamkottai, from 1973 to 1978. As Principal, he was the first one to introduce social work, and he himself used to accompany his B.Ed. students, and work with them in the villages. He was always ready to help the poor students and would arrange jobs in schools for the deserving students. He was a strict disciplinarian, imparted good qualities

and moulded thousands of excellent teachers with a high sense of social responsibility.

He was the founder Principal of Pope John Paul II College of Education (a diocesan institution) in Pondicherry from 1987 to 1992. He served also as Principal of Loyola College of Education, Namachi, Sikkim (1994-1995). He worked in Kohima Region (1996-1998), as well as at St. Paul's Teachers' Training Institute, Phesama, and then at St. Joseph's College, Jakhama.

Coming back from the northeast, he served in several places before being sent to Beschi Illam, Dindigul, in 2016, to begin his real retirement from service. He passed away peacefully on 22nd April 2021. Since he was in his post-COVID recuperation, his funeral was organized following COVID, on the same day, and his mortal remains were interred in Beschi cemetery. R.I.P.

■ S.M. John Kennedy, SJ



Fr. Praveen Hrudayaraj, SJ (KAR)

Born on 7th August 1979, in Silvepura, Bengaluru, Fr. Praveen joined the Society of Jesus in 1998 and was ordained a priest on 9th Nov., 2013. On completing his LL.M., he practiced law in Bengaluru courts. He was pursuing his doctorate in law at Christ University, Bengaluru, when he was diagnosed with a malignant lymphoma. As the Director of St. Joseph's College of Law, a post he held till he was incapacitated by the disease, he exercised his administrative skills with utmost dedication, great enthusiasm, and unceasing passion. In his last days he was cheerful and optimistic; and forgetting his pain, he battled for life until his last breath. He passed to the Lord on 22nd April in Bengaluru.

Fr. Praveen Hrudayaraj had a multifaceted personality: a loving son, a beloved brother, a prayerful priest, a compassionate counselor, a faithful friend, a talented teacher, and a legal advisor. "Body Broken and Blood Shed", the theme he had chosen for his first

Thanksgiving Mass after his priestly ordination, found its fulfillment in his final surrender to the Lord in his untimely death. Reminiscing his presence in our lives, we recollect his smile, laughter, care, compassion, concern, appreciation, guidance and companionship – so moving indeed that it invites us to emulate his traits in our lives.

Fr. Praveen as an outstanding Jesuit of Karnataka Jesuit Province drew inspiration from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and patterned his personal and apostolic life on the Ignatian charism. His quick wit and sense of humour, his creative ideas, and his compassion for the poor and the downtrodden, will remain with us as fond memories to be cherished. Thank you, Fr. Praveen, for all that you have been to us. "The song is ended, but the melody lingers on."

■ Cyril Raj, SJ



Fr. Diago D'Souza, SJ (BOM)

Remembering Diago D'Souza, my Jesuit friend for 55 years is for me to remember forever the favourite line of Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins – "There lives the dearest Freshness deep down things." Diago was always fresh and brought freshness wherever he went. He was a musician, singer, actor, a persuasive speaker and an attentive listener. He delighted in imitating some of our Jesuit companions, capturing their typical traits. He wanted others to be happy and joyful like him. His joyful mood never allowed him to be fearful or to give in to any tragic event.

Music was in Diago's blood; music was his real nature. We knew this when he was approaching from the favourite tunes he hummed in the corridors. He was an excellent violinist and later mastered the harmonium too. Our Provincial used to call him 'Mohini Master', a magician who could charm all around him.

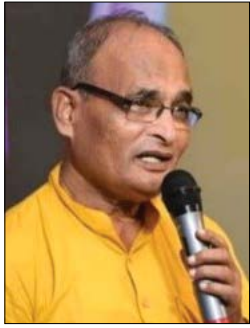
Diago spent all his life working for the upliftment of the poor. He was taken up by the idea of Concientization

and devoted his energies and talents in this direction. He composed innumerable songs and street plays which were put to good use in the Narmada Bachao Andolan and in the many villages where he worked. His voice and songs were an energy booster for the people who would join in with full gusto. All this was done with no regard for his own health or well being.

The beatitude Diago closely followed was the seventh one - Blessed are the Peace makers. In this 'Be-Attitude' he saw the Bright Face of the One whom he followed - the face of Jesus Christ. A great poet of Maharashtra, Narayan Vaman Tilak, referring to Balkavi Thomre, wrote a passionate poem, 'My little bird, will you ever come back?' He tells the Bird, "Please come back at least once to taste my bitter tears". Yes, you and I, all wish the same from our beloved Diago Bhau, isn't it?

■ Tony George, SJ





1953 - 2021

Fr. Sushil Lawrence Sah, SJ (PAT)

Fr. Sushil Sah, SJ was a loving and loveable person, who forged endearing and enduring relationships with people of all age groups and cultural backgrounds. Simplicity, availability and apostolic zeal were the hallmarks of his life.

On returning to the Province after his doctoral studies in Clinical Psychology at the University of Detroit, Mercy, USA, Fr. Sushil put to maximum use his knowledge and skills, in the form of counseling people from all walks of life. But, his specialized training abroad did not imprison him in institutional settings: after his term as Rector of XTTL (House of formation with Novitiate and Juniorate) in Patna, he readily went to Gopalganj, a new mission in an interior part of north Bihar at a distance of 145 km from Patna, where even minimum facilities were not available. From there he was called upon to serve as Minister (Administrator) of St. Xavier's, Patna and then as Co-Pastor in Kurji Parish, Patna, before being missioned as Parish Priest of Bettiah.

When he was at XTTL, he worked in Kurji Holy Family Hospital as a counselor for patients who needed such service, and also the family members of certain type of patients. When he was in St. Xavier's and Kurji parish, he functioned as counselor for students, staff and parents of St. Xavier's and St. Michael's Schools and St. Xavier's College of Education. Of course, as Co-pastor and Pastor, he guided the faithful, especially of estranged couples and broken families.

In his life and ministry, it was evident that Jesus was the center and source of his life. His simple orthodox faith and affable personality, endeared him to all. Even the stroke that paralyzed his right arm and leg, and to some extent impaired his speech too, did not diminish his apostolic zeal. With faith and will power he was slowly bouncing back. Fr. Sushil, your simplicity and zeal for mission will always guide and challenge us. Commend us, your companions, to the Triune God.

I Susai Raj, SJ



1964 - 2021

Fr. Samuel Marandi, SJ (DUM)

Samuel Marandi was born in Rajapur village of Sahibganj Dt. in Jharkhand State on 20th November, 1964. After completing his matriculation, Samuel joined the Society of Jesus at Jisu Jaher, Dudhani, Dumka, on 29 June 1988. Ordained priest in 2003, his first priestly assignment was that of assistant pastor at Deopur. After a couple of years he was transferred to Tinpahar parish which, at the time, was the responsibility of the Province. Fr Samuel was a simple, open and welcoming person, a little shy and diffident, very responsible in carrying out his pastoral duties. Always available for mission, he was happy and felt at home ministering to the rural folk and visiting them in their villages. Pastoral ministry was to be his life-long call. He was a good community man, sensitive to the needs of others. He was also interested in cultural values. After tertianship, his first assignment was as assistant parish priest in Majlispur, West Bengal.

Two years later he was appointed Father-in-Charge of Nunbatta, in Dumka diocese. He put his mind and heart in forming the Christian community. In 2015, he was assigned as assistant pastor in Mariampahar parish and later the task of minister of the house was also given him. His last assignment in 2017 was at Kodma in Sahibganj Dt, with the task of pioneering the new parish of 'Bishunpur-Mangrutukur.' His task came to an abrupt end at the beginning of April 2021, when he contracted the COVID-19 virus. He was immediately rushed to Dakaita Mission Hospital where he was put on oxygen. Fr Samuel breathed his last on 24th April 2021, at around 9:00 am. Fr Samuel was laid to rest with his fellow Jesuits in the Province cemetery. May God grant him Eternal Bliss!

I Paul Aquilina, SJ



1939 - 2021

Fr. P.T. Augustine, SJ (DEL)

In many ways Fr. P.T. has been an inspiration. If someone asked him how he felt he would reply with a smile, "pretty good" even when he was suffering. He had an art of taking things positively and moving on to accomplishing his goal. After his heart surgery he was not in the best of his health. And yet no complaints! Gus remained a "Pretty Good" Jesuit all throughout his life and left his "footprints on the sands of time".

The significant contributions Fr. Augustine has made, speak volumes of his Vision accompanied by passionate Commitment as a son of St. Ignatius. To list a few: he established St. Xavier's College of Education, built necessary buildings and facilities for the same, founded the Patna Catholic School Principals' Association, established St. Xavier's Parish and a Convent for Missionaries of Charity, and a Home for Destitutes in Jaipur, built the Millennium Hall Complex,

organized the Golden Jubilee events of St. Xavier's Raj Niwas Marg Delhi, built Navjivan Renewal Centre, built the Fr. E.L. Watrin Memorial Building, Kathmandu, added more facilities, and initiated new courses in St. Xavier's College Kathmandu, besides being effective Principal and Rector in some major schools/colleges in Patna, Delhi and Nepal. In all these places he had put in a yeoman's work with marvelous achievements in a record time. He is called back by the Lord who had anointed him a 'Companion in His Mission'.

"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavour". May your life and work ever remain an inspiration.

I K.P. George, SJ

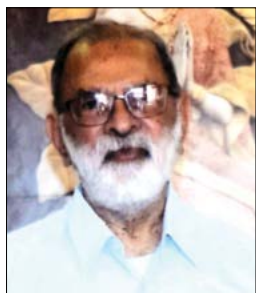


Fr. Sushil Kujur, SJ (DUM)

Sushil Kujur was born on 29th November 1962, in Pinhi village, in the Diocese of Raigarh in Chattisgarh State. He joined the Society of Jesus for the Santal Region in 1985 at Jisu Jaher, Dudhani, Dumka. He was ordained Priest in 1999. Fr Sushil was a pleasant person to deal with, simple, cordial, sensitive, compassionate, and hard-working. He inculturated himself and laboured well in the Santal Region. His prayer life and devotion to the Eucharist enabled him to be open to superiors and companions and to be always available for mission. His first assignment after ordination was as minister of Jisu Jaher Novitiate in Dudhani, a duty which included looking after the material needs of the community and care of the house and property. In 2002, Fr Sushil was appointed minister, director of the boys' hostel and assistant pastor in Hathimara parish. Two years later, Fr Sushil moved to Majlispur in West Bengal to become assistant headmaster of St Ignatius Higher Secondary

school and director of the boys' hostel. After completing his tertianship in 2006, Fr Sushil worked as assistant headmaster and hostel director at St John Berchmans in Mundli, Tinpahar; director of boys' hostel at Mariampahar; Father-in-charge of the fledgling mission of Purana Kesari, near Dumka; in-charge of Jibonpur mission and first director of the new mission of Jirulia. In 2020, Fr Sushil became the parish priest of Chilimpur. At the beginning of April 2021, Fr Sushil tested positive for COVID-19 and began treatment in Mission Hospital at Dakaita. He was put on oxygen and seemed to have weathered the crisis. However, his health took a downward trend and Fr Sushil surrendered his generous soul to God on 24th April 2021. His body was taken to Jisu Jaher and laid to rest in the Province's cemetery. May God grant him Eternal Rest!

I Paul Aquilina, SJ



Fr. Royce Wenceslaus Macedo, SJ (AND)

Fr. Royce was a man of God. This summarises his whole life. God mattered all in his life. In spite of all the great works he was doing as Socius to the Provincial, principal and teacher, he never missed his spiritual duties. He was truly a man of the Society of Jesus. The Mother General of JMJ says that he was "A noble son of St. Ignatius to the spirit, with an exemplary life." He loved his Jesuit brothers deeply and loved our community recreations.

Fr. Royce was a good teacher. Besides being the Principal, he taught good and elegant English for many years in Campion High School, Trichy and Loyola Public School, Guntur. He spoke in idioms and similes, and taught English for eight years in SICJ Jesuit Juniorate at Beschi College, Dindigul. He had a special regard for the staff and had a loving way of correcting them. Fr. Royce loved sports and encouraged sports

activities wherever he was. He was human to the core, would not talk ill of others, as he saw God in every one.

He had given retreats to many Religious and priests, was a spiritual director to many of them, and also known for his confidentiality. He was very fond of St. Paul - quoting the letters of St. Paul in almost every one of his talks.

We, the Jesuits of Andhra Province, miss a great personality. His body was laid to rest in Loyola Academy cemetery in the presence of his younger brother Mr. Jerry Macedo and about 30 Jesuits and Religious women. It was a fitting and a simple farewell to this great personality, Fr. Royce. Dear Fr. Royce you will certainly remain in our hearts for many more years.

I A. Stanley, SJ



Fr. Mangal Kerketta, SJ (DAR)

Father Mangal Kerketta, SJ was born on 16th March 1975, in Corondabera Parish, under the Diocese of Gumla, Jharkhand. After his Higher Secondary education in St Ignatius School in Gumla, he entered Dhyan Ashram Novitiate, Kolkata, in 1998, for Darjeeling Mission. After philosophy in Pune and theology in Delhi, he was ordained a priest in 2012 at St Joseph's School, Darjeeling.

Fr. Mangal served in various places in the Province, in different capacities. His first pastoral assignment was as an assistant pastor in Panighatta Parish. Thereafter, he was the Headmaster of St Peter's Primary School and the Director of Candidates in Gayaganga from 2013 to 2016. After Tertianship in 2016, he worked as an assistant teacher in St. Alphonsus' School, co-pastor in St. Paul's Parish and minister of Wery Niwas Jesuit Community in Kurseong until he returned to the abode of Eternal Peace on 25th April 2021 in Dr. Chiang's Super-specialty

Hospital, Siliguri, after having been tested COVID Positive in Navjeevan Hospital, Gayaganga.

Fr. Mangal died of COVID-19 at the age of 46. His greatest gift was his humane way of relating with people, young or old, educated or illiterate. That is what made him very much loved by all - Jesuits, non-Jesuits, staff, students and their parents. He knew the names of each student and their parents under his care. He was approachable. Hence many students sought him for spiritual guidance. He was also known for his availability for any ministry or service, devotion to duties and loyalty to the Society. He lived a very simple, humble, cheerful, honest and responsible life. Above all, he was a man of truth. He appreciated all that life had offered to him with his deep faith and remained active till death. He will be greatly missed by his Province men!

I Nabor Dundung, SJ and Xavier Alangaram, SJ





Fr. Hilary Lobo, SJ (JAM)

Fr Hilary Lobo was an outstanding Principal, most sought-after national level referee of basketball, and administrator. He was the very first Indian Jesuit in the Province to acquire a Doctorate in Education. Except for a few years, he was engaged in the education apostolate throughout. He was very fond of the kids in the schools he worked for, but truly a strict disciplinarian, a perfect and no-nonsense type of person. He was always ready and willing to contribute his share to the mission of the community. As a teacher, he tried to remember his former students' birthdays and wedding anniversaries, to wish and congratulate them over the phone or on Facebook. Whatever was entrusted to his care, he did with utter commitment and dedication. He was meticulous in planning and demanded excellence in everything. He was also very fond of young scholastics. He made regular trips to Mangalore, and brought vocations to Jamshedpur Province, not to mention

that the present provincial, Fr. Jerome Cutinha, is his vocation. He was an excellent Religious and indeed found God everywhere, especially in the mission assigned to him by obedience. God, for him, was everywhere! In the nitty-gritty of the mundane as well as in the exalted position of a Principal. Hilary, a confirmed diabetic, used to be insulin-dependent. He had prostate problems. Three times he faced heart surgery and a stroke.

On 19th April, at the behest of doctors' advice, he was admitted to hospital as he suffered from Corona and pre-existing chronic health conditions. Within the next few days, on 26th April, he breathed his last. We can only accept God's plan, hard as it may be. Adieu, dear Fr. Hilary Lobo. We are proud of you. Rest in peace, and may you see the face of God forever.

■ Mukti Clarence, SJ



Fr. Joy Karayampuram, SJ (PAT)

Fr. Joy Karayampuram, SJ was an affectionate, dedicated, trustworthy and unassuming person. He had a special love and commitment to the poor and deprived sections of people. His first assignment as a young priest was to Ratanpurwa in West Champaran District, where he inherited and carried forward the work of a veteran social activist of the Province, Fr. Thomas Chakkalackal, SJ. This apostolate for four years among the bonded labourers and oppressed, illiterate and landless people – Dalits, Oraons and Tharus - at the border of India with Nepal, shaped the person of Joy: his life-style, intellect, relationships and spirituality. He studied and practiced law to serve the voiceless.

At his burial service, Most Rev. Sebastian Kallupura, Archbishop of Patna, narrated an example of the quiet and unassuming way in which Fr. Joy helped many people: Fr. Joy had sorted out the legal complications regarding the landholdings of one of the parishes of the Archdiocese, which involved much hard work and deft handling; it seems no one knew of this work of Fr. Joy, except the Archbishop and the Parish Priest. Fr. Joy never looked for recognition or appreciation for his work. He was rooted in the person of Jesus, from whom he received his 'reward' in the innermost recesses of his being. Fr. Joy, you left us so suddenly. Be our advocate in heaven.

■ Susai Raj, SJ



He brought this passion for mission and love for the poor into his administrative roles as Rector of KR High School, Bettiah, as Provincial of the Province, and as Superior of the Jesuit community at the Indian Social Institute, Delhi, and to his last appointment as Rector of XTPI, only six months before his untimely and unexpected death due to the second wave of the Corona pandemic.



Fr. Ramesh Tribhuvan, SJ (PUN)

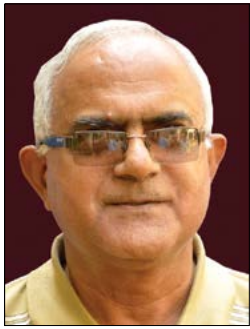
Fr. Ramesh was admitted to St. Luke's Hospital, Shrirampur, on 18th April, after being affected by the Corona virus. After eight days in the hospital, he recovered to some extent and returned to his parish at Rahuri. However, a couple of days later, when his health condition started deteriorating, he was rushed to the Evangeline Booth Hospital, Ahmednagar, where he finally breathed his last on 6th May, 2021.

The news of his death left his parishioners shocked and grief-stricken because they had lost their 'smiling priest'. Fr. Ramesh's smile was truly infectious. With a cheerful and zealous missionary spirit, he reached out to the faithful, proclaiming the joy of the gospel and helping them resolve their challenging problems and difficulties.

Right from his novitiate days, Fr. Ramesh displayed a bold and courageous spirit. With his radiant and cheerful smile, he endeared himself to his flock and his fellow Jesuits. After his ordination on 7th November, 2009, Ramesh served in several parishes. The faithful really loved him. He also did remarkable service in the Social Centre where he served as Project Coordinator of the watershed projects. He will always be remembered for his commitment and hard work. Thank you, Fr. Ramesh, for the precious gift and blessing you have been to the Province. God saw you were tired, and wanted you to share in the joy of His Heavenly Kingdom. Do intercede for all of us.

■ Subhash Tribhuvan, SJ





1949 - 2021

Fr. Jerome Gonsalves, SJ (PUN)

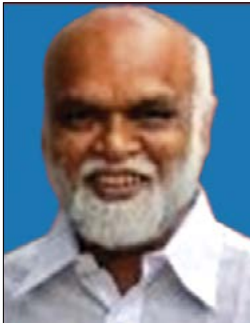
Fr. Jerome will be specially remembered as a caring teacher and pastor, who kept the wellbeing of the people he served with joy always close to his heart. His students at St. Joseph's Technical Institute, Pune, and at the Xavier Technical Training Center, Shrirampur cherish his dedicated and loving ministry. Fr. Jerome was a devout, zealous Jesuit and a warm, mission-driven companion to many. Fr. James Shelke and Fr. Jerome made an inspiring team, as they toiled together, with one mind and one heart, for the development of the Shrirampur mission. With deep resolve, Fr. Jerome would often say, "We must do something for our people!" — revealing his passion, commitment, compassion, and his intense love for the people he worked with and worked for. With the heart of a good shepherd, his evenings were dedicated to spending time in the villages to celebrate the Eucharist with the scattered flock.

As Director of the Social Centre in Ahmednagar, he worked tirelessly for the development of village

communities in the drought-prone district, to renew the environment through soil and water conservation projects, with the people's active participation. His priority was to seek justice and a life of dignity for the weak and vulnerable groups - especially children and women, through networking and collaboration. He remained committed lifelong to their empowerment.

Fr. Jerome also served as the Province Youth Coordinator and Vocation Promoter. With his ever-enthusiastic spirit and the support of companions and friends, he organized youth camps within and outside the Province to promote vocations. Fr. Jerome passed into God's eternal embrace on 7th May, at the Sonali Memorial Hospital in Pune. He surrendered his life to the will of God—as he always did. Fr. Jerome, our dear companion and friend, joins us now in prayer for vocations and intercedes for us, as we continue together our mission journey in love, faith and hope

■ Bhausahab Sansare, SJ



1945 - 2021

Fr. Antony Raj Perinbam, SJ (MDU)

Fr. Antony Raj was born into a poor Dalit family in Meenthulli, Tirunelveli District. He studied at Manapad and Palayamkottai before joining the Society in 1963. In the light of his own experience of discrimination, he wanted to know the Dalit people's predicament. He did sociology at St. Xavier's College, Trivandrum, and later went on to do his doctoral studies at Loyola University, Chicago, USA.

Returning to the Province in 1987, he started working from IDEAS, Madurai, and to enable the Dalits to fight for their rights, he founded the Dalit Christian Liberation Movement (DCLM) in the 1990s which grew into a powerful instrument able to fight for the dignity and equality of the Dalits within the church. Opposition grew, especially from the hierarchy, and he had to move from IDEAS to Vilangudi, then to Perungudi and finally settle down in the present Mandela Nagar, Madurai, in 1999 where he built Dr. Ambedkar Cultural Academy (DACA). Feeling for the poor Dalit girls with nothing

much to eat at home, he started Vidivelli Girls' Home for school-going girls. His Self-Help Group project has been educating the villagers in awareness, human rights, and possibilities of starting small businesses. He registered Jesuit Madurai Downtrodden People's Welfare Trust (MJDPWT) and carried out all these good works. He also served as Chairman of the Central Board for Workers' Education, Ministry of Labor, and Adviser to the Adi Dravida Welfare Department, Government of Tamil Nadu. Whenever there was a problem or threat to the Dalit and the oppressed communities he was there to stand with them and fight for their rights.

On May 3rd, he was admitted in the COVID ICU of Vadamalayan Hospital, Madurai, where he passed away on May 10th. His mortal remains were laid to rest in front of the DACA main building facing the statue of Dr. Ambedkar. May his liberated soul now rest in peace.

■ Francis P. Xavier, SJ



1955 - 2021

Fr. Ambrose D'Souza, SJ (KAR)

Ambu, as he was affectionately called, was born at Alnavar in Belgaum diocese, on 20 March 1955. Responding to God's call, Ambrose joined the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1981 at Mt St Joseph, Bengaluru, at the age of 26. He was ordained a priest on 29 December, 1993 at St Rita's Church, Mundgod, the Jesuit Mission which was dear to his heart. He pronounced his final vows at Loyola School in Jakhama-Nagaland on 1 November, 2004.

One could portray Fr Ambrose as a happy Jesuit who made others happy. Throughout his priestly life, except for a short stint as administrator at St Aloysius College, Mangaluru and again at Papal Seminary, Pune, he enjoyed being a pastor. It was as a pastor that he served zealously in various parishes and mission centers of the Province and of different dioceses of Karnataka.

Fr Ambrose was friendly, humane, compassionate and approachable. The rich and the poor, the young and the

old, found him approachable and understanding. His infectious smile seldom failed to bring joy and laughter whenever he conversed with Jesuits, fellow religious or lay people. With the sudden demise of dear Fr Ambrose D'Souza the Karnataka Province and the Church in Karnataka has lost a zealous pastor.

On 23rd April, Fr Ambrose tested COVID positive, and was admitted to Fr Muller's Hospital in Mangaluru. Despite intensive medical treatment for nearly three weeks during which he battled for life, Ambrose finally succumbed to COVID-19 and breathed his last in the early hours of 12th May. At the time of his last illness, he was the parish priest of St Peter's Church at Jagir Pannur in Bellary diocese. Adieu, dear Fr Ambrose, till we meet again.

■ Richard Mascarenhas, SJ



Note: This section invites moments of turning point or experiences of conversion in your life just as the moment of conversion in the life of St. Ignatius after the injury of the Cannonball at Pamplona. This section will continue throughout the Ignatian Year sharing moments after which your life was never the same.

Finding my True Self

It was during my Tertianship in 2010, the last stage of formal formation of Jesuit Life, that I had a real cannonball experience like that of St. Ignatius, which totally changed my direction from building and repairing people's broken houses into repairing the broken and wounded hearts and minds of people and thus building their lives.

It was a terrible humiliation experienced by me during my first ever retreat given to a group of Sisters in Manila, Philippines, during the Tertianship. I totally failed to deliver inspiring talks, even after spending so much time and energy in reading lots of books. The talks were so bad that two Sisters of the group discontinued the retreat and walked away. I was very much disappointed and discouraged. It was a very big cannonball that really shattered my personality with all the pride of great work done in different ministries earlier. However, that utter failure to deliver inspiring talks to the retreatants really opened my heart and mind to understand how weak I was spiritually and psychologically. It was really an enlightenment that I received from the Lord to know the need of getting healed first of my broken and wounded heart and mind, and thus developing a deep relationship and faith in the Lord.

Counseling Psychology that complements the Spiritual Exercises (SE) in finding God and one's True Self within.

The Principle and Foundation of the SE of St. Ignatius tells us that we are created in the image and likeness of God to praise, reverence and serve God, and by means of doing this to save our souls. This is possible only by experiencing God, his unconditional love and our true self within, by getting rid of all the disordered attachments. In my retreat ministry for the last ten years, I have observed that with the help of SE alone, it is not easy to detach from the disordered attachments in our life without knowing them and their root causes clearly, which we have gradually developed since our birth. Most of the disordered attachments begin to develop during our childhood, as a result of our failure to experience the love of God through our parents.

When we fail to experience enough love, affection, acceptance and respect from our parents and other important people, especially during the early stages of our human development, may be due to the deprivation of physiological needs or due to painful and traumatic experiences, we begin to feel and think that something is wrong with our personality, and want to become someone else. Thus, we create a False Self with all the disordered attachments of it.

Counseling Psychology complements the SE in helping us to find God and our true self within by recognizing and getting rid of the disordered attachments and their root causes in our life. Without the help of counseling, the Spiritual Exercises and Directions can become a mere pain killer, to overcome the desolation and to experience some consolation for the moment, for those who were badly wounded or had traumatic experiences during the early stages of their lives.

Psycho-Spiritual Retreat helps to become aware of the roots of our disordered attachments.

The False Self or the Ego is the primary cause of most of the emotional pain and suffering experienced later as adults. "Doing" is more important than "Being" for people suffering from an Ego-centered personality. They feel happy and important only when they have many degrees and high positions in the society or when they do a lot of work, like social workers.

I have developed this psycho-spiritual retreat in order to help people, both religious and lay, to experience God within, and their true self created by God in his own image and likeness, by healing their wounded inner child which is the root cause of disordered attachments. Once we become aware of our unmet needs and inner wounds which are mostly in the sub-consciousness and get healed with the help of counseling, we begin to experience love of God through our Spiritual Exercises leading to a deeper relationship with God, oneself and with others

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Donald Miranda, SJ

'Life is difficult'. The first sentence of M. Scott Peck's book 'The Road Less Travelled', is as relevant today as it was more than forty years ago, when the book was first published. This column is being written in the midst of the euphoria of 100 years of the Patna Jesuit Mission and the sudden loss of

three Jesuits, within nine days, to the Covid pandemic. So, as a leader, one of the important characteristics that strikes me is maintaining an equilibrium between what is death dealing and energy sapping, on one side; and life-giving energizing forces on the other. Some would like to call it crisis-management, I prefer to call it the balancing of opposites. Sometimes, as in the present moment, these opposites can be the extremes of life and death.

As a leader, I also feel vulnerable in being sensitive to the needs of others over my own. An attitude of compassion, caring and concern, in reaching out to the last, least and lost. Patna Province has had a long-tested tradition of a preferential option for the poor. This is borne out by the nine social action centres in the Province, catering to marginalized groups in rural Bihar. In recent times, all the schools have been tagged to the rural

centres creatively, through zoning of the Province. The Covid-19 crisis was an opportunity to take this concern to another level. First, by providing relief to the suffering masses during the first lockdown, without any support or assistance from the government. Second, by engaging the returning migrant labourers from the Southern states, during the first wave of the pandemic. The creation of a migration cell, and Patna becoming one of the hubs

for the MAIN – (Migrants Assistance International Network) - have been one of the initiatives to focus our apostolic energies on the more vulnerable sections of society. "Love for the poor", as "love for Christ", makes all other apostolic engagements more meaningful and cherished.

Nothing truly significant, the 'Magis' is attained without taking risks. A leader in particular is confronted with "risk" when one pushes the boundaries in the midst of new challenges, and ideas are pushed outside one's comfort zone. He is willing to "trust" and experiment with new ways of doing things. Patna Province took the risk of moving into five dioceses of eastern Uttar Pradesh, along with the four dioceses of Bihar of the past 100 years, even as our numbers were falling. To actively take this initiative forward may seem foolhardy. However, as the great risk-taker, Nelson Mandela, has said: "It's not about getting a chance, it's about taking a chance.... It always seems impossible until it is done".

Even as the second wave of the pandemic rages, spreading death and uncertainty, the Jesus-Leadership inspires me to become a life-giving "spirit", creatively striving for God's Greater Glory and Praise.

The author is the Provincial of Patna Jesuit Province.
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James Kulvi, SJ



As Jesuits, we are always on the move even though there are exceptions, depending upon the nature of our apostolates. In my case, the course of formation has taken me to various places and communities, where I have encountered and learned from many different superiors. This diversity of experiences in the Society of Jesus broadens our vision and so helps us to understand our mission in new and more profound ways.

In the Society of Jesus, every encounter between a superior and the men entrusted to his care, may be fairly guided by the wise principles that Father Ignatius once communicated to Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón and Pierre Fabre, at the time when he was sending them to Trent in 1546, at the request of Pope Paul III, to help tackle the highly sensitive issues being debated at the Council. Ignatius counselled them to be slow to speak, to listen attentively, to seek the truth in what the others are saying, to correct misstatements humbly and gently, and to allow the conversation the time it needs. These same principles are *ad rem* and *desideratum* for any conversation with a Jesuit superior that leads to apostolic discernment.

Over the years, I have realised that these conversations always bring about greater clarity and consolation when there is active and attentive participation from both sides. Of the principles enunciated by Father Ignatius, it is the last one that I find the most reassuring and the most demanding. A Jesuit is expected to carry out faithfully the mission he has received from his superior, because he and the superior have together completed the process of discernment, in and through conversations that allow each one to know the mind and heart of the other. In these conversations, the superior listens and perceives with his heart, because his role is not to impose his own vision and will, but rather to accompany another Jesuit in seeking to discern the will of God. This manner of discernment requires conversations that are honest, unscripted, and authentic. They require the time and space that is needed to free ourselves from prejudices, disordered attachments, and personal preferences, and so to be able to listen more carefully and attentively to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The value of these conversations for an effective apostolic discernment, will be quickly affirmed by Jesuits who by the grace of the Holy Spirit, were able to fulfil faithfully a mission that they were initially reluctant to accept. As Jesuits we are often on the road, but we do not always travel to places that we would choose to go. We are on the road because of the mission that we have received. The freedom to set out on these missions is the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is offered to us in and through our authentic conversations with those who send us forth.

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“A Jesuit is expected to carry out faithfully the mission he has received from his superior, because he and the superior have together completed the process of discernment, in and through conversations that allow each one to know the mind and heart of the other.”

COMMUNITY INITIATIVE TO SOLVE PERENNIAL WATER CRISIS



Gujarat Woman Revives 675 Water bodies to solve Water Crisis of 5000 families in Kutch

On **World Water Day** (22nd March), Gazala Paul, founder of Ahmedabad-based NGO 'Samerth', talked about how she helped 97 villages in Kutch remedy their traditional water crisis through a community-led initiative.

In Kutch, a desert landscape of Gujarat, droughts are a daily affair. Scant rainfall and rising temperatures makes the local community migrate for their livelihood despite owning 3-4 acres of agricultural land.

Since 2009, thanks to Samerth, they no longer migrate for work and grow more than one crop now. While previously they barely saved Rs. 10,000 per year now it has gone up to about Rs.1,00,000. With enough ponds, the recharged rainwater allows them to grow food throughout the year. They grow cumin, bajra, moong, cotton and castor – all high-yielding crops.

The migration has reduced from 70% to 30%. There are 675 ponds, dug wells, rainwater harvesting structures and step-wells in Rapar that ensure water security. 30% of villagers practice animal husbandry.

The 2001 earthquake augmented land-salinisation and degradation in Rapar. Gazala spent a decade on hydrological mapping, educating herself about the history of water bodies, acquiring the trust of locals and arranging funds. People would not trust her, an outsider. Some laughed at her for dreaming to solve their ancient water problems.

"The communities lived in utter poverty - migrating, taking loans and not educating their kids, not trusting outsiders. With patience, we executed a pilot project that impressed everyone," Gazala recalls.

Every family had 3-4 acres which they got dirt cheap. Ponds were constructed near their houses, paid by families. Together they de-silted five wells and four ponds, developed a bund to retain water; built sand-filled dug-wells to allow water to seep underground. The following monsoon, all water bodies filled up, enabling them to cultivate profitable cash crops.

Water conservation, income and consumption increased in 97 villages. 'Jaldoots' were appointed to maintain ponds with Samerth's help.

Corporates and the government, District administration and block-level Panchayats gave help, while MNREGA paid wages.

A 15-year plan was devised to restore traditional Vavs (step wells), and introduce rooftop rainwater harvesting.

"Revolutionary equipment or hefty funds are not needed to solve grassroots' issues. A collective will of locals and aid from local Panchayats are all you need," Gazala adds.

Adapted from TBI

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

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Image Source: Times of India

A Bhopal auto-driver has turned his three-wheeler into an ambulance. That too, free of cost. Javed Khan from Bhopal has put his livelihood on hold, but the lives of many on an oxygen cylinder. Before he was earning around 600 rupees every day from his auto rides. Now he spends more than that providing Corona affected people with emergency oxygen. What made him take this step?

"I saw on social media, WhatsApp and News channels that several people were forced to carry their relatives on their shoulder, or pull them on carts due to the unavailability of ambulances. That was when I thought I could do something for humanity," says Javed Khan, speaking to ANI. His auto rickshaw is equipped with essential items like an oxygen cylinder, a PPE kit, sanitizer and an oximeter. He had been driving the auto for 18 years. Though no one has been infected

in his family, he felt disturbed by the deaths he saw every day and wanted to do something about it with the resources he had. He told the Times of India, "I sold my wife's gold necklace for Rs. 5000, and bought an oxygen cylinder to turn this auto into an ambulance. I refuel the auto with my money." In a factory at Govindpura, he gets oxygen refilled although it is a tedious task, as he has to stand in the line for hours.

Sharing his mobile number on social media platforms (7999909494), Mr Khan says, "Whoever is in trouble and is not able to get an ambulance, can call me. I am ready to help people all 24 hours." When asked how long he will continue this service, he says, "I will not hesitate even if I have to borrow money, as people are desperate for help. My priority is to save the people." In fact, he lost his livelihood, but gives life to so many.