

July, 2024

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA



Only in the light of Manresa

| 2025 will be a Jubilee Year | Relevance of Ignatius for Today

Rest in Me

Rest in Me,
full of comfort;
I know you often optimize everything,
make the most of every gift,
Magis-ize each moment;
just for now,
stop and savor for savoring's sake;
feel the wind;
hear the current's gurgle;
see the stars;
fill full of wonder, and hear My heartbeat;
I hold you;
and the world;
and the works;
and everyone I've ever made;
so, full-of-comfort,
rest in Me.

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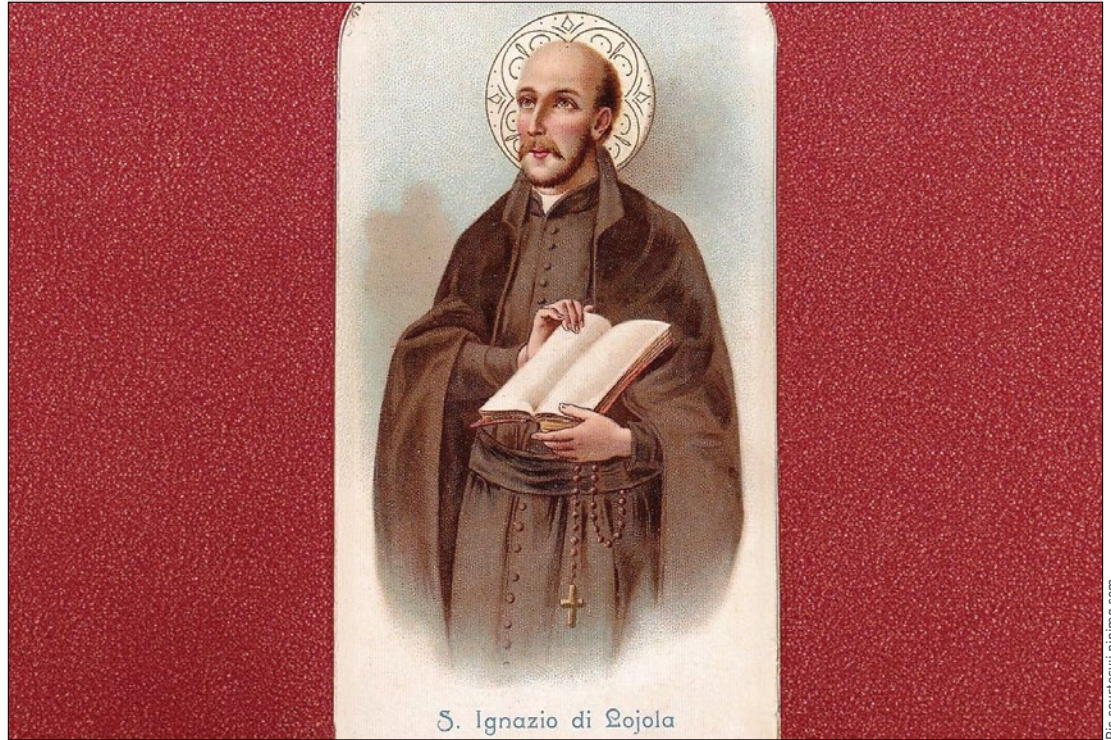
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S. Ignazio di Lojola

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What Mother Cabrini proved

While reading the May-June 2024 issue of *Jivan*, which celebrates the 100th anniversary of AICUF and its dedication to the holistic development of youth, I came across 'The Nun who built 'an Empire of Hope' which discusses the new movie, Cabrini, released in the U.S. this year.

The writer begins this with a short family background of Cabrini and later talks of her special and peculiar vocation. He also gives two or three minute details regarding her frail health and her determination to build hospitals to serve the poor. It ends with the mention of the mission she has accomplished. The writer has quoted Pope Leo XIII who said that her overseas mission would serve the Church "proof of what a woman can or cannot accomplish." By what Mother Cabrini managed to achieve she has proved that nothing is beyond what women can do. The film is timely as we are still discussing the role that women in the Church can play.

| Jeyasachin Jeyaseelan, SJ (CEN) | Pune

All mission and no vacation makes ...

Every purpose under heaven has a time, says the author of the book of Ecclesiastes. Indeed there is a time for work, and a time for rest, and if this shouldn't suffice, there is a time for vacation as well! Fr. Emmanuel Arockiam's article on vacations, titled, 'Holidays can make us normal humans and saner Jesuits' (*Jivan*, May-June 2024) conveyed the right message at the right time. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy..." All mission and no vacation makes a Jesuit with no joy. This is the mantra behind excellence and efficiency, what we Jesuits call the magis.

Every machine needs servicing over time; likewise we too need time for relaxation. The annual retreat charges up our spiritual life, and a vacation charges up our relational life and rejuvenates our body. Just how essential the annual retreat is, so is our vacation. Annual programmes like retreat, province days or scholastic get-togethers are organised so

as to free ourselves from our stressful daily engagements, while giving us the opportunity to meet God and each other, and above all to meet ourselves who are lost in the daily activities that turn to become monotonous or tiring.

Jesus understood the importance of a holiday. He would often go to Bethany with his disciples to have a day off with friends and where they were sure of a well-prepared meal. Ignatius, too, was compelled by his companions to return to Spain that he may catch some native air to recover from fatigue.

| Denver A. Pushpam, SJ (KAR) | Bengaluru

We belong to one big family

"Together through Lent and Ramadan," the 'First Person' sharing by Rose Aloysius in the May-June '24 issue of *Jivan* brought me a lot of happiness. It helped me know that we are taking steps to be more inclusive in connecting with our brothers and sisters of other faiths. The initiative taken by some Christians to accompany our Muslim brothers and sisters throughout Ramadan by reading a daily excerpt from a little booklet titled, *Journeying with Muslims: Listening, Praying and Working Together* by Cardinal Michael Louis Fitzgerald is remarkable. I was deeply touched by a sentence which goes this way, "In denying themselves the most existential needs like food and water, Muslims are encouraged to be their best selves, so Ramadan becomes a joyous moment of deep self-discovery." This sentence made me reflect and made me realize that in denying the most existential needs, we grow in dependence on God, which Ignatius calls spiritual poverty. We grow in understanding that we are fragile and weak and that we depend on God, who loves us.


Thank you, Ms. Rose Aloysius, for sharing your experience which enabled me to realize that we all are children of God and so we belong to one big family.

| Brian Macwan, SJ | Ahmedabad


Prayer Intentions for July'24


FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK

Let us pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick grant the Lord's strength to those who receive it and to their loved ones, and that it may become for everyone an ever more visible sign of compassion and hope.



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network





Pic courtesy: ncregister.com



WHAT DO YOU SAY?

STANY D'SOUZA, SJ
President, JCSA

Ecological conversion

If I were to ask you whether you have walked in a garden or a forest, on the banks of a river, you would surely say, 'Of course! We have done it many times.' If I were to ask you whether you have paused while walking, and observed a flower, a plant, a tree, a stream closely, you would probably say, 'I have not, but why?'

Well, just try. Pause and look at a flower, a plant, and the earth closely. You will be in for a surprise. There is a rich diversity and beauty not only in colours, texture, designs etc., but also in forms of life, like ants, insects, worms, bees, butterflies and birds which make their home there. It is indeed a symphony of life.

This was our experience during the recent extended consult of Fr General, in Rome, when, at a prayer session in the Curia Garden, we were advised not only to walk but also pause for some time and closely witness life. To our surprise, we discovered a harmonious community of life. The icing on the cake was the realization that we are very much a part of this great sea of life. Hence, what surrounds us is not merely an environment but our common home.

But there is the dark side. Just look around: The earth is bleeding and consequently, there is climate change: rising heat and drought, unusual rain and floods, which will lead to diseases and destruction. Scientists warn us that the situation is disastrous. It is not only that the conflict between human beings and other forms of life leads the latter to extinction, but also that human beings themselves will struggle, suffer and die.

Scientific studies predict that the first victims of the poly ecological crisis will be from the global south, largely populated by the poorer sections of humanity. Hence, there is an inherent relationship between the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

Isn't it a call to us to create a new earth? How shall we create one, if we are not aware and awakened? The need of the hour is to usher in a process of individual and collective ecological conversion, a paradigm shift in our perception, a discovery of interconnectedness of life and a realization that human beings are part of the ecosystem. It will inaugurate a new way of living, encourage different and new types of politics and economics, and explore new pathways to move from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism and to theo-centrism.

The death of the earth is the death of humanity. Hence, let us be alert, awake, and advance the process of ecological conversion and engage in the restoration of the eco-system. We are at the beginning of the new academic year, 2024-25. Isn't it the right time to make a resolution to save the earth and save the humanity. What do you say?



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

M.A. JOE ANTONY, SJ
Editor

Begin now!

"Just about an hour before the counting of votes started on 04 June, I celebrated the Eucharist for the Sisters and the students of the neighbouring Holy Cross College. Naturally, I exhorted them to pray earnestly that the day should bring us good news. The next day, 05 June, I asked them if the news was good or bad. They just smiled. I shared a comment a friend had forwarded: 'The Indian voters have delivered a historic verdict that will be remembered for a long time in Indian politics. They have given the BJP and its partners a victory that feels like a defeat. They have given Congress and its allies a defeat that feels like a victory.'"

This is what I said in my regular column in a recent issue of the *New Leader*. I shared also my belief that the Indian voters have given a new lease of life to Indian democracy and ensured that India will remain secular at least for now. The voters may have declared that they want neither a dictator nor a politician-priest. I had also quoted Sudheendra Kulkarni, a close aide to India's former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who hopes that the verdict may put an end to politics of arrogance, and bring more freedom to the media and judiciary.

Here in this issue of *Jivan*, Cedric Prakash, SJ, our valiant activist-writer, tries to interpret the election results. He quotes Yogendra Yadav, a leading political analyst, who said "This was the least free and fair national election in the history of independent India, where everything was stacked against the Opposition." Cedric reminds the readers of what lies ahead: "The road ahead is a long-haul journey. For this, there is neither room for complacency nor callousness. The tasks ahead must be looked upon with a sense of urgency and immediacy."

You have surely heard this quotation attributed to Thomas Jefferson: 'The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.' It means that the efforts, from individuals and groups, to protect the priceless privileges we need and value like freedom, democracy and secularism, must begin not a few months before the elections. They must begin now and continue till these privileges are no longer threatened.

We cannot think of the month of July without thinking of our Father and Founder, St. Ignatius. There are two articles that speak of him in this issue. Enjoy reading them!

Jesuits of CHF and CAW meet in Pune



A one-day review meeting of Common Houses of Formation (CHF) and Common Apostolic Works (CAW) was held at De Nobili College, Pune on 24 April 2024. There were 32 participants, consisting of all the local superiors and directors of works of common houses, all the conference secretaries and coordinators of select forums and networks.

The programme started with a prayer led by Fr Thomas Perumalil, and a welcome address by Fr Stany D'Souza, President, JCSA. Fr Stany based his talk on Psalm 23 'The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want'. He underlined the need of constant accompaniment and assistance of God in our life-mission.

After the welcome address, the participants went into prayer and reflection to recall and relive the graced moments wherein one experienced the presence of God, and the significant challenges and the strategies one employed to address them. After the prayer there was a spiritual conversation in specific groups and the fruits of the spiritual conversation were shared during the plenary sessions. The participants listened to the stakeholders and collaborators.

They also shared about the importance of 'Jesuitness', 'Cura Personalis', Practice of Examen, Reflection, Sense of 'Magis', and Spiritual heritage in our institutions. Other highlights were the need for better vocation promotion and formation, sectoral and zonal level collaboration, use of technology, ecology, safeguarding, and peace and reconciliation.

Fr Stany, in his concluding remarks, said that the Jesuits of CHF and CAW make a positive contribution to the Conference, and he values the work done by the local superiors, directors of works, the secretaries and the coordinators of forums and networks. Thanks to their efforts the formees become good priests because of the formators.

Tom Perumalil, SJ (PAT)

Arrupe Month in Shillong

Arrupe Month, a month-long Pre-Ordination Program (POP), for 28 first-year students of theology from 10 different provinces and one region was held at Arrupe Renewal Center, Shillong on 16 April - 16 May 2024. Fr. George Beck SJ (DUM) and Fr. Sajeev Painunkal SJ (CCU) facilitated the entire programme. It was a great opportunity for the Scholastics to imbibe the spirit of 'Jesuit Priesthood' and hone their skills needed to be effective priests.

Arrupe Month began with an inaugural Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Melvil Pereira SJ, the Regional Superior of Kohima Jesuit Region. There was a short introductory session in which the Scholastics got to know each other better. They studied Fr. Pedro Arrupe's letter on priesthood. Fr. Caldinus Majaw, SJ (KOH), the parish priest of Umbir, shared the joys and challenges he encounters as a parish priest. The Scholastics had the opportunity to listen and interact with a senior lady parishioner, who highlighted the critical role of the laity in contributing to the growth and progress of a parish. She also talked about the expectations of the faithful with regard to priests, emphasizing the need for priests to be available, prayerful, and prove by their conduct that they are ministers of God.

Fr. Anbarasan Savari Raj SJ(MDU) shared his experience as a missionary in the region, including the initial challenges he faced while learning the language and culture of the local people. His sharing inspired us to venture into uncharted territories with similar zeal and reliance on the Almighty. Fr Sajeev Painunkal, SJ led sessions on Nonviolent Communication, which is essential in the Church and the world today to resolve conflicts peacefully. There were also sessions on Psychosexual



Integration. A picnic to the Cherrapunji region provided a refreshing experience. The beautiful landscapes and cascading waterfalls in the area served as a powerful reminder of God's presence in nature. The program ended with an 8-day retreat guided by Fr. George Beck SJ, which helped the Scholastics to imbibe the spirit of the entire Arrupe Month. We remain grateful to the Kohima Jesuit region and its communities for their hospitality, love and accompaniment.

Sch. Rintu Mondal, SJ (CAL)



2025 will be a Jubilee Year

Next year: What will be special about the coming year? On 9 May 2024, Pope Francis issued a momentous papal document titled, *Spes Non Confundit*, which translates to “Hope does not Disappoint.” This official decree declared 2025 a Jubilee Year, a special occasion for the Catholic Church.

Jubilee Year: The concept of the Jubilee Year, emerging from ancient Jewish traditions, is richly layered with themes of renewal, regeneration, and restoration. It functioned as a social and economic reset, marked by practices such as forgiving debts, freeing enslaved people, and allowing the land to lie fallow to recuperate. These practices embodied the core Jewish values – economic fairness, social justice and environmental responsibility.

When the Catholic Church adopted the concept of the Jubilee, it merged the celebrations with contemporary issues and concerns that the Church and the world faced at different points in history, while maintaining the core Jewish values at heart. This is evident in the upcoming 2025 Jubilee, guided by Pope Francis’ document *Spes Non Confundit*. This Jubilee will focus on pressing contemporary issues such as promoting economic fairness for all, finding solutions to the climate crisis, and advocating for social justice on a global scale.

From Sabbath to Jubilee: The tradition of the Jubilee Year stems from the Jewish Sabbath, which traces its origins to the Judeo-Christian creation narrative. This narrative depicts God’s creation over six days, culminating in a seventh day of rest. This day, blessed and sanctified by God, is known as the Sabbath, derived from the Hebrew verb *Shabbat*,

meaning ‘to rest from labour.’ It symbolizes a day of repose, tranquility, peace, and harmony. The Sabbath serves as a prelude to the ultimate rest and peace that believers in Yahweh look forward to in heaven.

The fourth commandment emphasizes the importance of remembering the Sabbath day and keeping it holy. It directs the Israelites to set apart the seventh day as a Sabbath dedicated to the Lord, after six days of labour. All including servants and livestock are to refrain from all forms of work. While this mandate serves as both a reminder of the creation narrative where God rested on the seventh day, it also establishes a divinely ordained rhythm of work and rest.

From Sabbath Day to Sabbath Year: Building on the weekly Sabbath, Leviticus 25 introduces the tradition

of the Sabbath year. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they were instructed to observe a Sabbath Year every seventh year. During this year, the land itself was to rest: fields were not to be sown, vineyards were not to be pruned, and what grew naturally was not to be harvested in the usual way. The produce of the land during this Sabbath Year was to serve as sufficient food for everyone in the community. This practice helped the land to rejuvenate and underscored the principle that the land ultimately belonged to God.

Jubilee Year: Leviticus 25 expands on the principles of the Sabbath, instructing the Israelites to count off seven Sabbath Years, totalling forty-nine years. The fiftieth year, then, was declared a Jubilee Year – a profound extension of Sabbath principles. Just as the weekly Sabbath offered a glimpse of ultimate rest in and peace with God, the Jubilee year provided



pic courtesy: thedialog.org

a comprehensive societal reset and peace. Debts were forgiven, slaves were set free, and mortgaged lands were returned. This ensured economic fairness, social stability, and the opportunity for every family to begin anew. The beginning of this momentous year was marked by a powerful symbol – the blowing of a ram’s-horn trumpet, once a call to battle, but now a symbol of introspection and repentance.

Designated as a holy year, the Jubilee emphasized social justice, communal harmony, ecological balance, and spiritual well-being. This ancient tradition offers a profound message for our times – a call for periodic reassessment and reconstitution of societal structures to ensure that the spirit of justice, equity, and compassion remains the driving force of our society.

The Christian Jubilee Tradition: In 1300, Pope Boniface VIII formally established the practice of the Jubilee in the Catholic Church. Unlike its Jewish roots, which focused on the liberation of enslaved people, the Christian Jubilee centred on the liberation from sins and purgatorial punishment. Pope Boniface VIII declared that faithful believers who fulfilled certain obligations, such as genuine repentance and visiting the basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome, would receive a plenary indulgence, a remission of sins.

In 1475, Pope Paul II shortened the Jubilee interval from every 50 years to the current practice of every 25 years. Since then, the Catholic Church has celebrated ‘Ordinary Jubilees’ every quarter-century, with the option of proclaiming additional ‘Extraordinary Jubilees’ for significant events. These celebrations serve as periods of repentance, forgiveness, and spiritual renewal, marked by special ceremonies, pilgrimages to holy sites, and acts of charity.

Jubilee Year 2025: The opening of the normally sealed Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica, the Catholic symbol for opening of the gates of mercy, on 24 December 2024 will mark the commencement of the Jubilee Year 2025. Over the next 12 days, the Holy Doors of Rome’s three other major basilicas – the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran, the Basilica of

Santa Maria Maggiore, and the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls – will also be opened. The Jubilee celebrations will come to an end with the closing of the Holy Doors on January 2026, on the feast of the Epiphany of the Lord.

As per the Catholic tradition, during a Jubilee Year, under specific conditions, including pilgrimages through the Holy Doors of Rome’s four major basilicas, the faithful can receive plenary indulgences, the remission of sins for themselves or deceased relatives. Furthermore, pilgrimages to other designated religious sites with recognized Holy Doors, and acts of charity can also qualify the faithful for indulgences. No wonder pilgrims from across the globe flock to Rome during

Jubilee Years.

The celebrations will revolve around the theme of hope. Pope Francis invites the believers to look for signs of hope in the world around us and work for peace and justice insisting that “If we really wish to prepare a path to peace in our world, let us commit ourselves to remedying the remote causes of injustice, settling unjust and unpayable debts, and feeding the hungry.” He also emphasizes the need to address the “true ‘ecological debt’ that exists, particularly between the global North and South, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time.”

Conclusion: The upcoming 2025 Jubilee Year serves as a springboard for a global conversation – a chance to reimagine our relationship with each other and the planet. Can we harness the spirit of forgiveness, release, and renewal not just for ourselves, but for the Earth and all its inhabitants? The 2025 Jubilee invites us to answer this call, to transform hope into action, and build a more compassionate and sustainable world for generations to come. This is the true legacy of the Jubilee tradition – a blueprint not just for individual salvation, but for collective transformation. ❖

Fr Sacaria Joseph, SJ (CCU) teaches at St. Xavier’s College, Kolkata. He can be contacted at sjosephsj@gmail.com.

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Designated as a holy year, the Jubilee emphasizes social justice, communal harmony, ecological balance, and spiritual well-being.
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Pic courtesy: franthonyagnes.com



A Long-haul Journey to Hope!

Interpreting the Election Results



On several counts, 2014-2024, was the worst decade in the history of independent India. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had failed miserably in most aspects of governance. Global (impartial and professional) indicators evidenced this. At the receiving end were the poor and vulnerable sections of the Indian society: the small farmers and the migrant workers, the casual labourers and unskilled daily wagers, the marginalized and the minorities, the excluded and the exploited, women and children, human rights defenders, writers, academics and other intellectuals- who took a stand for truth and justice; even political opponents, were not spared. They all had to face the wrath of a vicious, vengeful regime

who controlled a brutal system.. Above all, what was at stake was the Constitution of India and the democratic, pluralistic fabric of the country!

The run- up to the General Elections 2024 was not easy: the Opposition parties were in disarray – they neither had the political sagacity to gel together, nor did they have a common agenda to effectively respond to the legitimate cries and struggles of the common people. On the other hand, the ruling regime did all they could to either co-opt or blackmail some of their political opponents. There was a beeline of those who had cases of corruption on them, to cross the floor, realizing that once they did so, they would be absolved of all their crimes. They were not disappointed!

The Opposition parties finally did come together, though haphazardly, at the final stretch. To their credit, the INDIA bloc (as they called themselves) did put together a common agenda; besides, their own party manifestoes also focused on the real issues of the country. All this certainly helped in the final outcome.

Above all, there were the painstaking efforts by civil society groups and even individuals. These included social and political activists, human rights defenders, intellectuals, academia and other professionals, retired bureaucrats, students and ordinary grass roots workers; in fact people from every walk of life. They tirelessly gave of their best. They left no stone unturned to save democracy, to save the Constitution.

In a very meaningful communication at the end of the elections, one of the networks, the All India Mission (AIM)2024 said “We have determinedly slogged for close to ten months with a singular purpose of pushing down BJP from unquestionable power. And they are pushed from their high pedestal. It was a large gathering of a whole range of concerned people’s organizations and individuals from not less than 24 States.

“From then on there has been no turning back. We have only been marching forward. We have only been gaining in strength, knowledge and experience on the ground. And it is so in the electoral field which had belonged mostly to corrupt politicians only thus far. We have made a whole All India network and network of networks in many States... We have made greater inroads into the hearts of the common people. We have relentlessly strived to create the space for more vigorous and united struggles with the fascist power mongers who are a threat to our country and Constitution.”

When the results of India’s General Elections 2024 were finally announced late night on 4 June, one thing was evidently clear: we, the people of India gave ourselves a reprieve, the much – needed space to breathe: to breathe democracy. It was perhaps, not the results what many hoped and prayed for: a change in regime. For the past ten years, the common person in India was feeling throttled in many ways, and the only way to get rid of this suffocation was to ensure that a more democratic Government be installed. This was not to be!

God apparently answered the prayers of millions by giving the ‘second best’: a fractured mandate for the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), denying them the power of

being the majority party on their own and forcing them to take the help of their political allies to form a coalition Government. As one political commentator remarked, “never before in a democracy, have people who have lost feel they have triumphed and those who have won, actually feel they have lost”. With the Opposition, despite all odds, securing 230 plus seats, the nation was given a ray of hope.

Yogendra Yadav, the nation’s leading political analyst writes in the *Indian Express* (7 June 2024), “This was the least free and fair national election in the history of independent India, where everything was stacked against the Opposition. Money, media, administrative machine — the ruling party enjoyed an infinite advantage over the Opposition.”

The road ahead is a long-haul journey. For this, there is neither room for complacency nor callousness. The tasks ahead must be looked upon with a sense of urgency and immediacy.

At this moment however, one has some breathing space, to get one’s act together and to actualise several immediate tasks which need to include: - to network with all like- minded, secular political parties, so that they focus on the burning issues which grip the country and on the cries of the poor - to insist that the coalition partners of the newly formed Government do not abdicate Constitutional propriety and work to keep the Government responsive to the genuine needs of the country - to join civil society groups/ movements which will help promote and protect democracy and the Constitution of the country - to ensure that one’s name is on the electoral rolls and help all others whose names may not be registered, to do so *now* - to promote and protect the Constitution in every way; particularly the rights and freedoms of all - to ensure that all official policies / legislation which are draconian anti-people, anti- poor and anti- Constitutional (like the New Criminal Laws) which go against the democratic and pluralistic fabric of the country be rescinded immediately and unconditionally.

Given the mandate the Jesuits have given ourselves and motivated by the likes of our late Fr Stan Swamy, we certainly have a road-map chalked out for the long – haul journey ahead! Will it be a journey of hope for a better tomorrow for the people of India? ❖

Cedric Prakash, SJ (GUJ) is a human rights, reconciliation and peace activist/writer. He can be contacted at: cedricprakash@gmail.com.



“I think Pope Francis and I would weep and laugh, dance and pray”

Betsey Beckman is founder of ‘The Dancing Word: Embodying the Sacred in Liturgy and Life’, a ministry that includes liturgical movement, dance-prayer DVDs for Abbey of the Arts, embodied arts retreats, and spiritual direction. With 30 years of experience as certified InterPlay Leader, Betsey weaves theology, spirituality, dance, and play in engaging, artful, and transformational expression. **Prashant Olalekar, SJ** interviewed her for *Jivan*.

At the ‘Art for Earth: Out of the Box’ webinar in September 2021 organized by the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES) of South Asia and Samanvaya, Mumbai, as a part of the global InterPlay team, you shared your vocation story and interpretation of the Eucharist celebrated by your two Jesuit uncles. Could you share this with the *Jivan* readers?

We are all called to bring our gifts to uplift the Body of Christ. It so happens that as a very young child, I discovered that my desire to dance was also my call to prayer. When the church bells at our local parish started to ring and fill our yard with a sense of the holy, I sensed that the only appropriate way to respond was to let my body participate in this holiness by dancing my response in joy.

Of course, not everyone has the same call to dance. But we all live in our bodies, and we cannot escape that reality. So rather than try to escape it, what if we embraced our physicality whole-heartedly and celebrated our humanity as a fundamental gift of God’s grace?

As a young girl, I had two uncles who were Jesuit priests, and I had the gift of participating in the Mass with them in our home setting, and being



asked to read the readings, and even help give the homilies. At the time of the Eucharistic prayer, I was quite taken with the words of institution: “This is my Body, given for you.” If Jesus was so literal in giving his body, perhaps that was also my call. My body was also holy and could be an instrument of prayer - not just a machine to accomplish tasks, house my mind, or be an object of sexual desire. In fact, when Jesus spoke of bread saying – “This is my body” – he consecrated all of Earth as part of his body, the wheat, the water, the sun, the atoms, the hands that made the bread ... all were part of his own presence on Earth. This form of incarnational theology was breathed into my being and has led my journey so far.

At the online book launch of *If Not Now When?: Disquieting Feminist Questions* organized to take the Stan Swami Movement forward, your presentation, ‘Who Will Speak If We Don’t?’ was very provocative. You elicited the participation of the listeners, who are normally passive, and energized them. How has your call as a spiritual dancer evolved and helped to convey the good news to the poor?

When I was in high school, I was involved in theater at the local Jesuit High School, St. Xavier High School, in Cincinnati, Ohio. A young Jesuit Scholastic named Michael Sparough was directing a play based on scripture, and he cast me as Mary. In good Ignatian fashion, he led me into a meditation of what it would be like to be Mary standing at the foot of the cross, having my heart rent open by witnessing the death of my son. And then, I was invited to dance the intensity of her emotion. I remember praying to Mary to help me enter into this experience so that I could become a vessel of that deep heartbreak and express it for all.

This same kind of prayer of the imagination leads me to stand in the shoes of the marginalized who are forced to face silently extreme discrimination, exclusion, or violence. When I enter these stories, I am called to dance an empowered response and call to action, to feel the crime of injustice and to counter that with the surge of loving justice moving through me. Some folks are called to march in the streets, or write letters, or confront hierarchies, whereas I am called to express the call to empowerment through dance, to be an inspiration to galvanize and inspire action. When I gave the presentation for the book launch, I invited all present to embody the call to action with me. It was so moving to witness participants shedding their self-consciousness to enter into an embodied prayer, and to practice the courage it takes to stand up for justice in the world.

For the Harmony webinar for St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai on World Peace Day in 2019 your ‘out of the box’ presentation of the UAPs was highly appreciated. What role has Ignatian spirituality played in your life?

Ignatian spirituality has opened the door to the integration of heart and mind, body and spirit in my life. As a woman in the Catholic Church, I am not able to be ordained in the priesthood, but my ministry of embodiment has led me to proclaim the scripture stories in both word and movement as part of the Mass. At these moments, I experience the priesthood of the people coming to life. I feel the Spirit moving through me in powerful prayer ... and I lead the assembly into the depth of their own felt experience of heartbreak and transformation that is so often described in our scripture texts. The return of the Prodigal, the death and raising of Lazarus, the quenching of thirst of the Woman at the Well ... all these stories come to life through my own vessel of my body becoming the Word. Also, when I want to learn something, the best way for me to do that is to create a rhythmical song and movements to encode that in my body. That’s what I did for the UAPs, and they live with me still!



In what ways do you work with Art as Prayer and Activism?

Spiritual direction is a practice that is well-known in Ignatian spirituality. Ignatius continually leads us from the head into the heart ... and one of the best ways I know to do this is through embodied practices. In this ministry called 'Dancing Spiritual Direction' people dance their struggles, their desolations, their discernments, their consolations, and celebrations. These practices bring me great joy to guide others in ways of trusting our bodies to be temples of the Holy Spirit and to live in harmony with the guidance of Spirit.

I am also embarking on a project with a community in Uganda to have a cultural exchange of the dance as prayer, and to co-create embodied video dance prayers as a form of fostering wholeness and artistry for youth, sponsored through a Catholic Cultural Center in Kampala. For me, this is a joyous new venture.



In some situations there seems to be some allergy to women and dance in the liturgy. Have you met with resistance? If you have, how have you coped with it?

When I joined my parish in Seattle thirty years ago, our pastoral leader was a woman who had been appointed by Archbishop Hunthausen, one of the youngest Bishops to attend Vatican II. With visionary leadership on the Archdiocesan and parish level, my ministry was able to thrive in a church that lived the call to lay leadership and engagement at all levels. I am forever grateful

to this dynamic and inclusive parish! Sadly, our parish was recently closed by the current Archdiocesan authorities, so our community is mourning the loss of our rich history and creative expression. I am now a new member of our local Jesuit Parish - St. Joseph - and by the surprise of the Spirit, our newly appointed pastor, Fr. Chris Cartwright and I share a history of working with Fr. Michael Sparough in a liturgical drama troupe, called 'The Fountain Square Fools' fortyyears ago! Good liturgy deserves good artistry. I am dedicated to both. When there is no room on the altar, I take to the streets, mountains, rivers, and desktops as my sanctuary!

If you had the opportunity to meet Pope Francis, what would you say to him about the role of the women in the Church today?

I have a feeling that Pope Francis would personally like to open the doors to women in all roles of the Church, but that he cannot take such a big jump for the universal Church institution. So, I would share with him my story-dance of Mary Magdalene ... who thinks she is going to anoint her beloved Christ ... but when she meets him in the garden... the tables are turned. She proclaims: "I am the one who is anointed! You are risen within me! I am set free. I am sent forth! My brothers, sisters, rise, come out of tombs; he is risen! Let life rise in you!" And I think Pope Francis and I would weep and laugh, dance and pray for the doors of the Church to be opened. ❖

South Zone Workshops for School Principals and New Teachers

School Principals' Enhancement and Enrichment Programme (PEEP) was organized on 01-04 May '24 in Bangalore for 32 Jesuit Principals from the South Zone provinces (Madurai, Chennai, Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala). Fr. Ravi, JEA Secretary, stressed the need for holistic development of principals and brought out the various traits of enhanced leaders, in his inaugural address on the first day.

Fr. VM. Thomas, SDB, a well-known leadership trainer, was the resource person. He emphasized the need for transformational leadership in today's context and highlighted the importance of taking calculated risks, rooted in the Jesuit tradition. What we need today is the paradigm shift towards servant leadership.

On the third day, we had an exposure visit to Delhi Public School-East in the outskirts of Bangalore. Though this school is run in the corporate model with the latest state of art facilities, what distinguishes it were their quest and pursuit for excellence and their commitment to social causes and concerns.

We had a recollection on the last day with points proposed by Fr. Olvin Vegas, SJ with spiritual conversation and personalized planning based on questions like, 'What is my vision for the school I am entrusted with? How do I strive to realized this vision?' etc.

There was a 'New Teachers' Induction Programme' for 37 teachers from the five southern provinces. This was a ten- day workshop on 01-10 May '24 in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu. The twin aims of this workshop were to enhance participants' communication competence in English and empower them with expertise and confidence to teach the English language skills to young learners and familiarize our new teachers on the life of St. Ignatius, and our education legacy up to the latest Jesuit documents on education.

Prof. Charles Durai from Loyola College, Chennai conducted the English classes which covered the English pronunciation and conversational skills, speaking skills and strategies, writing skills, presentation skills and teaching of grammar and vocabulary. Fr. Stephen, the former PCF of Madurai Province, spoke on the journey of St. Ignatius, the Pilgrim, the Spiritual Exercises, and the works of the Jesuits. Fr. John Ravi, JCA Secretary, presented the milestones of Jesuit education, 10 Global Identifiers and the profile of the Jesuit school student at graduation. Fr. John Kennedy, PCE of Madurai Province spoke on IPP, its relevance and strategies to implement it in our schools. Fr. Henry, Rector, St. Xavier's institutions,



Palayamkottai, dealt with the digital revolution, realizing the impact of multimedia, instructional strategies on curricular transaction and cybercrime and ways to safeguard ourselves and our students. Fr. Rohan, PCE of Karnataka Province brought out the focus areas of NEP – 2020. Fr. Thayriam, PDD of Madurai Province led the teachers into an awareness on how to integrate ICT in the teaching-learning process. Fr. Cyril, SJ(MDU) spoke on our duty to protect child rights in our schools.

"I appreciate this south zone collaborative venture and such inter province networking should be strengthened," said Fr. Thomas Amirtham, Madurai Provincial, in his valedictory address on the last day. Fr. S.M. John Kennedy, PCE of Madurai and Fr. Rohan Almeida, PCE of Karnataka took these initiatives in collaboration with the other PCEs of the South Zone. ❖

S.M. John Kennedy, SJ (MDU)



Challenges the Jesuit Educators Face Today

Fr. Audibert, the courageous French Jesuit who was the first Principal of St. Joseph's College, which was started in Nagapattinam and later shifted to Trichy, had to face the excessive, unbearable summer heat, and epidemics like cholera and plague. I have just completed six years as the Principal of this renowned college, where President Abdul Kalam was once a student. The challenges I have faced in these years are not the ones faced by Fr. Audibert and his colleagues. Let me talk about these challenges, which many other Jesuit principals in India are likely to face.



Traditionally, Jesuit educational institutions don't stop with imparting knowledge and developing the skills of students. They aim at making the student a better person, who would go on to create a better society. They believe that education should lead not merely to one's socio-economic progress, but also for upholding basic human values such as genuine concern for the poor, caring for Mother Earth and working for social harmony in a diverse society.

Earlier education was considered a service done in God's name to the people. This is why Jesuits and other religious orders started educational institutions. Even when some philanthropists and democratic governments started educational institutions, service was their main aim. But today in the field of education, there are many who see it as a profit-making business.

Challenges: Jesuit educators today have to

compete with such private players whose aims are different. Educational institutions run by corporates or business magnets attract the bright, studious and hardworking students from the creamy layers. But we want to serve students from marginalised communities and the first generation learners, who have been deprived of opportunities for ages. Jesuits want to provide the best to the least. In the process the Jesuit educators face challenges both from the individual level and the institutional level. By individuals I mean the students and the staff and institutions mean the government agencies.

Challenges from students: The present-day Gen Z youth are, of course, talented, dynamic, lively, creative, techno-savvy, quick to react and have greater exposure to the world through internet. While a miniscule minority of this generation are very creative, highly motivated and working hard for a future they dream of, a vast majority is mediocre or content with their low academic performance.

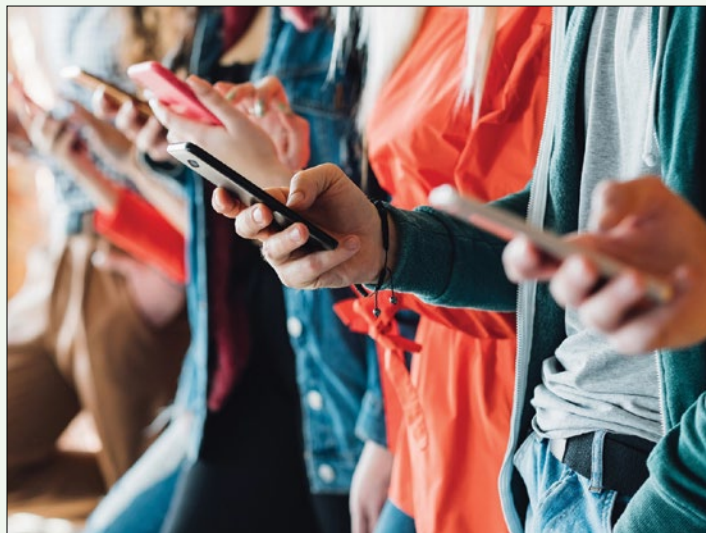
Attitudinal issues: As adolescents, students are struggling to discover their identity, their personality, and to develop correct perspectives about the world and society. They would like to experience all that thrills and excites them. Many of them are easy going and lethargic. Their complacency and satisfaction with mediocrity seem to have become worse after the Covid '19 pandemic. They have a low level of motivation. They don't seem to realize that what they do now

will affect their future. Many suffer from a low self-image and so their self-confidence is very low. They want instant results, and so they are not ready to wait. Only the end seems to matter – not the means.

Cognitive Issues: When there is a need for continuous learning in this highly competitive world, most students lack interest in updating their subject knowledge, even when so many resources are easily available. Language proficiency in their own mother tongue and English is far from satisfactory. Many want just to have a good time and are not ready to work hard and spend enough time to develop their talents and skills.

Behavioural issues: An alarmingly large number of today's youth are addicted to substances and their mobiles. This addiction makes them waste their money, time, and energy. They are easily upset and are not ready to accept even minor failures, mild disappointments and slight insults. They find it difficult to handle them. Procrastination, inability to prioritize things in life, lack of professionalism and systematic approach in their academic life hamper their growth. This generation - like all others – longs for love, but unlike the previous generations, don't realize that they need to love if they want to be loved, care if they want to be cared for. They want unlimited freedom, but they do not seem to realize that their freedom is always linked with responsibility. A good number are cynical and hyper critical. They are fun-loving and resort to short cuts to find solutions. They don't bother about what the older generations called 'good manners'. They don't respect the elderly. They lack analytical skills and a rational approach to issues.

Challenges from the teaching fraternity: Teachers who work in our institutions are expected to share the ideals and vision of Jesuit education as they are collaborators in our mission. But many Jesuits would have noticed that today's teachers are very different from those who worked in our institutions earlier. Today greed, lethargy,



Pic courtesy: axexmedia.com

Many of the students today are easy going and lethargic. Their complacency and satisfaction with mediocrity seem to have become worse after the Covid '19 pandemic.

and sluggishness make many of them mediocre. Except a few, many seem to lack sincerity and commitment to the teaching profession, a passion for teaching, efforts towards continuous learning, eagerness to become better teachers, accompaniment of students with genuine care, loyalty to the institution, and duty consciousness. They are very slow to update their knowledge of the subject they teach and new techniques to keep pace with the techno- savvy students of today.

How many of our teachers would play any role in making our students conscious of what is right and wrong in our socio-political context and in making them powerful instruments for the transformation of the world? Most fail to engage the creative minds of bright students. A considerable number of the faculty do not deliver quality presentations in their class room and are unable to publish quality research papers which are expected of them. They do not keep the deadlines.

Jealousy, sectarian attitude and groupism among the faculty cause unnecessary tension to the Jesuit administrators and bring down the reputation of the institution.

Challenges from Government Agencies: All colleges in India have to function within the parameters formulated by three important government agencies - University Grants

Commission - UGC (now Ministry of Education of the Union Government), Directorate of Collegiate Education of the State Government and the local university to which the college is affiliated. All these keep issuing norms and guidelines to the institutions.

Of late all these bodies attempt to infringe on the rights of minority institutions. They want to control us in various ways. And it is difficult to comply with their orders as they are issued at the eleventh hour. Earlier the UGC functioned as a co-ordinating body but of late it is working as a controlling body. UGC used to sanction financial assistance for research and conducting academic programmes, but this has completely stopped.

The Directorate has to approve all our sanctioned posts for government aid. But since they have refused to do this for the past ten years, we are forced to file court cases, hoping that the Court would sanction the post. Ours are autonomous colleges which can function independently from the parent university. That is why they are called autonomous colleges. But for the past few years the parent university has treated our colleges like any constituent college of the university. It expects us to get permission from them for even minor matters. All these consume so much of our energy and time.

What should the Jesuit educator be?:

A Jesuit educator is both an administrator and a formator who carries out his mission with the Ignatian spirit of Magis. He is expected to be a visionary leader, who has clearly thought-out plans in order to take the institution to greater heights and give greater visibility to the college. In my opinion, a system-centric approach than a person-centric administration would fetch better results. In order to be an effective Jesuit educator, he requires total commitment to his mission, a broad universal outlook, a compassionate heart, and aptitude for *cura personalis*. He is expected to treat people with respect and dignity, willingness to consult and look for wise counsel from his fellow officials.

He should be a person who could connect with various stakeholders - students, faculty, alumni, government agencies, local bodies, other educational institutions, the province administration, industries, etc. Familiarity with the latest changes and trends in education at the global and national level would help him respond to the emerging issues and changing situations. Cheerfulness while working, an accommodative nature, availability and approachability would help him interact positively with the faculty and motivate them to dedicate themselves to our common vision.

He should not merely be but seen to be impartial while dealing with teachers and students. He should be someone capable of blending firmness and kindness. As a leader he should be a unifying force in the institution.

What could Jesuit educators do?:

From my own experience I can say that loving accompaniment helps. Without criticizing the students or the faculty, we need to help them identify all their potentials and talents. We must help them understand the need for intellectual training and moral formation. Our patient, continuous engagement and meaningful interactions with students and teachers would certainly help them gain the right perspectives, imbibe values, develop their talents and learn new skills.

Given our social context, it is our duty to encourage them to appreciate cultural diversities and religious pluralism and to celebrate them in a meaningful manner. Some of these could be achieved by organizing regular sessions on these topics. Recognizing their achievements and creativity will yield results. The students should see the sincere efforts taken by the Jesuit educators to empower them by providing them an integral formation. ❖

Earlier education was considered a service done in God's name to the people. But today in the field of education, there are many who see it as a profit-making business.

Fr. M. Arockiasamy Xavier, SJ (MDU) a Professor of History, is the Principal of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu. Earlier he was the Principal of Loyola College, Chennai. He can be contacted at arockxavi66@gmail.com

Workshop on Human Fraternity for World Peace

A workshop on 'Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together' took place on 14 and 15 May 2024 at the Our Lady of Health Shrine Retreat Centre in Velankanni, Tamil Nadu. This event was a collaborative effort between the Gandhian Society Villages Association, Our Lady of Health Shrine, Velankanni, and Islamic Studies Association. It was held in commemoration of the International Day of Living Together in Peace.

Over 40 participants from three different religions, including children who are active members of the Human Fraternity Forums, attended the workshop. The main focus of the event was to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding, and solidarity among all, with a special emphasis on involving children in these efforts. The participants received training on how to embrace and celebrate differences, and work together to create a sustainable world of peace, solidarity, and harmony.



The workshop underscored the importance of living together in peace, highlighting the significance of accepting differences and listening to, recognizing, respecting, and appreciating others. Fr. Cyril SJ (MDU), the program coordinator, emphasized the need to instill these principles in children to ensure a future of peaceful coexistence.

Joseph Victor Edwin, SJ (DEL)

Summer School on Islam in Hyderabad

The Henry Martyn Institute in Hyderabad hosted the Summer School on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in 2024. The programme was held on 29 April to 04 May 2024. It focused on the need for four types of dialogues with Muslims - the dialogue of life, where individuals strive to live in an open and friendly way by sharing their joys and sorrows, their problems and preoccupations, the dialogue of action, where Christians and Muslims collaborate towards common good, the dialogue of religious experience, where people, rooted in their religious tradition, share their spiritual riches, and lastly, the dialogue of theological exchange, where

scholars engage in deep discussions that help to build understanding and foster mutual respect.

The program included comprehensive classroom presentations on a range of Islam-related topics, delivered by both Muslim and Christian scholars on Islam. These presentations were complemented by visits to a local mosque, a madrasa, a shia ashur khana, a Sufi dargah, and the Students Islamic Organisation's office. During these visits, participants had the opportunity to interact with Muslims on different aspects of Muslim life in India.

Joseph Victor Edwin SJ, who coordinated the programme, highlighted that the Summer School aims to equip participants with the skills to recognize themselves as pilgrims of truth and peace. Rev. Dr. Packiam T. Samuel, the director of the Institute, emphasized that Christians and Muslims should come together to listen, get to know and respect each other and collaborate towards the greater good.

Joseph Victor Edwin, SJ (DEL)





Relevance of Ignatius for Today

In the light of DSS, 2023

What is the relevance of Ignatius for the world today? I would like to address this question in the light of the recent Jesuit document *De Statu Societatis Iesu*, 2023 (DSS), because, therein I see Ignatian intuition applied efficiently. The second chapter of DSS makes a significant statement to the effect that ‘state of the Society’ is defined by its response to the enormous challenge posed by the change of historical epoch, and proposes the “ministry of reconciliation” as a decisive means to face this challenge.

Such a perception fits well with the Biblical perspective, which first presents the whole creation as the word of God, an expression of God (Gen. 1; cf. Ps. 19.1; Rom. 1.19) and the human being as the reflection of God (Gen. 1.26) and then in chapter 3 goes on to explain as to how humans alienated themselves from God, (from one another and from creation) in terms of entering into dualistic mode of thinking (eating the fruit of good and evil) and asserting their independence from God (through disobedience).

This view is not specific to the Bible alone. Most ancient religions and spiritual traditions share two common insights – first, that our “normal” state of mind is marred by a fundamental defect, and the second that there is the possibility of a radical transformation of human consciousness. As Eckhart Tolle says, when faced with a radical crisis, when the alienation-mode of being in the world does not work anymore, when survival is threatened by seemingly insurmountable problems, the chances are we will either become extinct or rise above the limitations through an evolutionary leap.

Jesus proposed, precisely, such an evolutionary leap when he talked about “being



Pic courtesy: facebook.com

born again” (Jn. 3.5). Paul elaborates excellently on this “second birth” in Rom. 6.3 - 11, esp. vv.10-11, in terms ceasing to live a self-centred life and growing to live a love-centred life (cf. Jn. 3.30). Paul deals with the same theme in Rom. 5.12-21 by contrasting the First Adam’s mode of being human by alienating himself from God through disobedience in the garden of Eden and Jesus, the Second Adam’s mode of being human by uniting himself with God through obedience in the garden of Gethsemane.

In fact, Jesus’ entire life is one of total surrender to God (Jn. 5.19) even till the moment of his death on the Cross (cf. Lk. 22.42). According to Paul, God Himself presents such a death of Jesus as the best sacrifice of reconciliation (contrasting it with the sacrifice of a lamb in Lev. 17.11 cf. Rom. 3.25). In brief, Jesus’ life is a sacrament, that is, an embodiment of reconciliation, in other words, a way of reclaiming one’s original and authentic identity as the image and likeness of God and living in perfect communion with God, with other humans and with nature. This is the meaning of “reconciled existence.”

Chapter 3 of DSS, therefore, deals with the issue of Jesuit identity. In my opinion, that identity must be situated in the context of common human identity that is beautifully articulated in Gen. 1.26. Chapter 4 deals with the intrinsic relationship between “Being” and “Doing.” The tension is not between being and doing, but between two modes of understanding one’s being – as an “alienated being” or as a “reconciled being.” This has direct bearing on the next pair – the person and the mission – the quality of a person’s commitment to and mode of functioning in mission is very much related to the quality of that person’s being – an “alienated person” or a “reconciled person.” And that ties up with the third pair - a person who has assimilated the charism, and the spirit of the Society and one who is not able to do this because of generational and cultural conditionings.

The very dynamics of the document DSS demand that we reflect on “mission” – the *raison d’être* of the Society of Jesus, the theme of chapter 5, in the light of what has preceded in the first four chapters, especially in terms of collaborating in Christ’s mission of reconciliation that would lead to one Universal Human Family at home in our Common Home. This draws our attention not only to the global and universal scope of our mission but also to the all-inclusive attitude in our approach to mission. Love, the Ground of all reality, is the ultimate source and the driving force of this mission.

**We can deeply hope,
along with the
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Chapter 6 of DSS, on Governance in the Society, begins with the following statement: “The transformations in life-mission of the Society of Jesus that are required by the change of historical epoch bring with them adjustments in the modes and structures of government.” In the light of the major theme of the document, we can state: Those who govern and those who are governed must be “reconciled men” who discern as to what God wants to do through them and

then surrender by putting themselves at the disposal of God.

Finally, we can deeply hope, along with the members of the World Social Forum, that “another world is possible” – a world characterized by “reconciled mode of existence.” And in human history there have been women and men who have intuited that world first deep within them and then have manifested that in their external way of life. Jesus of Nazareth had a vision of that world and showed a pathway to it through his own life and mission. And Ignatius of Loyola had the genius to design a work-book to follow that pathway shown by Jesus, thus become “magical men of the Exercises.” ❖

Manickam Irudayaraj, SJ (GUJ) taught Scripture both at Regional and National Theology centres. At present, since 2021, he is the Assistant Tertian Instructor at Sitagarha, Hazaribagh.



Against All Odds

In the vibrant city of Bangalore, amidst the clash of cultures and the echoes of ancient traditions, lived a couple whose love story was a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. Shoaib Malik, a devout Muslim, and Gayatri Mahajan, a proud Hindu, found the true meaning of love in the diverse corridors of University of Melbourne, Australia. Their love story, born amidst the colours of a festival, grew and flourished, defying the boundaries set by religion and society.

Returning to Bangalore after their studies, they tied the knot, embracing a life where their love bridged the gap between two worlds. However, acceptance came with a heavy price. Both families, though they accepted the union, harbored reservations about the marriage, casting a shadow over Shoaib and Gayatri's happiness. In time, their love bore fruit, and they were blessed with a son, Sahil Mashtan. Right from his childhood Sahil grappled with the harsh realities of prejudice and ignorance stemming from the deep divisions in society.

One year, during the festival of Diwali, Sahil innocently wore a green kurta when they went to meet his grandparents. His grandmother suggested a yellow one to avoid looking 'too Muslim'. This incident served as a stark reminder of the societal pressures he faced, even within his own family.

The first blow came when they were forced to leave their rented apartment due to religious bias, a victim of the narrow-mindedness that plagued their society. Despite numerous attempts, finding a new home proved difficult because of their mixed

religious background. They looked at many apartments, but they were either too expensive or too far away from their workplaces. Eventually, they settled in a Muslim-dominated area, hoping for understanding and acceptance. However, their hope was short-lived.

The local area secretary, Maqsood, learned about Gayatri's presence and imposed restrictive conditions. She was told to adhere to Muslim dress codes, stripping away her

freedom to express herself as she chose. The freedom they sought in their homeland remained elusive, buried under the weight of prejudice. But even in the face of adversity, the family found glimmers of hope. They formed bonds with like-minded friends, Hindus and Muslims whose intentions, though varied, were rooted in understanding and acceptance.

Shoaib, working in a travel agency, harbored dreams of establishing his own business, but financial constraints hindered his ambitions. Gayatri, a dedicated writer, supplemented the family income by working for a newspaper. Their meagre earnings primarily went towards Sahil's school fees and apartment rent, leaving them with little savings.



Pic courtesy: iplimg.com

On Sahil's 14th birthday, he made an unusual request: a bank account. Recognizing his maturity, Shoaib agreed, unknowingly paving the way for Sahil's act of kindness. Sahil, witnessing his parents' struggles, hatched a plan to help them. Unbeknownst to his parents, he created a YouTube channel, appealing for donations to fulfill his father's dream of owning a travel agency. His innocence and selflessness touched the hearts of viewers, and funds started pouring in.

One day tragedy struck when Sahil and Shoaib ventured out to the market. A sinister plot unfolded, orchestrated by none other than the local Muslim secretary, nursing a grudge against Shoaib due to a past altercation about Gayatri's choice of attire. The intended target, Shoaib, escaped the assassin's bullet, but it hit Sahil, snatching away the young boy's life in a cruel twist of fate. Devastated, Shoaib and Gayatri made a heart-wrenching decision: to leave the land that never accepted their love and snatched away their beloved son.

Australia, the place where their love story had begun, beckoned to them. It was a bittersweet homecoming, a return to the country where they had found acceptance and understanding. As they settled in a quiet corner of Melbourne, memories of Sahil continued to guide them. His selflessness, his love, and his dream for a better world lived on in their hearts. They found solace in the knowledge that Sahil's spirit would forever inspire them to fight against prejudice and hatred and to spread love, acceptance, and understanding wherever they went.

One day they stumbled upon Sahil's smartphone, unlocking a secret world of kindness and generosity. Sahil's YouTube channel had amassed a staggering seven crore rupees, a testament to the compassion of strangers who had been moved by his plea

and the courage of her parents. Perplexed, they delved deeper and found Sahil's YouTube video. The revelation left them in awe of their son's selflessness and the kindness of strangers who had rallied behind his cause. In the face of tragedy, Sahil had become a beacon of hope, uniting people across religions and backgrounds.

**“
Their tears
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”**

His dream of helping his father achieve his goals inspired countless individuals. Overwhelmed by their son's love and the outpouring of support, Shoaib and Gayatri decided to honor Sahil's memory. They founded an NGO named 'Sahil' whose aim was to help people discriminated against because of their caste or religion. Through their organization, they hoped to erase the lines of division, fostering understanding and acceptance in a world marred by prejudice.

As they began this new chapter in their lives, Shoaib and Gayatri found solace in the love they had for each other but grieved for their extraordinary son, Sahil. Their tears were bittersweet, a mix of sorrow for their loss and gratitude for the kindness that still existed in the world. And so, the story of Shoaib, Gayatri, and Sahil became a beacon of hope, reminding humanity that even in the face of hatred, love and compassion could prevail, inspiring change and breaking the chains of prejudice and hatred. They dedicated themselves to the mission Sahil had unwittingly begun. Their NGO became a symbol of unity, inspiring others to challenge discrimination and embrace diversity. The story of this family served as a reminder that even in the face of hatred, the goodness of humanity would prevail, and love would eventually conquer hate. ❖

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Do Jesus' disciples interact with women as He did?



Socio-Cultural Historical Context: To understand the status of women in each region of the Society of Jesus, it is crucial to consider the socio-cultural and historical contexts of the civil societies where these women, Jesuits, and collaborators live.

At the first in-person meeting in Rome in October 2022, after 18 months of virtual meetings, the Women's Commission members presented the unique contexts of their respective continents. This experience was eye-opening. I realized that Europe shares some issues with Latin America. Africa is more diverse than I previously thought, and India is more complex than my experiences as a tourist suggested. These presentations highlighted the global nature of the Society of Jesus, with its varied wealth and challenges.

The recurring question: Do Jesuits in different parts of the world mirror the societal attitudes toward women in their regions, or do they adhere to the spirit of Decree 14 of General Congregation 36 (1995), which often challenges local cultures? Decree 14 states, "The prejudice against women, to be sure, assumes different forms in different cultures. (...) Further, in many parts of the world, women already cruelly disadvantaged because of war, poverty, migration, or race, often suffer a double disadvantage precisely because they are women." (N°364). This raises a sociological question: How much are we influenced by our contexts?

Another way to raise this issue this is: Does the understanding of the Gospel vary according to places? How do Jesus' disciples emulate His

interactions with women? (See John 4:1-42, Jesus and the woman at the well).

It would be important to mention that Decree 14, notes in its introduction that this issue “has a universal dimension in that it involves men and women everywhere. To an increasing extent, it cuts across barriers of class and culture” (N°361).

Women Today: Decree 14, formulated around 30 years ago, addressed women’s issues but also stated that, “It would be idle to pretend that all the answers to the issues surrounding a new, more just relationship between women and men have been found or are satisfactory to all. In particular, it may be anticipated that some other questions about the role of women in civil and ecclesial society will undoubtedly mature over time” (N°382).

Today, cultural and birthplace differences significantly impact these issues. In many parts of the world, women still face unjust treatment and exploitation. Jesuits and collaborators must support these women and strive to fulfil Decree 14’s directives.

In other regions, strides have been made towards gender equality, including equal pay and dignity. The European Union, for instance, has been working on this since 1957. Does this mean societies and Jesuits in these areas can feel satisfied, believing women have won all their rights? I don’t think so. At the World Youth Day Welcoming Ceremony in Portugal on 3 August 2023, Pope Francis emphasized inclusivity, stating: “Everyone, everyone, everyone! In the Church, there is room for everyone.” Young people echoed his words, signifying a call for an inclusive Church.

Moving Forward: We aspire to be a Church that welcomes everyone, respecting diverse genders, sexualities, marital statuses, affectivities, and lifestyles, as well as marginalized and excluded individuals. We recognize cultural and social differences worldwide and aim to be a safe space for all to explore their faith. We encourage communities to foster dialogue and hope.

Is it possible for civil societies and the Society of Jesus to realize this vision? Can Jesuits reinterpret Decree 14 to encompass all marginalized individuals? During the Commission’s October 2022 meeting in Rome, we discussed the matter with Father General, suggesting Decree 14 be



expanded to include everyone. His affirmative response was encouraging: “Of course, you have to do this.” This response was heartening because each Conference must address its unique challenges.

Jesuits in regions where women’s rights need reinforcement should start with the original Decree 14. In places where women’s rights have progressed, they should extend the decree to include every marginalized individual in order to become a community of generous hospitality, where there is no room for discrimination, and where joy abounds. “I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved, said Baba Sahab Ambedkar, father of the Indian Constitution. ❖

Cecilia Vanneste now serves as the coordinator of the Ignatian Apostolic Network (IgnAN) in the European Low Countries (North Belgium and the Netherlands). She is a member of the Apostolic Staff of the Regional Superior of ELC and represents the Jesuit Conference of European Provincials (JCEP) in the Commission on the Role and Responsibilities of Women in the Society of Jesus.



Her mission of love

Film: Mother Teresa (2003)

Director: Fabrizio Costa

Run time: 177 minutes

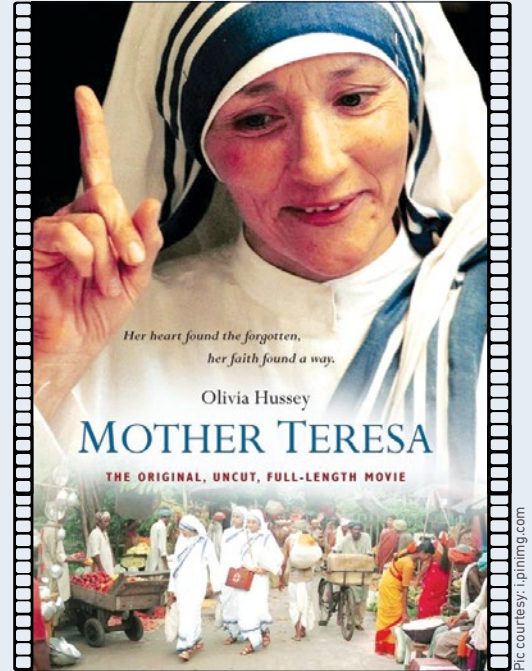
The life of St Mother Teresa of Kolkata is widely known around the world. This movie gives us a closer look into the Nobel laureate saint of our time from the time she left the secure life as a school teacher in the Loretto convent, Kolkata in 1946 while India was getting ready for freedom and Kolkata was a hot bed of politics allied to it.

She had applied for founding her Missionaries of Charity and the Vatican had sent Father Serrano to India to consider the case. Her story is an epic one of trials and obstacles overcome by a life of prayer and compassion. Teresa, while attending to a destitute dying in the street, hears his last words: "I thirst." The words resonate in her mind while praying before a crucifix which carries the same words of Jesus. Initially her superiors are skeptical of her ambition to serve the poor but soon concede to her wish.

This is the beginning of her life's new path where she is up against all sorts of odds where the public, including politicians, and business men, the media and bureaucracy are initially indifferent or skeptical. They are all won over by the small nun's winning ways, and her mischievous humour.

Some of the episodes recall her childhood which helps us understand what made her Mother Teresa. The love that she experienced in her family was the starting point of her formation which eventually led her to the Loretto convent as teacher and then responding to God's call to serve in Kolkata among the destitute dying in the streets or abandoned children. The film is also honest about the troubles she had to face in building her City of Hope. She had to face false allegations surrounding money, accusations of forced conversion, child trafficking etc.

In one scene a television channel from the U. S. comes to investigate the allegations about her accepting huge amounts of money from a shady millionaire. She faces the media crew and asks them if they want to see where the money is and opens the door to a dining hall where a large number of orphan children are having a meal and says: "This is it, take it." This ends the investigation. The core of the movie is not what Mother



Teresa did for the poor. It is that in whatever she did and said her unique abiding faith in the Lord shines through. This helped her come through every obstacle and criticism and stay focused on her mission of love which the modern world applauded.

Included in the film is her 1979 Nobel Prize acceptance speech at Oslo, which highlights some of her well-known statements. In her speech she repeats the famous Peace Prayer of St Francis of Assisi: "It is in forgiving that we are forgiven. And it is in dying that we are born into eternal life." ❖

Prof. Gigy Joseph Koottummel, former Head of the Department of English, SB College, Changanacherry is a sought-after writer, translator, columnist and actor-director of Shakespeare productions.

Roots and Wings 2024 in Shembag

We were 21 Jesuits from 12 provinces and diverse ministries and 1 Salesian Sister, attending the 'Roots and Wings 2024'. In the cool, verdant, Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, Tamil Nadu, we were privileged to revisit the life of St. Ignatius through several Jesuit resources. Every re-reading of the Jesuit resources was a new revelation and a rich learning experience to all of us.

We began the programme on 03 April 2024 and it ended on 04 May 2024. Every day we had the Eucharistic celebration, input sessions, time for personal reading and reflection and sharing in groups. The participants enthusiastically shared their aspirations for the program. Fr. William Sequeira, SJ (KAR), preparing us for the profound journey ahead, explained the essential dispositions. He also led us into the Autobiography of St Ignatius of Loyola.

Fr. M.I. Raj, SJ (GUJ), grounded us in Scripture and Spirituality, expounding on the Spiritual Exercises and the foundational spirit of the Jesuit Constitutions. The Spiritual Diary and Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola were introduced by Fr Antony Inigo, SJ (MDU).

Although we could deal with only a few of the letters, we could understand the importance St. Ignatius gave to *cura apostolica* and *cura personalis*. The letters reveal how St. Ignatius was a discerning person and how he guided every one out of love for the greater glory of God.

Fr Sunny Kunnappallil, SJ (KER) guided us in a 8-day physio-psycho-spiritual Ignatian retreat, which ignited within us a fervent love for God and a profound self-awareness. It helped us confront personal barriers and embrace a deeper spiritual life. The retreat set our hearts ablaze with the fire of the love of God.

This year we had a special pilgrimage to the minor basilica of the Jesuit martyr, St. John de Britto, in Oriyur and visited the tomb and the memorial museum of Fr. Louie Levelil, SJ, the Servant of God, at Surugani, in diocese of Sivagangai, Tamil Nadu. We were spiritually



energized with the missionary zeal and undaunting courage of these two great Jesuit missionaries.

We were happy to visit some important places in the town of Kodaikanal, a popular hill resort where tourists from several States come during the summer. We visited Bodhi Zendo, the Jesuit-run Zen Centre, in Perumal Malai and the nearby St. Joseph's Estate.

We are grateful that the Roots and Wings programme made us re-discover the spirit of St. Ignatius and his mission. It helped us perceive how God is working in us every day and what God wants of us at this moment in this rapidly changing world. We departed feeling enriched, grounded once more in our Jesuit heritage, and emboldened to live out our calling with renewed vigour.

We thank the JCSA's Secretariat for Faith for organizing this on-going formation programme. We feel profoundly grateful to Fr Devadhas Muthaiah, SJ, (CEN), the organizer of Roots and Wings 2024, for his meticulous planning. He made all the arrangements with the gracious help of Fr Patrick, SJ, superior and the Jesuit community of S.H. College, Shembaganur. ❖

Anto Arputha Raja, SJ (CEN)

Augustine Paruthipallil, SJ (KER)

Fr Augustine Paruthipallil went for his eternal reward on the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation, 24 March, 2024. He led a "life of faith that does justice" by pitching his tent among the poor, especially the vulnerable and excluded groups of people in Kerala.

Fr Augustine was born on 08 January 1943 in Thalavady, Alleppey district. He joined the Society on 06 July 1968, after his graduation at Rural Institute-Gandhigram, Dindigul (1962-1966). After his formation, he was ordained to priesthood on 05 May 1979 and made his Final Commitment on 22 April 1988. The dire needs of the fishing people and the Dalits moved him. His services started with assisting in Loyola Social Work Projects, Poovar (1979), Fides Centre,

Poonthura (1980-1985). He took part in Fisheries struggle in Quilon (June 1984). He was the Director of Loyola Social Work Projects, Poovar (1987-1992), Asst. Director in SRC, Kozhikode (1992), Director, SRC and Beach Blossoms (1992-2000). He was able to inspire others to opt for the poor while leading an exemplary life as a social activist.

He also served for around 18 years in the pastoral field in different parishes belonging to Kannur, Kozhikode, Trivandrum and Punalur dioceses. Acknowledging his own shadows, he went on to lead a life of sadhana. What is striking is the compassionate way he dealt with others' shadows and weaknesses.

| Benny Chiramel, SJ



Boniface Tigga, SJ (MAP)

Fr. Boniface spent 23 significant years in Umaria, with 11 of them dedicated to St. Xavier's Hr. Sec. School in Ambikapur. His commitment to education led him to become well-versed in educational practices, consulting numerous manuals to address school challenges effectively. He emerged as a key figure in educational matters and other Catholic schools sought his guidance.

As Principal, he meticulously selected and trained new teachers, leaving a lasting impact on them. Many who are now pillars of St. Xavier's express profound gratitude for his guidance. He had a unique approach to subsidiarity, empowering his colleagues to take charge joyfully, rather than micromanaging tasks himself. Described as soft-spoken, kind-hearted, and sympathetic, Fr. Boniface was loved by those who knew him. Despite facing physical challenges

following a severe fall eight years ago, he remained patient and resilient, relying on a wheelchair for mobility. His health declined in March, culminating in a fatal stroke on 07 April 2024.

At his funeral Bishop Emeritus Patras Minj D.D. emphasized the victory of life in the risen Lord. On behalf of Fr. Ranjit Tigga, Provincial, Fr. Henry Lakra, Socius, honoured his memory, with inaugurating the newly-constructed cemetery at Khrist Milan Ashram, Namna.

Fr. Boniface Tigga's legacy is one of dedication to education, kindness, and resilience in the face of adversity. May his soul find peace in the embrace of the risen Lord!

| Ignatius Bara, SJ



Hilario Fernandes, SJ (KAR)

Fr Hilario Fernandes, aged 93, with 72 fruitful years as a Jesuit, was a man of wisdom, and widely-acclaimed retreat director and spiritual guide. His talks and conferences were much appreciated for their depth, scholarship, and inspiration. He was a man of the heart because of which he touched the hearts and lives of so many. He was a formator in the province and in Singapore. He was a perfect gentleman: gentle, decent, peaceful, and loath to hurt anyone, not even the most difficult people.

His love for the Society, his knowledge and appreciation of Ignatian Spirituality, his wide general knowledge and his rich repertoire of humorous anecdotes made him a much sought after and well-appreciated Jesuit. His love of books, his artistic temperament and his love for literature, both secular

and spiritual, had been important factors in making him a well-integrated Jesuit.

Born on 14 January 1931 in a Goan immigrant family in Tanzania, Hilario had his entire education right up to graduation in St Joseph's, Bangalore from where he joined the Society, had his initial formation in Calicut and philosophy and theology in Pune, and did a Masters in Counselling in USA. He taught at St Joseph's Boys High School, and was appointed the Acting Rector for a year to resolve a minor crisis in the community, did a year's Sadhana course in Pune, and was appointed Novice Master at Mount St Joseph.

So, as we bade him goodbye on 12 May 2024, we all knew and felt that we were saying farewell to a fine human being, an exemplary Jesuit and a holy priest.

| Freddie D'Silva, SJ





Isaac Xalxo, SJ (RAN)

Fr Isaac Xalxo, SJ was born on 25 July 1957, in Kamti, Mandar parish in Ranchi District. Joining the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1981, he pronounced his First Vows on 21 June 1983. He was ordained on 20 March 1996. His ministries were largely centred on education and administration. As a Vice Principal in St. Stanislaus' High School, Lohardaga and St. Mary's High School, Samtoli, Simdega and as Principal in Janta High School, Noadih and Loyola High School, Khunti, he served as a successful teacher and an administrator. He was the Superior of St. Michael's Jesuit Residence, Khunti and also the Province Consultor.

Fr Isaac was admitted in Constant Lievens Hospital and Research Centre, Mandar on 15 January 2024 for

treatment of severe jaundice. It was diagnosed that he had pancreatic cancer which had spread to his liver and other internal organs. He peacefully passed away on 3 May 2025. The funeral Mass service was on the following day at St. Xavier's College Auditorium, Ranchi. Officiated by Fr Provincial, Ajit Xess, it included a heartfelt homily by Fr Sushil Tirkey, who emphasized Fr Isaac's life of commitment, joy and simplicity. His life was marked by deep trust in the Lord, and commitment to the Gospel values.

| Raymond Kerketta, SJ



John Baptist de Rossi Rego, SJ (KAR)

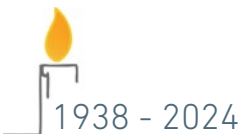
Fr John Baptist de Rossi Rego, 86/65, left us on 03 June 2024 in Fatima Retreat House, Managaluru. A beacon of compassion and wisdom, he dedicated his life to serving others especially the poor. In his tireless pursuit of excellence, he touched countless lives through his ministry of counseling, spiritual direction and retreats. He was a God-sent right hand to the Provincials.

The Province cannot thank him enough for the tireless work he did as Mission Procurator for 14 years. He left an indelible mark on our missions by his advocacy for the marginalized and the excluded. The relationships he established and maintained with benefactors through correspondence and personal visits, the meticulous and responsible way he dealt with finances, and the personal interest he took in the

Missions were clear proofs of his commitment to the task assigned to him. Convinced that the funds we got were the patrimony of the poor, he was very particular that they really serve the needs of the poor.

A multifaceted personality, he could sing a variety of songs with ease in multiple languages. He used to be a source of real joy during the celebrations and common gatherings. He had a passion for psychology and spirituality. Hence, he equipped himself with studies at Massachusetts, USA and acquired plenty of books. Without looking for limelight or popularity, he would do quiet and hidden work, in the true Gospel spirit. May the Father who sees what is done in secret, bless you, dear Fr. Rossi, with peace and the heavenly treasure you richly deserve!

| Freddie D'Silva, SJ



Ladislaus Chinnadurai, SJ (MDU)

Fr. Chinnadurai, having lived for a 100 years, breathed his last on 10 April 2024. He was born in Tiruchirappalli on 13 June 1923. His father and his maternal grandfather, Mr. Mahadeva Iyer, were Brahmin converts. Of his seven siblings, Fr. Lawrence Sundaram became a Jesuit; four sisters joined different religious congregations.

After completing his MA in Physics as a gold medallist at St. Joseph's College, Tiruchi, in 1945, he continued teaching there and, after settling family matters, he joined the Society of Jesus in 1962 at the age of 39. He was at St. Paul's, Trichy as Professor of Philosophy and Spiritual Director from 1971 to 1985. Then he went to the South Indian Common Juniorate, Beschi, Dindigul and served there till the Juniorate moved to Thiruvananthapuram in 1993 and he, too, went with it and continued to offer his services till 2000. He returned to Beschi, Dindigul, in 2000 and was teaching the novices till 2015.

In 2015, just 10 days before his own death, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, President of India, who was Fr. Chinnadurai's student at St. Joseph's College, paid his last visit to him at Beschi Illam. Recalling his days

at St. Paul's, Bishop J. Susaimanickam, says, "I came to realize that he was a man of minimum needs and of deep spirituality. Two things stand out about his personality in my mind. Firstly, his simple, humble, and deeply spiritual profile. Though he was a voracious reader and highly knowledgeable in science, English language, and other matters, he was never known to seek fame, status and recognition. Secondly, his enormous contribution to the Church in the formation of the future priests is commendable. He shaped the thinking pattern and life of many seminarians at St. Paul's Seminary and Jesuit scholastics in their early stages of formation.

On 11 April 2024, Archbishop Antony Pappusamy of Madurai, came to pay homage to Fr. Chinnadurai's mortal remains in the morning. There were three prelates at his Funeral Mass. After the Mass, Fr. Thomas Amirtham, Provincial, led the prayers, as Fr. Chinnadurai's body was laid to rest in Beschi cemetery.

| Devadoss Mudiappasamy, SJ





The Sound of One Hand

Once upon a time, in the Kennin temple was Zen Master Mokurai. He had a young protégé named Toyo, who, when he saw the older disciples visit the master's room, morning and evening, to receive instruction or personal guidance in which they were given certain riddles to stop mind-wandering, decided that he too wished to join in.

But the wise old Mokurai said, "Wait a while. You are too young."

But Toyo insisted, so Mokurai finally consented.

In the evening little Toyo went to Mokurai's interview room. Striking the gong, he bowed respectfully three times outside, and then entered and sat in silence.

"You can hear the sound of two hands clapping," said Mokurai. "Now show me the sound of one hand."

Toyo bowed, went to his room, considering this problem. From his window he heard the music of geisha ladies. "Ah, I have it!" he proclaimed.

When Mokurai asked him to illustrate the sound of one hand, Toyo commenced playing geisha music.

"No, no," said Mokurai. "That will never do. That is not the sound of one hand. You've not got it at all."

So, Toyo moved his abode to a quiet place, meditating again. 'What is the sound of one hand?' He happened to hear some water dripping. "I have it," imagined Toyo.

When next appearing before Mokurai, he imitated dripping water. "What is that?" asked Mokurai. "That is the sound of dripping water, but not the sound of one hand. Try again."

In vain Toyo meditated to hear the sound of one hand. He heard the sighing of the wind. That sound was rejected. He heard the cry of an owl. Refused! The sound of one hand wasn't the locusts. Ten times Toyo visited Mokurai with different sounds. All were wrong. For almost a year he pondered what the sound of one hand might be.

At last Toyo entered true meditation and transcended all sounds. "I could collect no more," he explained later, "so I reached the soundless sound."

Toyo had realized the sound of one hand.

This classic 'riddle,' "the sound of one hand," is meant to transcend rational thinking and lead to a direct



experience of reality. To present or manifest it, one might engage in contemplation, encouraging individuals to explore the concept beyond logical reasoning. Allowing space for personal insights and interpretations, one is encouraged to ponder the nature of sound, duality, and the limitations of conventional thought. A meditative atmosphere goes beyond the intellectual to embrace the experiential aspects of the riddle.

This riddle is metaphoric; while pointing to soundless sound; it denotes non-duality of self and the world; the self is the world, the world the self. The Buddha, at birth, took seven steps, raised his right hand and uttered, "Above the heavens and below the earth I alone am the Holy One," thus pointing to the self as holy, meaning no other human or non-human can absorb or comprehend the self, and also that the self enfolds all the worlds.

The riddle points to an unconditional self-affirmation. It says, 'You are holy and blessed.' Self acceptance is required for living a genuine spiritual life. This is true knowledge that wells up from our silent depths: I see myself, as I am, affirmed and desirable in my uniqueness and individuality. And when the Master guarantees my individuality and uniqueness, all I can say is, "Thank you Master!" ❖

Ama Samy, SJ (MDU) is the Founder-Director of Bodhi Zendo, the Zen Meditation Centre in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu. He founded the Bodhi Sangha, the international community of his disciples in 1986. He can be contacted at amasamy@googlemail.com.



"Why are you selling this encyclopedia set, Father?"

"Well, we have a Jesuit, who just joined our community. He is a Ph.D. He knows everything. He is even better than Google!"



"Well, this was just a one-day picnic that we had, as part of our UAP, 'Accompanying the Youth.' Next I am going to ask the Provincial about taking you all for a tour of Europe or USA!"



"I usually check my weight on Ash Wednesday and then on Easter Sunday to see the effect of my fasting... I can't understand why there is hardly any difference!"



"Why do you need a dog?"

"He is more loving, loyal and obedient than any of my community members."

Melwyn Pinto, SJ (KAR)

JESUIT HUMOUR

How are you?



Mangalore was a part of the Calicut Mission before it became a vice-province and eventually, a province. Jesuits of the Venice-Milan Province opting to work in the missions were sent, as a rule, to Christ Hall to become acquainted with the local climate, language and culture. Among the aspiring missionaries was Brother De Signa who arrived in Calicut (in the 1940s or thereabouts) with zero knowledge of English. On the very first day after the Brother's arrival, the Rector of the house appointed a tutor to teach Brother to say Good Morning, Good Evening, How are you; and also to name a few things like a knife, spoon, fork, bread, rice, milk, cow, chapel, etc.

Late Bro. Thomas Madtha - those who knew him will remember him as an incurable conversationalist, not to say a chatterbox - was at that time in charge of the farm and the cattle shed at Christ Hall. In the absence of any human company in the cattle shed, he talked aloud to the cows, and replied even louder, to the queries he fancied the animals made. It was in the cattle shed that Bro. De Signa found Bro. Madtha on the following morning. Eager to practice his skills in spoken English, he said to him in his Italian accent, "Bro. Madtha, how are you?" Brother Madtha, temporarily suspending his exhortation to the cows, responded with, "I am well, Brother. Thank you." Elated with his incipient success in speaking in English, Bro. De Signa said, "And your cows how-are-you, Brother?"



Only in the light of Manresa

At Manresa Ignatius gave himself up to a severe regimen – long hours of prayer, fasting, self-flagellation, and other austerities that were extreme even for the sixteenth century. However, this program sent him into such a deep spiritual and psychological crisis that at one point he was tempted to suicide.

By attending once again to his inner inspiration, he began to find guidance. He greatly tempered his austerities and found that as a result his serenity of mind returned and he was more capable of helping others who came to him to “speak about the things of God,” as he put it. He had reached a critical moment in his spiritual life that later had profound repercussions on the spirituality of the Society. He turned away from the model of sanctity that prevailed up to that time, which assumed that the more severely the body was punished, the better the soul would flourish. It assumed that the greater the withdrawal from “the world,” the holier one would be.

Only in the light of this change at Manresa can we understand why Ignatius, as he returned from his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, decided to enter a university “the better to help souls.” Only in the light of Manresa can we understand why, unlike all religious orders up to that time, the *Constitutions* professedly abstained from prescribing penances or austerities for the Jesuits and, indeed, went on to insist that “a proper care to preserve one’s health and strength of body for God’s service is praiseworthy and should be exercised by all” (#292).

Only in the light of this change at Manresa can we understand how in the *Constitutions*, Ignatius could prescribe that, along with prayer and other spiritual means, Jesuits make use in their ministries of natural means: “Therefore the human or acquired means ought to be sought, with diligence, especially well-grounded and solid learning... and the art of dealing and conversing with others” (#814). Not monastic silence was the ideal but cultivation of the art of conversation. A significant



Pic courtesy: jesuitinstitute.org

moment had been reached in the history of Catholic piety.

With his serenity returned, Ignatius began to receive great consolations of souls and internal enlightenment, which sometimes took the form of visions. In all this he became convinced God was gently teaching him and leading him along the right path. He made notes about what was transpiring in his own soul and what he observed taking place in others who came to speak with him. These notes contained some of the essential elements from which the Spiritual Exercises eventually emerged. The book was, thus, not a product of theory but of lived experience. Although

Ignatius continued to revise the notes over the next twenty years, he had much of it fundamentally in hand when he left Manresa to complete his pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The result was a book unlike any other up to that time, a manual of “exercises” and reflections to help individuals get in touch with themselves and with the action of God within them...The Exercises are not, then, a book to be read but to be used so as gently to lead an individual along a spiritual path consonant with the person’s gifts and personality.

Ignatius wrote the book while still a layman, and he intended it for anybody intent on a deeper spiritual life. Yet the book came to play a determining role in the ethos of the Jesuits themselves. In the *Constitutions* Ignatius prescribed that every novice entering the Society spend a full month making the Exercises (#65)...

The Spiritual Exercises also delivered onto the hands of the Jesuits a new ministry, which came to be called the ‘retreat.’

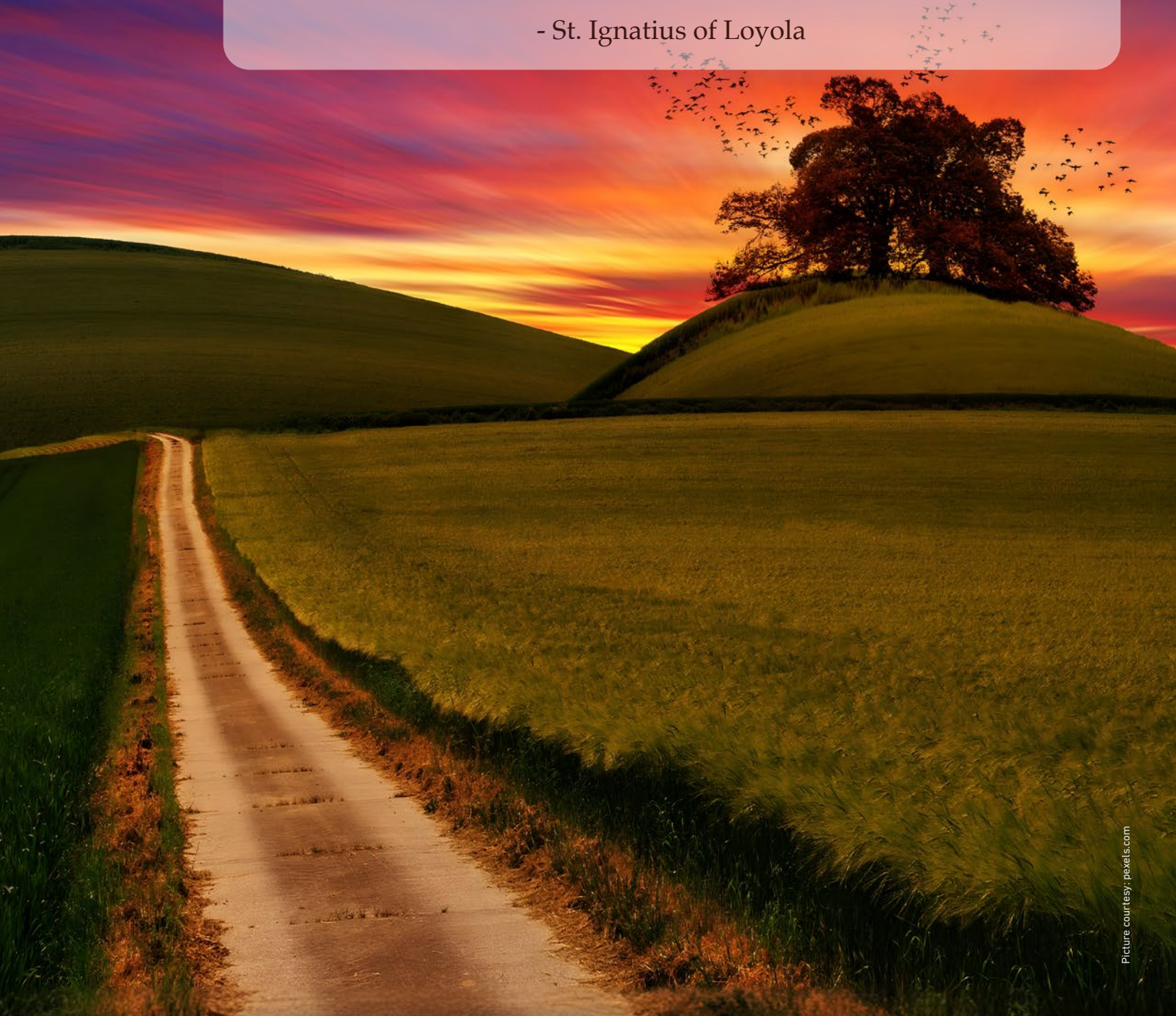
- Excerpts from his book:
The Jesuits – A History from Ignatius to the Present

John William O'Malley, SJ was an American academic, Catholic historian, and Jesuit priest. He was a Professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Georgetown University.

WELL SAID

**“All the things in this world are gifts of God,
created for us, to be the means by which we can
come to know him better, love him more surely, and
serve him more faithfully.”**

- St. Ignatius of Loyola



Picture courtesy: pexels.com