

March, 2024

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA



Where has all the Jesuit humour gone?



Jesuits and St. Joseph
Jivan Awards



Any Woman

I am the fire upon the hearth,
I am the light of the good sun,
I am the heat that warms the earth,
Which else, were colder than a stone.

At me the children warm their hands;
I am their light of love alive.
Without me cold the hearthstone stands,
Nor could the precious children thrive.

I am the twist that holds together
The children in its sacred ring,
Their knot of love, from whose close tether
No lost child goes a-wandering.

I am their wall against all danger,
Their door against the wind and snow,
Thou Whom a woman laid in a manger,
Take me not till the children grow!

— from 'Every Day is a Fresh Beginning: Meaningful Poems for Life,' compiled
by Aoibhín Garrihy, 2022, Eriu, London

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Companion on the journey

It has been decades since *Jivan* has been a part of my life, first as a reader (thanks to Fred Sopena who recycled his copies!), then as a contributor, and finally as a member of the Editorial Board. I have been enriched by those behind the pages who give it life, and those within its pages who inspire life.

Earlier this year for instance, I shared the evocative poem, 'Out to Dance' by Christine Evangelou (*Jivan*, December), with 'Sisters in Solidarity', a group of us that is accompanying a woman religious survivor of clergy sexual abuse. One of the women in the group was inspired by the poem to create an online liturgy to help the sister glimpse the possibility of Hope springing out of nowhere to dance in the midst of her pain and despair at the betrayal by her own.

A few days ago the February issue of *Jivan* arrived as I was setting out on a retreat, and I carried it along. It proved to be an apt companion on the journey. Learoy Rodrigues's reflection on falling in love with God turned out to be a fitting prelude to my own discoveries in contemplation that affirmed Sopena's "listen to their (people's) beating hearts." Tielhard de Chardin followed me from the pages of *Jivan* in McGinnes's reminder that harnessing the energies of love will set the world on fire, to a homily during my retreat reminding me that all Creation pulsates with the Breath of God. And Jose Parappully's prescription for health and happiness – meaningful relationships through reconciliation, and gratitude born of a sense of awe and wonder at life in all its simplicity – were a practical guide for going back to the marketplace.



The finale however, was that word, so pregnant with meaning: 'God-seeker'. As Women's Day approaches I hope Jesuit readers will answer sincerely the question Jenene Francis has asked: Did your heart leap for joy when you first heard about the Women's Commission? Or did the doors of your heart start to swing closed with anxiety or fear?

|| Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, | Mumbai

My Christmas joy was doubled

My Christmas joy was doubled and I felt overwhelmed when I saw the picture on the last page of the Nov-Des'23 issue of *Jivan*. The image portrays a mother who is sitting down at the roadside platform and selling Christmas caps. She is trying to crown her baby who is on her lap with a Christmas cap. Despite her pathetic and miserable life situation, she is able to rejoice and share her love with her baby. The gleaming face of a mother and the innocent look of her baby opened my eyes to see the real Christmas celebrations amidst them. I wished to be a part of their celebrations and so I cut the picture and pasted it in front of my study desk. I feel a deep consolation whenever I look at it. I am deeply touched by the image and it inspires me to reflect on my vision and mission.

I profoundly thank *Jivan* for doubling my Christmas joy and plunging me into a deep reflection just through a picture - besides its articles, views and news.

|| B. Madan Babu (AND) | Calcutta

JIVAN
NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA

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(signed)
PARMAR FRANCIS



WHAT DO YOU SAY?

STANY D'SOUZA, SJ
President, JCSA

Do you have your own tower?

As I was returning from my visit to Sri Lanka province recently, I hit upon a book, *Deep Work* by Cal Newport. Attracted by the title, I picked it up from my co-passenger to have a glance. But when I returned the book to him an hour had already rolled by.

In the introduction, Cal Newport makes a mention of Carl Jung's 'Tower'. After returning from a trip to India, where he observed the practice of adding meditation rooms to homes, he installed a private office, a basic two-storey stone house, which he called the 'Tower', where he would retire. It was a place of solitude and silence, where, as he would say: "...no one else is allowed in there except with my permission."

By the way, tower was not a place for Jung to escape from his professional work. It was a place of repose and renewal, energy and enthusiasm, insights and illumination. It was one of the places where he got ideas to critique his one-time friend and mentor, Sigmund Freud, and come out with a stream of enlightening articles and books, which eventually made him one of the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century. He delved deeply into the unconscious and came up with some of the best illuminating ways to understand and address it.

Not only Carl Jung, but every person who has made a difference in the world has had a tower of his own. In fact, Fr Arrupe had his own private chapel which he called his Cathedral, which inspired him leave a mark on the Society, the Church and the world at large.

We are in the world of social media. Positively we are well connected with the world and well fed with answers at the stroke of a computer key. However, being kept busy with messages we are gradually led to irreversible shallowness. Chipped away from our capacity for composure, concentration, and contemplation, we are robbed of intense reading, deep thinking, and of course, impactful working.

Curiously, the best advice in recent times came from Jannik Sinner, an Italian tennis player who won the Australian open 2024. He warned the youth about the social media. He said: "I personally live better without the social media and I will continue to do so. I don't like social media..."

Of course, the way forward is certainly not to shy away from social media. While making the best use of it to advance our ministries, we need to erect a tower and find some time to visit it so that refreshed, recharged and renewed by it, we could contribute something significant to the Church and the world. It is our vocation, isn't it? What do you say?



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

M.A. JOE ANTONY, SJ
Editor

Learning to laugh

What do you think a young man will do, when he sees a young woman sitting in front of him in the train compartment? But what does he actually see? He sees her meticulously painted nails, her stylish handbag and her high-heeled shoes. He is not able to see her face, as she is engrossed in reading a newspaper that hides her face completely.

Unable to see her face, he looks at the news and photographs on the page of the newspaper that is turned towards him. He ponders the news he is able to read – the news about Manipur, Gaza, Pakistan. But what he eagerly waits for is the moment when she will lower the newspaper she is avidly reading, so he will be able to see her face, and maybe, start a conversation. But she keeps on reading.

To know what happens at the end please read Sch Agil Roy's short story (*on p.17, 18*) that has bagged the first prize of Rs. 4,000. Go to p. 12 to know the other winners and those who wrote the two stories, which didn't win a prize but were still found meritorious.

There were 22 aspiring writers who sent in their short stories. Twenty one of them were either Scholastics or young priests. One happens to be a high school student, who is in Class 12 in a Jesuit high school.

Some tell me that the number of contestants will go up if the money for the first prize is increased to Rs.10,000. But that is something for the Mascarenhas brothers to think about. It is their thoughtful gesture that keeps this contest going.

In this issue, dated March 2024, you will see mostly articles or poems that have to do with women, St. Joseph and Jesus. The reason must be obvious. On 8 March the world celebrates the International Day of Women. The 'Starlight' article on p.31 talks about it. The 'Listen to Her!' article on p. 19, 20, written by Maria Elissa J. Lao, describes the journey of the Women's Commission appointed by Fr General.

On 19 March we celebrate the feast of St. Joseph. The article by the indefatigable Fr. Hedwig Lewis talks about the special bond we Jesuits have with the great saint.

The last week of this month is the Holy Week and Good Friday falls on 29 March. Good Friday? Good for whom? Read Amy Bengtson's poem on p. 26. An article, written by the tireless Fr Fio Mascarenhas, talks about the preview and after effects of what we celebrate on Easter Sunday (*See p. 13, 14*). Read the cover story (*See p. 9 - 11*) and learn to laugh a lot! So happy reading! And a Happy Easter!

Magis 2024 award to Fr Felix Raj



Fr John Felix Raj, SJ, Vice-Chancellor of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK) was honoured with the JHEASA Magis 2024 award on 27 January 2024 at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata at the National Jesuit Higher Education conference.

Fr. Raj received this award for his remarkable contributions to higher education and development of society in West Bengal. Fr. Stanislaus D'Souza, President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia, presented the Magis medal to Fr. Felix Raj while Fr. Joseph Christie, Secretary, Jesuit Higher Education from the Jesuit Curia, Rome handed over the plaque. Fr. Joe Arun, Secretary, JHEASA, presented the citation and Fr. Dominic Savio honoured him with a special shawl.

While receiving the award, Fr. Raj said, "An award is the reflection of people's appreciation and recognition of what one has achieved in the past, and an invitation to continue the work further for growth in future. And I still have miles to go."

The award was established this year and Fr. Felix Raj is the first recipient. The award coincides with his completion of 50 years as a Jesuit.

- Dr. Somak Sen

West Zone's seminar draws 40 participants



The West Zone's Service of Faith Commission, led by Fr James Vaz, SJ (GUJ), Fr Joe Monteiro, SJ (GOA), Fr Joe Gaikwad, SJ (PUNE), and Fr Wesley D'Costa, SJ (BOM), organized a 3-day seminar at Xavier Retreat House, Baga, Goa, from 15-17 January 2024.

Forty participants from Gujarat, Goa, Pune, and Bombay attended the training program tailored for those engaged in pastoral ministry. Fr Vincent Saldanha, SJ served as the main resource person, with additional sessions led by Fr Wesley D'Costa, SJ. The theme, 'Ignatian Leadership, Evangelisation, and Synodality', guided the seminar's focus.

Fr Roland Coelho, SJ, the Provincial of Goa, presided over the Eucharist. The seminar included input sessions, time for personal prayer time, and group spiritual conversations. Participants found the overall experience delightful and enriching, emphasizing its positive impact on both learning and fellowship. The seminar not only enhanced skills but also strengthened the sense of community among the diverse group. It seemed to have achieved the West Zone Faith Commission's goal of providing valuable training for those involved in pastoral ministry.

- Wesley D'Costa, SJ (BOM)

HES sows seeds of peace in Jamshedpur

Human Ecology Society (HES), Jamshedpur established by Fr. Joseph Kalathil, SJ organized an Interfaith gathering



and prayer on 30 January 2024 on the martyrdom day of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. The 'Human Ecology Society' had already initiated a series of 'sowing of peace' sessions by which students of different communities made

friends and strengthened their intercultural understanding and mutual relationship through cross-cultural communication and meetings.

HES makes efforts to bring together like-minded people who actively promote peace. Drawing inspiration from Pope Benedict's idea on human ecology, which refers to the profound connection between natural equilibrium and human equilibrium, said Fr Joseph Kalathil, SJ. If humans truly desire peace, they must be conscious of the links between humans, their communities, institutions, and civilizations and issues concerning ecological, environmental, and sustainability-related issues. Respect for nature is integral to living on the planet as a human person. "HES is committed to building bridges between people from diverse backgrounds, and I'm happy to be part of such initiatives that seek fellowship among people", said Samuel Cyril, one of the collaborators of Fr. Kalathil, SJ.

- Joseph Victor Edwin, SJ (DEL)



Jesuits and St Joseph

The close bonding between the Society of Jesus and St Joseph is deep-rooted. In the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola there are six explicit references (SE 111, 114, 264, 265, 269, 270) to St Joseph. Interestingly, the first assignment by Pope Paul III to St Ignatius and his companions was given on 19 March 1539, Feast of St Joseph.

In the 1600s, the French Jesuits working with the aborigines in North America had their chapel and an island-mission under the patronage of St Joseph. Eventually, St Joseph became the Principal Patron of Canada. Similarly, the Jesuit missionary-martyrs of Paraguay in the 17th century spread devotion to St Joseph among the natives. Jesuits also fostered this devotion in the New World. On 16 August 1678, Pope Innocent XI declared St Joseph the Patron of the Missions in China. In 1733, Fr General Franz Retz ordained that all Jesuit houses should say a special prayer to St Joseph – as “special Patron of the Society of Jesus”. In the 18th century, St Joseph was honoured as the Patron Saint of the Society of Jesus, in various Provinces. In the 19th century, it became customary for every Jesuit community to place an image of the saint near the entrance of its residence, to invoke his protection, to foster vocations, and to implore the grace of perseverance unto death in the Jesuit vocation.

In 1816, Pope Pius VII, at the request of the Society, extended the Office and Mass of the Patronage of St Joseph. GC 25, in 1906, mandated that the Society of Jesus be consecrated to “the Patriarch St Joseph” on his forthcoming feast day, 21 April 1907. When Pope Pius XII, in 1955 established the Feast of ‘St Joseph the Worker’ (1 May), the Society removed the Feast of the Patronage from its calendars. Over half a century later, in 2012, St Joseph was re-installed as the patron of the Society of Jesus in the revised proper calendar.

The first Jesuit pope chose to celebrate the Mass inaugurating his pontificate, on 19 March, 2013, the Solemnity of St Joseph, Pope Francis, in his homily, spoke about St Joseph exercising his role as head of the Holy Family “discreetly, humbly, and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he



Pic courtesy: loyolacsj.co.in

finds it hard to understand... How does Joseph respond to his calling to be the protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church? By being constantly attentive to God, open



to the signs of God's presence and receptive to God's plans, and not simply to his own... In the Gospels, St Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love."

On 8 December 2020 Francis proclaimed the "Year of St Joseph" in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church by Blessed Pope Pius IX. He also released the Apostolic Letter, "Patris Corde" ("With a Father's Heart") on St. Joseph.

In his letter, Pope Francis recognizes in Joseph what he terms "creative courage." Joseph is presented with a series of disturbing and difficult challenges. Joseph never fails to act decisively. Joseph finds a way to do God's will – creatively, no matter how improbable or impossible it might seem. The Gospel reveals Joseph was a man of prayer and action. He did not hesitate to listen to God. And there is no hint that Joseph ever complained about all of these significant disruptions to his plans. Joseph's creative courage, noted Francis, described Joseph's "trusting obedience" in God. "In every situation, Joseph declared his own "fiat", like those of Mary at the Annunciation and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane."

"In the 19th century, it became customary for every Jesuit community to place an image of St. Joseph near the entrance of its residence. "

St Joseph, our Patron and Model, presents us four outstanding characteristic traits found in him that are deeply Ignatian in nature. They can offer us inspiration and guidance in our pursuit of the Ignatian ideals. The first is obedience. St Joseph 'blindly' followed the designs of God in his total acceptance of the difficult mission that God asked of him. The second is silence. Joseph, the 'Silent Saint' exemplifies how love must be shown 'more in deed than in word'. The third is helpfulness: St Joseph was a 'person-for-others'. Fourth, Ignatian humility: St Joseph fades into the background and lets the light shine on Jesus and Mary, and those surrounding them.

"Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble," said Pope Francis (PC).

Pope Francis has helped popularize a devotion to the 'Sleeping St Joseph', a statue of which he keeps on his desk. When he is facing a difficult challenge and he is uncertain of the right solution, he places the problem underneath the image of the Sleeping Joseph! ❖

Hedwig Lewis, SJ (GUJ) is a well-known author and prolific writer. He can be contacted at hedwiglewis@jesuits.net



Where has all the JESUIT HUMOUR gone?



Pic courtesy: pbs.org

There exists, among Jesuits, a folklore of humour, handed down to them and others alike from time immemorial. In fact, what is available in the public domain may just be the tip of the iceberg of an otherwise ingenious array of humour - on and by Jesuits - that takes place in Jesuit communities, often at the expense of some gullible Jesuits or absent-minded professors.

One wonders why or how Jesuits became the source or occasion for so much humour. A plausible answer is that a Jesuit seldom takes himself or others too seriously. (In this, of course, I stand to be corrected.)

In support of this line of argument, I cannot think of a more suitable example than that of Fr Leo D'Souza, SJ (KAR). He is a renowned botanist and an acknowledged tissue culture scientist. Believe it or not, even at 93 years of age, he continues research work in his lab at St Aloysius College, Mangalore, seeking to extract bio-diesel from algae. Alongside his laboratory experiments, however, he has cultivated a sense of humour - one might say of epic proportions, genuine and folkloric - often making himself the target. At any rate, he has no problem laughing at himself or having others laugh at his expense.

It is remarkable that the series of jokes that he began to share with fellow Jesuits on WhatsApp in the pandemic years on a daily basis has continued uninterrupted to this date. Unsurprisingly, when, a few months ago, he planned to stop the series, many Jesuits respectfully protested and humbly pleaded that he repeats the old yarns if not recount new ones. So it came to pass that he has resurrected his old jokes, like the proverbial dead character being resuscitated on public demand in a Hindi Saas-Bahu soap opera.

One fine morning in January, Fr Leo - seated at his usual place in the refectory and sipping his green tea - was intently gazing at the wall calendar a little distance away. To a scholastic who entered the refectory Fr Leo said: "Could you do me a favour? The dates and figures printed on this calendar are too small for me to read. Kindly go to my room, fetch the calendar hanging on the wall opposite my desk, and hang it here on the refectory wall. It has the dates printed in large size." The scholastic, of course, dutifully followed the instructions, but learned that the calendar he now mounted on the wall was three-year old.

I have encountered a good many Jesuits in my province who are blessed with the gift of humour. But not all of them can be certified as non-sardonic. The following episode may serve to illustrate the point. Fr Elias D'Souza of happy memory was a great teacher of mathematics in the College. Despite his diminutive stature, he commanded a great deal of respect from the students. They could not even dream of messing around in his presence. When I saw Fr Elias for the first time in the novitiate refectory, I found him, to my surprise, filling his teacup with spoonful after spoonful of sugar. I recalled the childhood story of the crow dropping stones into the jar to raise the level of water so as to slake its thirst. I wondered if Fr Elias was trying to raise the level of the tea by dropping sugar into the cup! It was only much later that I learned that Fr Elias was low on sugar and had to replenish his diet with sugar.



Though low on sugar, Fr Elias was pretty high on sarcasm in his humour, which his audience seldom failed to spot. Once, when I was a scholastic at Vidyaniketan, Dharwad, Fr Elias had come to conduct our community recollection. It was just the time when

In our communities across provinces, I think, there is no dearth of Jesuit mirth. But I wonder if this happy tradition is slowly dying in the modern-day media ecology of cell phones and social media.

an indicative vote was expected from all the province members to elect a new Provincial as the incumbent was finishing his term. As I was finishing my five years in the Society of Jesus, my companions and I were also eligible to vote for the first time. In the secret ballot, each one was expected to mention three qualities that he considered essential in the new Provincial. In our common recreation, we turned to Fr Elias for guidance in the choice of qualities of the soon-to-be Provincial. This is what he declared: "The three qualities that a candidate for a Provincial's post requires are that he should be

tall, that he should be fair and that he should be the friend of the previous Provincial." To be sure, we had a hearty laugh at his wit and humour, but we swallowed his sarcasm with a large pinch of salt.

I am sure every Province has its fair share of Leos and Eliases. Both have their rightful place. We



Pic courtesy: istock.com

certainly enjoy harmless humour, but we can do with a little sarcasm to spice things up. Most of all, we relish the repertoire of funny narratives from those who give us moments of laughter at their own expense.

The name that pops up in my mind as I speak of innocent humour is that of the late Br Vadaparam who was a simple and holy Jesuit. He put his heart and soul into whatever he was assigned to do. The nature of the work did not matter for him as long as he knew it was his task. To see him washing his own clothes even at the age of eighty was, to me, an edifying experience. We scholastics had a great deal of fun and laughter thanks to his innocent responses to our not-so-innocent questions. Take, for instance, the visit his mother and brother were reported to have paid him when he was a novice. Later in the day, when his fellow novices asked him who his guests were, he simply replied: “My mother and my brother came to see me.” But the novice wanted to know more. “Elder or younger?” he asked. Pat came the reply from Vadaparam: “My brother is elder, mother is younger.”

As he was advancing in age, Br Vadaparam became hard of hearing in stages. The ear surgery he went through at the bidding of the superior did not really help him. He continued to strain his ear to catch what

was being said to him. The community news item that appeared in the Karnataka Newsletter succinctly stated the fact: “Br Vadaparam has undergone ear surgery; apparently, he can see better now!”

Then there is the humour that emerges spontaneously as it occurs on the spur of the moment. A case in point is the instinctive reactions of the late Fr Cyril Silva, a veteran missionary. (*See p. 30 to learn one of his instinctive reactions*)

In our communities across provinces, I think, there is no dearth of Jesuit mirth. But I wonder if this happy tradition is slowly dying in the modern-day media ecology of cell phones and social media. Today, most Jesuits - the younger lot in particular - seem to have recourse to their cell phones for pastime and amusement. In the bargain, the post-supper community recreations have become mere routine exercises, if not abandoned altogether. Sadly, not much is being done to address this malaise.

Our communities were more focused and less distracted two decades ago when cell phones were a rarity. Today, the cell phone has become so much a part of our life that we cannot think of parting with it even for a while. The danger inherent in this unfortunate state of affairs is succinctly stated by Georgetown University professor Cal Newport in his book, *Digital Minimalism*, in these words: “Philip Morris of tobacco company wanted your lungs, but cell phones and app stores want your soul.”

I think that the easiest way to lose one’s soul is to lose one’s sense of humour. On the other hand, Jesuits may lead the way by putting their cell phones away at least for a couple of hours every day. Such a measure, in addition to spiritual activities, will, I reckon, help revive supper and recreation as the two other sacred events; and bring back to our communities the much-needed joyfulness and camaraderie which now, regrettably, seem to be receding into happy memories of yesteryears. ❖

Melwyn Pinto, SJ (KAR) is the Director at St Aloysius Institute of Management and Information Technology (AIMIT), Mangaluru. He teaches Journalism and Mass Communication at St Aloysius College, Mangaluru. He can be contacted at melwynsj@jesuits.net

Jivan Short Story Contest - 2023: Results

Here are the results of the Jivan Creative Writing Contest - 2023. The contest elicited short stories from 22 young writers, from all the different regions of India. *Jivan* thanks all the Rectors or Superiors or Directors of our Formation Houses, and Institutions who helped by encouraging their wards to participate.

The short stories had to be set in today's Asia, highlighting people, events or trends that offer us hope for the future. The jury consisted of 5 gifted,



Francis Peter, SJ

knowledgeable persons – 3 men and 2 women. First, **Fr Francis Peter, SJ** Director, Joseph Knowledge Hub, and three professors of the Department of English here at St. Joseph's College, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India – **Fr Paul Pragash, SJ**, **Fr Gilbert Camillus, SJ**, and **Ms. Cheryl Davis** read all the stories and assessed them. They came up with a shortlist of 10 stories.



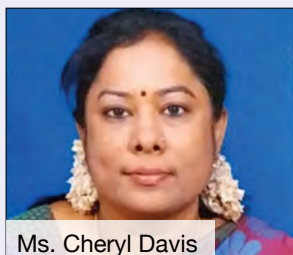
Paul Pragash, SJ

Ms. Christine Gomez, a versatile writer, author and the former Head of the Department of English, Holy Cross College, Trichy, read carefully all these 10 shortlisted stories and chose the three winners and two 'meritorious' stories.



Gilbert Camillus, SJ

The first prize of Rs 4,000 goes to **Sch Agil Roy James, SJ**, (KAR). He is a first year student of Philosophy at Jnana Deepa Institute, Pune. The second prize (Rs 2,500) goes to **Sch Denver A. Pushpam, SJ**, (KAR), who is studying for his graduate degree in Journalism



Ms. Cheryl Davis

and Optional English at St. Joseph's College, Bangaluru. The third prize, (Rs.1,000) goes to **Sch Ashish Kumar Beero, SJ**, (JAM), who is now a second year student of philosophy at Satya Nilayam, Chennai.

Of the two meritorious stories, the story ranked the fourth was written by Farhan Khan, who is a Class 12 student at St. Xavier's High School, Patna. A Class 12 student! She will go places, don't you think? The other 'meritorious' story, ranked the fifth, was written by Sajeev Painunkal, SJ, (CAL), who is now doing his tertianship in Sri Lanka.



Ms. Christine Gomez

What does Ms. Christine Gomez has to say about the ten stories? "Almost all of them have paid attention to the theme and the character portrayal. But many of them are descriptive and lack a clear cut storyline. Quite a few stories have errors in English – grammar and sentence structure."

She has precious words of advice and encouragement to all those who want to become successful writers: "Do a Google search on the elements of a short story. Internalize them. Keep writing on themes that mean something to you. Extensive reading of good English is the best way to improve one's writing. All the best to you!"

While this issue carries Agil Roy's story that won the first prize, all the other four will be published in *Jivan*.

We recall with gratitude what makes these awards possible year after year - the thoughtful grant made by **the Mascarenhas brothers - Fio and Frazer, SJ** - in memory of their dear parents, **Francis and Flora Mascarenhas**.

- Editor



Resurrection's preview and after-effects

Is there an event in the Gospels that gives us a brief preview of what it will be like to see God at the end of time, and how we will be transformed when we are reunited with our bodies?

I think the Transfiguration of Jesus does. In that mysterious vision given to Peter, James and John (Mt 17:1-8, etc., 2 Pet 1:16-18), the Holy Spirit anticipated what God would do later for Jesus, on Easter Sunday! In the scene, Jesus is glorified, seen as human, and also as divine. Through this event, we are able to get also a preview of what we will be able to experience some day.

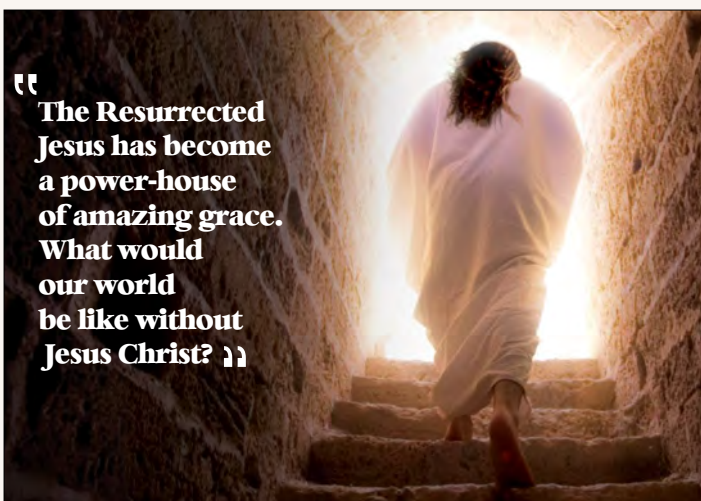
The real purpose of the Transfiguration was to display the glory of God, as much as the apostles could bear to see it, before Christ's Passion. For us today, the meaning of the event it foreshadowed (Jesus' Resurrection) lies in the words of the Father: "This is my Son, the beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" (Matt 17:5). Of course, the apostles could not understand the vision of Jesus Transfigured while he was still healing and teaching on earth. So Jesus warned them, "Tell no one about the vision, until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead" (Matt 17:9). It is only the Easter event that will make it understandable.

Satan deceives us into believing – wrongly - that God does not really love or care for us individually. He may do this by using seductive mass media and the secularized culture of our times. This is why in the Transfiguration event, the Father ends by saying, "Listen to Jesus!"

The appearances of the Risen Lord to so many disciples after the Resurrection (to more than 500, says St Paul), were not "mysterious visions" like the Transfiguration scene but, in each case, a consoling and empowering reality. "Jesus Christ our Lord was designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, *by his resurrection from the dead*" (Rom 1:4). St Paul insists, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile... But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead!" So "because He lives" we can live a new life in the Spirit, and face life victoriously!

This is true not for Christians only but for all of humanity. The Resurrected Jesus has become a powerhouse of amazing grace. What would our world be like without Jesus Christ? His Good News and his Real Presence in time and space as the Risen Lord have vastly changed human history! The Resurrected Jesus' legacy





Pic courtesy: freshgracefortoday.com

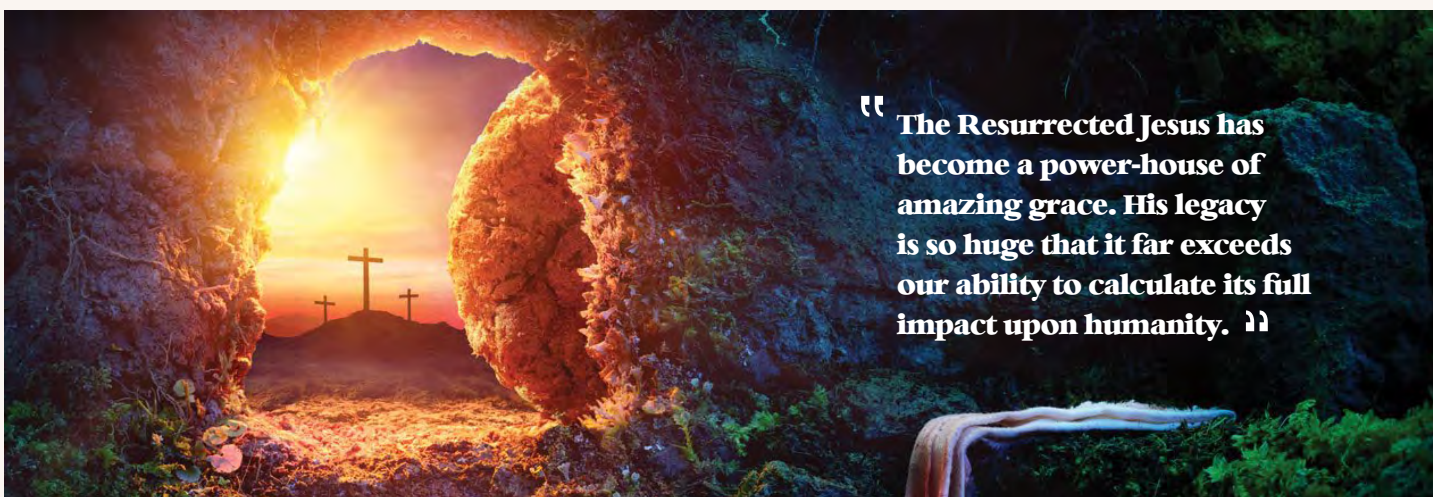
“**The Resurrected Jesus has become a power-house of amazing grace. What would our world be like without Jesus Christ? ११**

is so huge that it far exceeds our ability to calculate its full impact upon humanity.

Christianity, through the power of the Spirit of Jesus, has led to a massive expansion of hospitals, humanitarian organizations, educational institutions and charities. All over the world, and to its farthest corners, through the work of caring and dedicated missionaries, very influential “good works” were often

wave of social action for the betterment of society and of the environment. Our great universities were founded by disciples of Jesus, and it was Christians (and the Jesuits!) who started schools and attempted to bring education to all. Christian music, art, and architecture dominates the West: who can forget Michelangelo’s paintings in the Sistine Chapel and his Pieta in St Peter’s Basilica, or Gounod’s Ave Maria, Handel’s Halleluia chorus, Mozart’s Requiem, etc., etc? Christian values shaped our civilization. The possibilities of research into “what the Risen Jesus has done for our world” are endless!

So today too, Jesus continues to bring “good news to the poor,” through committed and courageous disciples who are fighting for the dignity of the unborn and the elderly, for the sanctity of marriage and wholesome family life, for the encouragement of the world’s youth, and for innumerable other worthy causes that can enhance the quality of human life! No right-thinking person, therefore, can dispute that in the resurrected Jesus, we have One who has virtually changed every aspect of human life.



Pic courtesy: baptismessageer.com

“**The Resurrected Jesus has become a power-house of amazing grace. His legacy is so huge that it far exceeds our ability to calculate its full impact upon humanity. ११**

founded by Christians in the name of Jesus. St Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her Missionaries of Charity, as well as innumerable other Catholic Religious orders and Protestant groups, have taken Christian pastoral social action to inspiring heights.

Martin Luther King Jr. was inspired by the Spirit of Jesus to fight for equality. Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela helped to end the evil of apartheid. And by their very influential encyclicals, Popes Leo XIII, John XXIII, St John Paul II, and now Francis, have all contributed significantly to creating a tidal

No wonder the Second Vatican Council can declare, “The Church believes that Christ, who died and was raised up for all, can, through his Spirit, offer human beings the light and the strength to measure up to their supreme destiny. The Church holds that in her most benign Lord and Master can be found the key, the focal point, and the goal of all human history...” ❖

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The letters that Jesuits wrote and their significance

Introduction

Right from the beginning of the Society, the pioneers, starting from Ignatius of Loyola, saw correspondence as a means of uniting the members for effective governance. Given the difficulties of communication and travel in the sixteenth century and the reality that most missionaries were leaving Europe with no intention of returning, rapport through the letters was the only possible means of contact.

The Superior General learned about the different activities around the world through the letters: the various projects in execution, the difficulties of the missionaries, the local needs, etc. Thanks to these letters, he was better placed to take right decisions.

The Jesuits wrote their letters with a specific aim in mind, and they knew who would be reading them. Therefore, their headquarters had provided them with guidelines about the various aspects of their correspondence materials. The Jesuit correspondence system was a systematically organized project and they are useful for the history of different lands.

Need for Correspondence in the Society

Although in the earlier years the letters were circulated only within the Society, in the course of time they were read also by the public. Several well-wishers of the Society were keen on getting news from the missions, as either they were curious to know what was happening or were financially aiding the missions. That Ignatius of Loyola himself took special care in editing the letters of other Jesuits is seen when he wrote to Peter Faber in 1542: "If the copies of others' letters that I send you appear to have some order and be free of useless matter, the reason is that with enormous loss of my own time, I extract the edifying parts, rearrange the wording, and edit out the irrelevant matter, so as to give some pleasure in our Lord to all of you and edification to those who hear for the first time."

According to Ignatius, the written word had to be cared for more than the spoken word as the former was

permanent and could not be changed once written. He also experienced embarrassing situations when he could not display a part of the letter to the friends because of its careless composition.

These letters were particularly recommended to be read by the novices and other members for spiritual reading. The letters also were useful in providing examples on how the Rules of the Society were concretely implemented in the local situations.

Publication of the Letters

The Jesuit letters that were published in Europe had huge welcome. Handwritten copies of the letters of St. Francis Xavier were made and circulated everywhere. From the Pope right down to the students in university lecture-halls, everyone was enthralled by the letters.

This huge welcome in the West was largely due to the fascination in the West for the mysterious and exotic East. The sixteenth century Church witnessed a split caused by the Reformation, which was followed by bloody religious wars between the Catholics and the Protestants. The Catholic Church, therefore, lost many members. So the stories of missionary success outside Europe were always a source of great consolation to the Church. Hence, the missionary letters which brought such joyous news were always expected with eagerness.

The letters from India too caught the attention of the European readers. Therefore, Ignatius wrote to Gaspar Berze, a Jesuit in Goa in 1554: "Some leading figures who in this city [Rome]...want to know, for instance, how long the days of summer and of winter are; when summer begins; whether the shadows move towards the left or towards the right. Finally, if there are other things that may seem extra ordinary, let them be noted, for instance, details about animals and plants that either are not known at all, or not of such a size, etc."

Jesuit Letters in History Writing

The Jesuit correspondence from different lands has been very useful in writing the local history. It was only after the publication of the letters on Ceylon in 1928 that it became possible to write the history of Sri Lanka for the years 1539-1552.

For Japan, the *Historia de Japan* written by Louís Fróis between 1585 and 1597, holds a commendable place. The author narrates the growth of the Jesuit mission, historical and political events of Japan in the first 44 years of its evangelization. He covers the Ashikaga dynasty's decline towards the end of the sixteenth century. Large chapters of French colonisation of Canada also would have remained in obscurity without Jesuit reports.

For the history of Brazil, we have the accounts of Manuel de Nobrega, and his aide Joseph de Anchieta. Though in matters of scientific information we cannot expect from these men of sixteenth century the technique and accuracy of our days, yet their vast culture, power of observation and their first-hand knowledge merit a hearing. *Sumario das Armadas*, an anonymous Jesuit manuscript (c. 1589), describes military campaigns and *Discurso das Aldeias* strongly criticizes the oppression of the indigenous population offer insights for debates on this topic.

For Africa, Camillo Beccari's *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales*, is a valuable work that contains documents and scholarly investigations into the geography, ethnology and history of Abyssinia and the first maps of the Nile by the early Jesuits. *História de Etiópia* by Pedro Páez is a guide that portrays the geographical, political and religious atmosphere of Ethiopia. The Jesuit letters contain detailed information about the lakes of Nyassa and Tanganyika.

The Jesuits in China had contacts in the imperial court, and thus they were able to gather and supply a bird's-eye view of the patterns of the Chinese civilization. The letters deal with all sorts of topics, never lacking interesting information.

The eighteen volumes titled *Documenta Indica* introduced the Jesuit letters to Indian historians. They are useful in constructing the sixteenth century history of the Portuguese India. Antonio de Monserrate, one of the missionaries in Akbar's court, wrote *Relaçam*

do Equebar Rei dos Mogores (1582), which deals with Akbar and his rule. Montserrate's notable work, *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius* (1591), is frequently used by the historians of the Mughal India. It gives an account of the Jesuit presence in the court of Akbar, the religious discussions, Akbar's interest and his open attitude to religions and his new religion, Din-i-ilahi. Although it reveals the author's Christian and European bias, the themes that emerge in the religious debates give a foretaste of the subsequent encounters between the Christians and Muslims.

Jacobo Fenicio's *Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais*, completed in 1609, gives an adequate account of Hindu mythology. It contains a voluminous description of Hinduism in Malabar. In 1615 Diogo Gonçalves wrote *Historia do Malavar*. It is a valuable source for the history of Travancore and its neighbouring countries. The work provides information about the religion, manners, customs and traditions of the region. Though the author's antipathy to Hinduism clearly stands out in the polemical part of the book, the chapters that describe the land, people and society are useful for the study of the early seventeenth century. Leonardo Cinnami, the founder of the Mysore mission wrote in 1648, *Istoria del Canara* which deals with the history of the Ikkeri kingdom of the seventeenth century. This too is a valuable source for history.

These are but a few samples for the contribution of Jesuit correspondence system to history writing.

Conclusion

The letters that the Jesuits wrote to their headquarters treated not only history but every art and science that was known at that time. We can say that there is hardly any topic which has not become the subject of an article or a book written by a Jesuit. Not only theology and philosophy in all their subdivisions, but also law, the arts, and sciences appear among the subjects studied by the members of the Society. Therefore the Central Archives of the Jesuits in Rome, called ARSI, contains a vast treasure of Jesuit letters, which are precious materials for research. There are also local Jesuit archives across the globe preserving equally rich materials of regional interest. ❖

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Pic courtesy: as1.ftcdn.net

Looking at the World

“Tintintin, Yatrigan kripya dhyan dijiye, Gaadi number 16576 Mangalore ko jaane wale”

He found himself running as the train’s departure was just two minutes away. As usual, the typical Indian mother’s farewell was a time-consuming affair, particularly early this morning. She knew she was not going to see her son for another six months. Tony, having had his holiday in his hometown, Bangalore, began his journey back to Mangalore.

This time he wanted to travel by the Gomteshwara Express, allured by the promise of the Western Ghats’s picturesque charm. This train had garnered a reputation among his friends, who regularly posted their experiences on Instagram. However, even without the allure of social media, Tony’s anticipation was palpable, driven by his genuine eagerness to soak in the wonders of nature. Harnessing the power of modern technology, he secured an online ticket, reserving a window seat for himself.

As he got into the train, his first observation was the presence of a young lady seated across from him. It was her choice of footwear, meticulously painted nails, and stylish handbag that gave away her gender. Those high-heeled shoes piqued his curiosity, and he pondered how she had navigated through the crowded platform in them. Like any typical young man, Tony couldn’t resist the urge to steal a glimpse of the girl’s face, but her newspaper provided an effective shield.

Tony couldn’t help but wonder if it was common for women in India to read newspapers. His own mother didn’t share that habit. ‘In any case, it’s heartening to see someone engaged in reading, under the hashtag feminism,’ he thought. Although he desired to strike up a conversation, he hesitated, not wishing to disrupt her reading. As he patiently awaited the moment when the newspaper would be lowered, he was left with only a glimpse of the headlines.

The image of the Indian cricket team celebrating its victory over Pakistan instantly captured Tony's attention. A surge of national pride coursed through his veins, yet the mention of Pakistan brought with it the shadow of terrorism. Initially, he had accepted this association, but as thoughts of his online friend surfaced, he began to reflect further. Abdul, a friend he had met virtually during his course on edX, shared the same enthusiasm for learning Spanish. They had supported each other throughout the course. 'Abdul was by no means a terrorist,' Tony realized.

'Why had I, along with my parents, teachers, and friends, always painted Pakistan with the broad brush of terrorism? How could anyone assume that everyone in Pakistan was a terrorist?' With these thoughts in mind, Tony resolved to discard the prejudice of terrorism towards the entire nation of Pakistan.

Continuing to skim the newspaper that still shielded the girl's face, he noticed an article tucked away in the corner, reporting on the violence in Manipur. The photograph he saw left him in sheer terror. He wondered if this news was featured in all newspapers, given that his father was a dedicated newspaper reader. Tony thought that if his father had come across this news, it would have undoubtedly become a topic of discussion at the breakfast table. He read the article in detail and couldn't help but lament the lack of attention it received in comparison to India's cricket victory over Pakistan. A sombre expression washed over Tony as he read about the death toll in Manipur, with more than 181 lives lost in the violence.

With a heavy heart, he turned his gaze outside the window, looking at the passing plains and fields. The girl across from him remained engrossed in her newspaper, leaving no opportunity for him to either catch a glimpse of her or engage in a conversation. Fatigued from waking up early in the morning, Tony succumbed to drowsiness and drifted off for a while.

Upon awakening, Tony noticed that the girl with the newspaper was no longer in her seat, but her bag remained. A sudden burst of excitement emanated from the passengers, signalling the train's arrival in the Western Ghats section. Eager to witness the natural marvel, Tony moved to the door, his eyes drawn to the breathtaking beauty of the landscape. As he gazed at the hills and valleys, he couldn't help but wonder about the

girl's beauty. Time seemed to slip away as he immersed himself in the scenic panorama.

After a while, he returned to his seat, only to find the girl still engrossed in her newspaper. Tony resumed his perusal of the headlines, encountering news of the Gaza attack once again, a sad moment that made him gloomy. But the girl doesn't seem to be affected. She must be a news hound. He briefly considered developing the habit of reading newspapers to stay informed. However, the convenience of his mobile phone providing instant access to news crossed his mind, and he wavered.

In search of a distraction, Tony took his phone and delved into the realm of highly recommended videos on Instagram and YouTube. Entertainment took precedence over the harsh realities of the news. But as he reflected, he realized the importance of staying informed and ultimately decided to commit to reading newspapers in the future.

With a multitude of thoughts swirling in his mind, hunger eventually struck Tony. He remembered he had some *dosas* packed for himself, and he contemplated offering some to the girl with the newspaper, as he hadn't seen her eat. However, observing her intense reading, he refrained from asking. While he enjoyed his meal, he stumbled upon an intriguing news article titled 'India that is Bharat: On a name game'. It left him wondering how such a situation could arise. He also caught a glimpse of something related to the G20, but the girl promptly turned the page. Tony realized that he had missed a chance to see her face, as he had been absorbed in the newspaper. Discouraged, he pondered, 'Why should I be so eager to see her anyway?' With these thoughts, he dozed off once more.

In his dream, he found himself engrossed in reading the newspaper when he heard the repetitive call of 'Chai, chai, chai.' Peering over the paper, he saw a faceless girl! Suddenly, he awoke to realize it was just a dream. He saw that the girl with the newspaper had disappeared, along with her bag. However, the newspaper remained where she was seated, and to his surprise, Tony discovered a note within it:

"The paper is for you to read the rest of the news. Do not try looking at me; try looking at our world, and you will find me." ❖

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The Journey of the Women's Commission, 2021-24

It has almost been three years to the day that the members of the Commission on the Role and Responsibilities of Women in the Society of Jesus were appointed by Fr. Arturo Soza. In 2021, the world was a very different place – many of the members were confined to their homes and away from their usual places of work or apostolates due to the Covid 19-related restrictions.

Most of us had never met, nor crossed paths in any capacity. We were limited to conversations online, separated by many, many time zones, and (in the beginning) individual understandings of our charge as

a Commission. As a representative of JCAP, a region that I barely knew outside my own engagement as a faculty member and administrator at the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, I recall the trepidation brought about by the challenging topic – what was the role of women in an all-male religious order – but also the challenge of completing the task in the middle of an unthinkable context: a global pandemic.

We began in earnest: getting to know each other through our sometimes shaky internet connections, and relying on the wonderful leadership of brave and



Fr. General with the women commission members

unshakable moderators: - Cecilia Vanneste of JCEP, who a number of times walked us through the confusing first steps, making sure that we were all on the same page on the goals and objectives of the commission and providing constant reassurance in the first year. Cecilia asked us early on to reflect on the objectives of the commission and the relationship between these goals and the UAP which eventually led us to speak to the authors of Decree 14.

Our objectives as a Commission are: 1. To evaluate the appropriation of Decree 14, GC 34 in the life and apostolates of the Society. 2. To evaluate the participation and position of women and the structures of collaboration at all levels in institutions of the Society of Jesus and its apostolic work. 3. To make recommendations to the different levels of leadership in the Society of Jesus, to strengthen the mission of the Society with the active participation of women.

Donna Andrade of JCCU, the resident “volunteller” of the Commission inspired us to run and complete the global survey on which a good part of our recommendations will be based. Donna’s indefatigable spirit and enthusiastic interrogation of our processes and outcomes put us on the right track.

Catherine Waiyaki of JCAM, who has recognized the strengths (and weaknesses) of each member of the Commission, ably put our individual and collective strengths to good use. Catherine has also provided

an external voice for the Commission as we begin to engage the larger Jesuit community post-pandemic.

During the time we have been together, we have had the privilege of spending time in conversation and

reflection with Fr. General, the authors of Dec 14, GC 34, Sr Nathalie Becquart, Conference Presidents, Socii, among others. The expectation in our last year is to deepen these connections and amplify the voices we first heard via the initial survey results and two years in conversation, prayer and reflection.

And, yes, we eventually did get to see each other in person in November 2022 as the entire Commission gathered in Rome for a week of meetings and activities. Meaningful conversations on the differences between cultures and across Jesuit Conferences made the pilot findings of the survey more real for the Commission. The days in Rome were well spent in prayer and reflection, discussion and debate, and in solidarity with one another. It was a fitting pause to our work as a Commission and a recognition that what once was a task to be fulfilled

as a Commission has now become a journey to be shared together as brothers and sisters fulfilling God’s mission. ❖

“ We eventually did get to see each other in person in November 2022 as the entire Commission gathered in Rome for a week of meetings and activities. ”



Maria Elissa “Melissa” Jayme Lao is Associate Professor at the Political Science Department Ateneo de Manila University. She is also currently a board member of the Women and Gender Studies Association of the Philippines (WSAP) and a member of the Commission on the Role and Responsibilities Women in the Society of Jesus.



In Search of a Lost Shepherd

Recently I had a unique experience of searching and finding a 'lost shepherd' in the faraway land of Australia. My friends and I had not imagined it would really happen one day. It was a miracle! And our joy was boundless!

It was on 26 May, 2023, that three of us, Fr Thamacin Arulappan, Fr Narendra Singh and I reached the Jesuit Octagon Cemetery at Gore hills in Sydney to find the grave of late Archbishop Mgr Walter Steins, SJ, former Vicar Apostolic of Bengal from 1867 to 1877.

The Lost Shepherd: Mgr Walter Steins was born on 1 July 1810 in Amsterdam, Holland and entered the

Mgr Steins travelled to Calcutta in December 1856 to discuss with Mgr Thomas Olliffe, terms and conditions regarding the restarting of St. Xavier College now by the Belgian Jesuits.

To restart the Bengal Mission: Two years later, in November 1859, Mgr Steins joined the first group of the Belgian Jesuits on their way to Calcutta to restart the Bengal Mission. After giving the newcomers the benefit of his experience and assistance in re-establishing St Xavier's College on 16 January in 1860, Mgr Steins, returned in February 1860 to Bombay, his vicariate.



Frs Jeyaraj Veluswamy, SJ, Fr Narendra Singh, SJ, and Fr Thamacin Arulappan, SJ praying at the grave of Archbishop Walter Steins, SJ at the Gore Hill Cemetery in Sydney, on 26th May, 2023

Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at Nivelles in Brabant in 1832. After his Novitiate and preliminary studies of Rhetoric and Philosophy, he was employed in various colleges of the Society in Belgium; and in September 1842 he was ordained a priest and in 1852, he came to Bombay as missionary apostolic and on 18 December 1860, Fr Steins was nominated Bishop of Bombay and Poona.

Came to Calcutta: The English Jesuits abruptly closed St Francis Xavier College, Calcutta, in 1846. Thirteen years later Mgr Thomas Olliffe, the Vicar Apostolic of Western Bengal in 1856, now appealed to Mgr Walter Steins, SJ, to bring back the Jesuits to Calcutta. After receiving a favourable response from the then Superior General, Fr Peter Jan Beckx, SJ,

Vicar Apostolic of Western Bengal: The death of the Archbishop of Calcutta, Mgr. Van Heule, in June 1865, proved to be a terrible calamity to the mission of the Jesuit Fathers at Calcutta, and it was by no means easy to meet the emergency and to fill up the vacant post. At last, the Jesuit authorities at Rome decided to transfer Bishop Steins from Bombay to Calcutta and on 11 January 1867, he became the Archbishop of Bosra and Vicar Apostolic of Western Bengal.

Founder of Chotanagpur Mission: If Fr Constant Lievens, SJ is rightly called the Apostle of Chotanagpur Mission, Mgr Walter Steins, SJ could justly be called the 'Founder of the Chotanagpur Church'. Thanks to his apostolic vision and missionary zeal, Mgr. Steins launched this challenging missionary

enterprise of the Chotanagpur Mission. It began when he travelled to the distant hamlet, Chaibasa, to baptize 28 Munda tribals on 8 November 1873. This was the historic day that was aptly celebrated as the Sesquicentennial Jubilee of the Chotanagpur Church on 8 November 2023, at Khuntani Mata Shrine, Chaibasa, Jamshedpur diocese.

Leaves Calcutta: In February 1875 his health began to decline. At the request of the Fr. General and of Cardinal Franchi, then Prefect of the Propaganda, travelled to Europe in order to recoup. He returned the same year, but it was evident that he was not so strong as before. Towards the close of 1877, while returning by boat from a pastoral visit to the southern missions of the Vicariate, he fell. What he thought was a slight scratch became an obstinate sore. His doctors told him that it would be dangerous for him to remain much longer in the country. With a heavy heart he left Calcutta in February 1878, for Holland, never to return to India.

His Last Days: In Holland as soon as he had regained his health, Bishop Steins offered his service to new missions. Pope Leo XIII entrusted to him, on 23 April 1879, the diocese of Auckland in New Zealand, retaining the title of Archbishop. He lost no time in setting out to join his new flock and to give them the benefit of his energy and pastoral solicitude. However, a fresh attack of his old malady, from which he had so long suffered, quickly wore him out, giving him this time no chance of recovery!

So he was advised to return to Holland for some weeks of rest and treatment. He travelled to Sydney, hoping to go from there to Holland. But his condition became worse, and was advised to stay at Kilda Jesuit community in Sydney and receive treatment. It is there he passed away on 7 September 1881. It is said that his funeral at St Mary's cathedral, Sydney



Archbishop Mgr Walter Steins, SJ
(1-7-1810 : 7-9-1881)



"In November 1859, Mgr Steins joined the first group of the Belgian Jesuits on their way to Calcutta to restart the Bengal Mission."

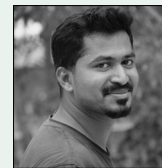
The Jesuit Octagon Cemetery in Sydney.
At the centre is the grave of Mgr. Steins, SJ

was attended by a huge congregation, even though he had not served there. His hard work and fame had reached the people of Sydney.

His death threw three families of the faithful into sorrow and mourning. Bishop Steins had been a Father in God to all his dear faithful in Bombay, Calcutta and Auckland; but more particularly to the faithful in Bengal and Chotanagpur Missions where he had spent ten precious years launching and promoting new missions.

Prayed before his tomb: Kneeling before his tomb, we thanked God for the gift of Archbishop Steins to the Bengal mission. Praying to the great, tireless shepherd himself, we thanked him for the great mission he started in Bengal and Chotanagpur. We felt we could never thank him enough for what he had given to the Church in India. ❖

Fr Jeyaraj Veluswamy, SJ, a former Provincial of Calcutta province, is now the Rector, St Xavier's College, Kolkata. He can be contacted at jeyasj@gmail.com



#OMG.Its100Years!

Initially, it was just a small group of a few college-going students and a Jesuit in a college. They called themselves a 'guild.' They came together, studied, informed themselves of the societal injustice and grappled with the incongruence between what they studied and the reality around them. Their discussions were intense, wanting to find solutions for the social problems they witnessed in their surroundings. They believed firmly that 'they had the right to be heard.' They started publishing their insights in a magazine, later becoming a household name among different colleges. They were growing but needed to pool their resources to be effective. They could no more be a 'guild.'

This young and vibrant group merged with a 'league' founded by again a Jesuit. The league grew and became a 'federation.' The federation's vision, mission and activities drew many students from far and near. It was no more a 'federation.' It was now a 'movement' by the young, of the young and for the young. It realized that 'collaboration and networking' was essential to change society. Jesuits who accompanied the young in this movement played different roles. Many were sages on the stage, some were guides on the side, and a few were 'meddlers' in the middle. But in all these roles, they were convinced it was all about the 'young— their fears and future.'



Pic courtesy: news18.com

Gradually, because it was owned and run by the 'young,' the movement gained immense popularity nationally and was recognized by the CBCI (Catholic Bishops Conference of India). The movement strongly believed that human beings are born into an unjust society and that it is the responsibility of every human being not to leave it as they found it. The movement nurtured many social activists, politicians, educationalists, journalists and others who fought against oppressive structures in the society.

As the All-Indian Catholic University Federation (AICUF) celebrates its centenary, we hope it revisits its roots and reimagines its future. Movements such as AICUF can offer the space needed for the young to 'think' in an age reaping the benefits of Artificial Intelligence.

Failing to plan a hope-filled future 'with' the young is planning to fail a hope-filled future. I hope we realise it ASAP!

Guild: The Catholic Young Men Guild (CYMG) was guided by Fr P. Carty, SJ at St Joseph's College, Trichy, Tamil Nadu. **League:** Malabar Catholic Youth League (MCYL) was founded by Fr Honore, SJ in 1915. **Federation:** Catholic Young Men Federation (CYMF). **Magazine:** The Rally ❖

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CREATING A HOPEFUL FUTURE

Celebrating

100 YEARS

**Of forming
men and women
for and with others**

AICUF
(All India Catholic University Federation)



Jesuit Education: Can we really nurture values?

Are Jesuit institutions still committed to provide quality education infused with Jesuit values? While some of our institutions have excelled in forming individuals who are convinced it is their mission to serve others, the pervasive trend of commercialization in education presents many challenges.

Therefore it is imperative to introspect and discern what sets our institutions apart. Are we merely focused on producing academically proficient individuals, competing with other institutions for top results? Or do we hold a deeper commitment to impart education and Jesuit values?

The pressing question revolves around the gratitude and commitment of our students. How many of them stand by us, expressing genuine appreciation and a willingness to return and collaborate in promoting justice and reaching out to the underprivileged? If the numbers fall short, it signals a critical moment for self-reflection and a thorough evaluation of our institutions. True adherence to Jesuit ideals should, ideally, lead graduates to champion the cause of justice and promote the wellbeing of all citizens, - not joining or helping communal groups with anti-human agendas.

Examining our historical journey, the uniqueness of Jesuit education lies in its holistic approach—educating the mind, body, heart, and spirit. Many of our alumni have responded to societal needs, standing with us in reaching out to the unreached. Unfortunately, today we can notice a shift, with some alumni not aligning with our values, sometimes even working against us by supporting divisive communal groups.

To make a meaningful impact and remain relevant in the current context, a renewed focus on four key areas alongside academic excellence is paramount: **Formation of the conscience:** Achieved through value education, faith formation classes, and promoting Jesuit ideals through creative activities. **Social consciousness:** Fostered through sessions on social awareness, exposure, analysis, and promotion

of awareness about constitutional rights and duties.

Physical and psychological wellbeing: Ensured through continual accompaniment, awareness of physical and mental hygiene, and promotion of a balanced way of living through creative life-promoting activities. **Skill based formation:** Jesuit institutions should stand out by incorporating a skill-based approach at various levels, considering both physical and psychological growth. A well-designed skill development program for each class is essential.



While some our institutions claim to have included these elements in their annual plans, their effectiveness needs evaluation. A comprehensive action plan and implementing strategy are necessary, in all the Jesuit institutions, involving: **Well-designed syllabus:** There is a need for having a systematically formulated syllabus in all the four areas mentioned above. It has to be implemented at the province or conference level with a consistent basic structure across all Jesuit institutions, regardless of location, language, and culture. **Trained personnel:** Establish common training and resource development centers at both the province and conference levels. **Means to evaluate:** Develop a comprehensive tool to evaluate outcomes, considering both measurable and non-measurable aspects. **Mandate from the authority:** Ensure a clear mandate and instructions from higher authorities, either at the provincial or at the conference level, to guide the initiative through the existing commissions for education.

As divisive ideologies and religious biases influence educational choices, and a business model of education creates unhealthy competition, it is crucial to safeguard the future of Jesuit institutions. Establishing a distinct Jesuit brand of education with a clear focus on Jesuit ideals is not just necessary—it is imperative for survival. It is better to act today than to regret in the face of a challenging future. ❖

Fr. Dheeraj D'Souza, SJ (KAR) is the Director of Navasadhana, the Pre-Novitiate at Hassan, Karnataka. He can be contacted at dheerajadarshsj@gmail.com



She becomes Moses to the enslaved

Film: Harriet (2019)

Director: Kasi Lemmons

Run time: 105 minutes

Cast: Cynthia Erivo, Leslie Odom Jr, Joe Alwyn, Clarke Peters, Vanessa Bell, Calloway, Omar J. Dorsey.

This Academy award winner recaps the heroic life of the Afro-American heroine Harriet Tubman, the icon of the antislavery struggle of the Pre 1860s America. Harriet saved hundreds of fellow blacks from enslavement through the Underground Railroad organized to help slaves escape from the slave holding south.

Aramita Ross (a k a Minty) born in Maryland was one of the nine children of a freed slave named John Tubman and his wife Harriet. She had been given as a 'loan' to the Bordess family while her other sisters had been sold off to other plantations. After a serious head injury sustained in childhood Minty claimed to have divine revelations. She with her mother and sister continued as slaves in the Bordess estate till 1849. Their former master had given Minty's father a written promise of release for his family.

But when he approaches Old Bordess to redeem the pledge it is promptly refused. Minty, trusting divine intervention, prays for Bordess's death. The sudden death of Old Bordess leaves his widow and her son, the profligate Gideon in charge of their declining plantation. When Gideon plans to sell her, Minty runs away. But the slave hunters chase her out while trying to cross a bridge. Minty, preferring death over slavery, jumps into the flowing river, and is thought dead. However she survives and with the help of an Underground Railway activist she walks 25 miles on foot to Pennsylvania. She finds refuge with the Anti-Slavery Society along with others.

In honour of her mother and her husband she assumes the name Harriet Tubman and joins the Underground activists to get back to her home in secret to rescue her dear ones. On her secret return she is heartbroken to see her husband now remarried thinking her dead. Harriet survives the emotional trauma and experiences divine visions that call on her to play Moses to the enslaved. She undertakes the dangerous task and makes several trips to conduct slaves to freedom through the wilderness. After many successful attempts, Gideon comes to know of Harriet's activities under the mysterious name "Moses" the slave stealer. Enraged by the Harriet's family's helping a slave stealer, Gideon threatens them. Undaunted, Harriet continues her activities



at great risk. During several secret trips she rescues more slaves. Coming to know of the true identity of 'Moses', 'Gideon tracks Harriet to Philadelphia along with Bigger Long, another slave hunter. Harriet crosses to Canada. There is a final confrontation between the two in which Harriet traps Gideon at gunpoint and tells him that she won't give up her cause and will continue her fight. She later took part in the American Civil War.

The movie makes use of the popular freedom song "Wade in the Water" as a leitmotif - one of the celebrated Negro spirituals, evoking the Exodus story. ❖

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.



Pic courtesy: creator.nightcafe.studio

Good Friday

By Amy Bengtson

It was not good for the tree
Whose only guilt was to grow tall,
To grow strong, To grow straight.

It was not good for the soldier
Whose duty was already stained red
And now whose heart was black.

It was not good for the women
Who stood at his feet and felt the breath
As it left him for the last time.

It was not good for the crowd
whose voices were hoarse from cheering
and crying with passion.

It was not good for the man
Who was much more than just a man
today, everyday to some.

It was not good to the Father
Who wanted to reach out and catch him
When he fell limp.

But for me? It was all good.
It was nothing but good for me.

Benedict Rosario, SJ (KAR)

Br Benedict Rosario SJ, fondly known as Br. Benna, passed away at the age of 76, leaving behind a legacy of unwavering dedication and service to the Jesuit community and beyond. Born on 2 January 1948, in Mangaluru, Karnataka, Br. Benna spent 59 years committed to his religious vocation. He returned to the Lord on 13 January 2024.

From educational institutions like Loyola HPS, Bengaluru, and St Joseph's HPS, Hassan, to technical institutes like St Joseph's Industrial School, Ooty, Loyola ITI, Bengaluru, and Loyola ITI, Vijayapura, as well as formation houses like Vidyajyothi, Delhi, and retreat houses like Fatima Retreat House, Mangaluru his contributions were manifold. He even offered his services at Jesuit House, Guwahati. As an infirmarian, teacher,

principal, and administrator, Br. Benna's versatility and tireless work ethic were unmatched.

His passion for technical education, especially for the underprivileged, reflected his deep-rooted commitment to compassion and social justice. Despite facing health setbacks, including a stroke, Br. Benna remained resilient, continuing to care for others and diligently fulfil his duties. Beyond his professional roles, Br. Benna's warmth, simplicity, and unwavering faith endeared him to all who knew him. He was a pillar of strength and a source of inspiration to his fellow Jesuits and others. Br. Benna's memory will live on in the countless lives he touched and transformed.

— Joseph Rodrigues, SJ



George Hilarion Thakur, SJ (PAT)

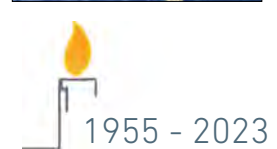
Fr. George Hilarion Thakur, SJ was born on 23 July 1955, in Bettiah, Bihar. He died at Asha Deep Community, Muzaffarpur, Bihar, on 16 December, 2023. The funeral Mass on 18 December at the XTTI chapel was attended by his family members, relatives, people from Bettiah, Patna and elsewhere. The main celebrant was Archbishop Sebastian Kallupura of Patna, offered the Mass, assisted by Archbishop Emeritus William D'Souza, SJ, and a large number of priests.

Fr. George was simple, straightforward, humble and approachable. He was warm and friendly towards guests and visitors. He had a great sense of duty and sensitivity towards his co-workers. He maintained a cordial relationship with them.

He was kind, empathetic and caring, and had concern for their well-being. While he was at Latonah parish, Bihar, he was actively involved with a deep sense of commitment in serving the people, creating a positive impact and nurturing a spiritual environment in the lives of individuals and the parish community.

He had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Never would a day pass by without him reciting the Rosary in the parish or with a small group of families. Marian devotion became a source of spiritual guidance for him and the parish community. Music had been part and parcel of his life. He loved singing and playing the *tabla* on various occasions.

— Jose Thayil, SJ



Ignatius Fernandes, SJ (BOM)

Ignatius Fernandes was my classmate in school. In fact, in our last year in school we sat on the same bench. But we did not know that we were planning to join the Society. We did our "four sheets" together. Fr. Provincial told me to come to Vinayalaya on 20 June 1966, but Ignatius was asked to do college in Ahmedabad. The next year he joined the Society.

We went through the normal years of formation and Ignatius was ordained a priest at St. Peter's Bandra on 24 April 1982. He loved to work with the tribals and so he was appointed to work in Shirpur Mission from June 1982. My companion, Fr. Louis D'Mello was Superior and Parish Priest. While going to the Mass centre, a drunk S.T. driver

banged his jeep headlong and Fr. Louis D'Mello died on the spot. Fr. Ignatius was appointed acting Superior and the next year, Superior of Shirpur Mission. He found it very difficult to accept the loss of his Superior and close friend, Fr. Louis and this took a toll on him from that time on.

Ignatius was a very affectionate person and a good companion. He took his theology seriously and stayed outside in the village while attending classes in DNC. He loved the poor and the simple tribals of Shirpur. They showered their love on him in return. He passed away in the province infirmary at Vinayalaya on 19 February 2024.

— Joaquim Tellis, SJ





Jose Panadan, SJ (GUJ)

Fr. Jose Panadan was an extraordinary human: a compassionate priest, an excellent teacher and a great Jesuit companion! He was called to his eternal reward on 13 January 2024 in Ahmedabad, at the fairly young age of 54 years (born on 26 June 1969 in Kerala). His untimely death, has left a deep and irreplaceable void in the hearts of many.

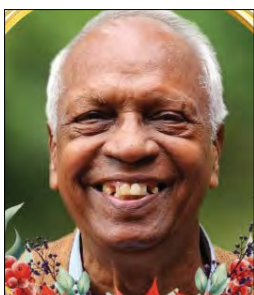
Jose was a shepherd with a listening heart and who smelled of his sheep. He was always there for the people: visiting the sick, administering the sacraments, encouraging the youth, sitting with the elderly. Long before the Church was talking about 'synodal journey', Jose in his own special way lived communion, participation and mission.

As a teacher, he challenged his students to think out of the box, to internalize a spirituality which was

contextual and meaningful, to respond to the cries of the people. His doctoral thesis 'An Ecclesio-missiological Investigation of the Ecclesial Paradigm of North Gujarat' and his books, *Mission in North Gujarat - the Way Ahead and Inculturation and Local Church*, poignantly reflected his incisive theological thinking. In the Ignatian Year, he edited a magnum opus, *Eight Day Ignatian Retreats for Various Groups*, which was well received.

As the pastor at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Camels, Unteshwari, North Gujarat, he conceptualized and built a unique and emotive 'Way of the Cross'. He was also entrusted with the renovation of the main Catholic cemetery in Ahmedabad - which he meticulously executed as a labour of love.

I Cedric Prakash, SJ



Leo Florent Tirkey, SJ (MAP)

Fr. Leo Florent Tirkey, S.J., passed away on 13 January 2024, at Holy Cross Hospital, Ambikapur. The Funeral Mass, held on 14 January at the chapel of Christ Milan Ashram, Namna, Ambikapur, was presided over by Bishop Patras Minj, SJ and attended by Fr. Leo's family, Madhya Pradesh Jesuits, religious men and women, and other relatives and friends.

Described as a pleasant companion, Fr. Leo was known for his simplicity, humility, and a broad, beaming smile. Born on 3 January 1942, he entered the Society of Jesus in 1963, and was ordained a priest in 1976. He was prefect and teacher at St. Xavier's, Ambikapur, director and superior at Vidya Sadan, Bhopal. He served as Socius to the Novice Master at Namna Novitiate, Ambikapur and demonstrated

exceptional care for the retired and sick members of the Province during his tenure at Khrist Milan Ashram, Ambikapur. He served also at Catholic Ashram, Baikunthpur from 2011 to 2016.

Despite facing hearing impairment most of his life, Fr. Leo continued his active ministries until a well-deserved rest at Khrist Milan Ashram, Namna, Ambikapur. It was from there that he was called to his heavenly reward. One can hope that Fr. Leo is now joyfully experiencing the heavenly choir's melodious hymns. His life is celebrated for its dedication to education, formation, and compassionate care for others in various ministries throughout the Madhya Pradesh Province.

I Agapit Tirkey, SJ



Lourduraj Arokiasamy, SJ (CEN)

Fr. Lourduraj Arokiasamy was born on 12 June 1945 in Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu. While he was studying at St. Joseph's, inspired by the life and works of the Jesuits, he entered the Society of Jesus on 10 June 1963 and was ordained a Jesuit priest on 25 April 1976. He pronounced his final vows on 04 February 1986.

He had close acquaintances with Muslim friends from his early childhood. Encouraged by Fr. Christian W. Troll, SJ, a German Jesuit, who taught at Vidyajyoti, Delhi, he specialized in Islamic studies. He was a much sought-after Jesuit for inter-religious dialogue in dioceses, and for teaching Islamic studies. As a visiting professor at various seminaries, he helped the seminarians understand and appreciate the Islamic religion.

An adorable teacher, a quality thinker, and a joyful and simple Jesuit, he preferred faithfulness to success in all that he did. While doing his Islamic studies at McGill University, Canada, he served as a spiritual minister in parishes and later in South America, Tanzania, and Kenya. Later he guided the young Jesuits in Berchmans Illam, Chennai and pre-novices at JPLI.

He suffered for about 10 months due to his illness and surrendered himself to the Lord on 12 December 2023, his 78th birthday according to his family narratives.

I Anto Arputha Raja, SJ



Alone - but never lonely

In the 1890's Western Australia's wool industry attracted Afghan camel drivers and they contributed much to the prosperity of Australia. When, in the 1920's and 1930's trucks started transporting wool, the camels were set free and the Afghans took up new occupations.

Once, as I walked through the city on a sunny spring day, I passed a green door in the high white wall abutting the pavement. I stopped, opened the door and entered the compound. A small white-washed mosque, with several arabesque arches, was centrally located, complete with facilities for ablutions for ritual purification.

I found the elderly, slightly-built caretaker of the mosque. His name was Iset Khan. He invited me to join him for tea where he lived — in the little room in the backyard of the mosque. He didn't use electric lights and so used a kerosene lamp. Having brewed the tea on a small gas stove, he served it with unassuming friendliness in a battered tin mug. He offered a very old chunk of fruitcake which I dunked in the tea. He was, I sensed, a sincere and good man.

He said, "The few Afghans left in the community, those descended from the camel-drivers of the last century, asked me to lead them in Friday Prayer. I'm also the caretaker. In return they allow me to live here. As you see, I live in safety and comfort." I said that in my experience very few people live so simply, to which he responded: "If I do not live life in a simple way, things will get complicated and I will create a web of frivolous goals that lead me toward the chains of materialism." I nodded agreement. He continued, "My focus, if not simple, would shift from a God-oriented life to a Godless, material existence. Prophet Muhammad once predicted that material wealth will be the cause of much evil amongst the people of the latter times."

I admired his quiet, contentment, his simple lifestyle, and service to the small community of Afghans who came for Friday prayers. Iset explained how, through his own example, he supported and practiced the central five observances of their faith: "These are giving witness to my faith, ritual prayer five times daily, giving alms to the poor even though I have very little myself, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and pilgrimage, if possible, to the city of Mecca."

He then explained his daily spiritual practices. "First I ritually wash, cleansing both mind and body. I wash my hands, arms, face, neck, and feet. My prayers are performed facing the direction of Mecca. Of course, praying together is preferred to solitary prayer. So while I pray with all on Fridays, I pray alone here on other days."

The old man was the first really impressive human being I had met beyond my family, who practiced a profound simplicity of life. He exemplified spirituality with integrity. Yes, he observed all the practices of his faith, and his faith impels him to brew and graciously offer a cup of tea, be courteous and hospitable to a stranger, and sincerely share the wisdom of a lifetime. His was a faith hidden under the mask of the ordinary and the humble. On parting, Iset Khan gave me a small card. It had a line from the mystic poet Rumi. It read, "Do not feel lonely, the entire universe is inside you."

Was he trying to explain his life lived all alone? Was it a nudge to me too? When we hold the entire universe inside us, why should we ever feel lonely? ❖

Rev. Dr. Meath Conlan is a Counsellor and Adult Educator. He travels frequently to India. He can be contacted at meathconlan@icloud.com



Pic courtesy: quora.com

After his retirement, Fr. Cyril Silva, SJ, (KAR), became the chaplain of the church attached to Mangalore Seminary. On one occasion, when he was reading out aloud the anonymous intentions of the devotees at a novena to Our Lady, he picked up a slip of paper which had the intention written in an annoyingly illegible hand.

After a minute or two of minute scrutiny, he finally deciphered the intention which simply stated: 'The favour I ask for is that I may pass in the SSLC examination.' Fr Silva read the intention aloud for all to hear, but only those close at hand heard what he added under his breath: "How will you pass if your handwriting is so bad?"

(sent by Melwyn Pinto, SJ)

**Intention
for
March, 2024**

FOR THE NEW MARTYRS

We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.



**Pope's Worldwide
Prayer Network**



Pic courtesy: sign.org



Women's Day



The idea of an international day came from Clara Zetkin, leader of the “women’s office” for the Social Democratic Party in Germany, while she was at a conference in Copenhagen in 1910. She proposed a celebration on the same day every year to press for demands.

London saw a march in support of women’s suffrage on 8 March 1914, and thousands of women in Russia protested to demand bread and peace on 8 March 1917 (23 February in the Julian calendar in use in Russia at the time), heralding the start of the Russian revolution. Four days later, the tsar was forced to abdicate, and the provisional government granted women the right to vote.

“International Women’s Day comes out of revolutionary movements among working-class women as well as [their] supporters,” says Temma Kaplan, an activist and retired professor of history at Rutgers University in the US. “It had an intellectual and public face because mobilisation was part of early socialist women’s and suffragist movements.”

The UN adopted the day in 1975, which it had declared international women’s year, and uses it to promote a particular issue, campaign or theme. IWD is now a public holiday in countries including Nepal, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Cambodia and Kyrgyzstan. In China, women get a half-day holiday.

The annual day has drawn criticism from feminists who say it risks becoming little more than a corporate Valentine’s Day, with companies using the occasion to “pinkwash” their brands rather than promote women’s equality. ❖

In India, a mural painted by women is being revealed at a metro station. In Mexico, protesters will be on the streets, demanding women’s rights. Jamaica will see the first all-female sitting of parliament. And in China, men will present the women in their lives with gifts. Happy International Women’s Day!

For years, women have marked the now-annual event on 8 March in different ways, but mostly to build momentum on issues that matter to them, and to inspire change.

The day’s origins date back to the beginning of the 20th century: in 1908, thousands of women marched through New York City, demanding better working hours and pay. A year later, the Socialist Party of America declared a Women’s Day.

Courtesy: (excerpts from an article in) The Guardian

WELL SAID

**"To all the little girls... never doubt that you are
valuable and powerful, and deserving of
every opportunity in the world
to pursue and achieve your dreams."**

- Hillary Clinton



Picture courtesy: cfr.org