

May- June, 2024

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA

AICUF's

1000

YEARS



Holidays can make us normal humans and saner Jesuits |
God calls us to Review and Reimagine |



Who trusts whom?

How many pleas for oneself or others,
asking favours general or specific, begin:

*'O Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I place all my trust in Thee'?*

How many sighs of gratitude mist the picture glass as it reflects
the supplicant lifting eyes to meet His loving eyes,

*'O Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I place all my trust in Thee'?*

How many waves of terror crash
and founder on the breakwater of

*'O Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I place all my trust in Thee'?*

And sometimes in a Silence
the speaker simply listens
to the Sacred Heart of Jesus say,
"I place all MY TRUST in THEE!"

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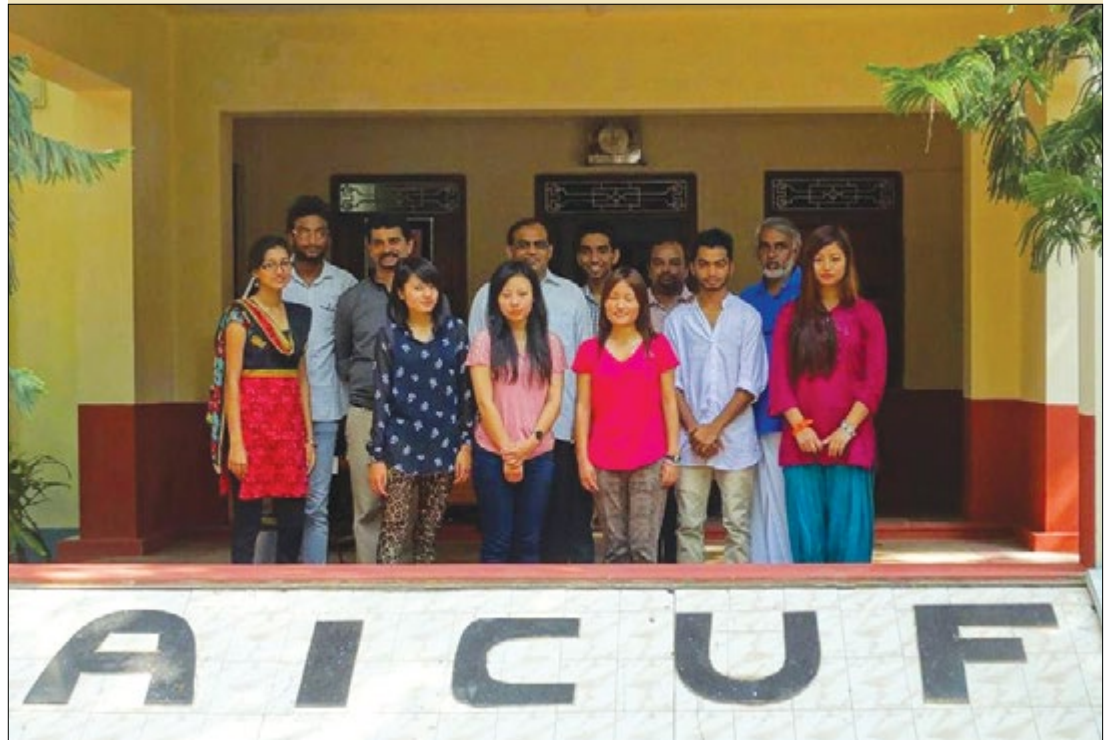
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Manage A between B and D

As I was cherry picking among the unrivalled contents of the February 2024 issue of *Jivan*, the article, "Pathways to health and happiness" by Jose Parappully, SDB caught my attention. Browsing through this article, I realized that one of the most chronic diseases that we face time and again is due to a five-letter word called "anger". The poorly managed anger is normally the main reason for many relationships to break-up. This soul stirring article helped me believe that to be healthy I need to improve my relationships by reconciling with others quickly.

Indeed, our life is between these two letters 'B' and 'D', i.e. Birth and Death. But what really matters is the 'C', i.e. the choices we make. I need to make a right choice to manage 'A', i.e. Anger and be free from the diseases that ultimately result in D, i.e. Death.

| Oswin Fernandes, NSJ | Bengaluru

Thanks for the article

St. Joseph is my favourite saint and my personal intercessor. So I want to thank *Jivan* for publishing the article 'Jesuits and St. Joseph', by Fr. Hedwig Lewis SJ in the issue of March '24. It was informative and inspiring. I was very happy to learn that we Jesuits have had a strong relationship with this great saint right from the beginning and he has been a father to us. I was delighted to learn through this article that the devotional bond between the humble saint and the Jesuits is long standing.

| Loordu Arul Oli J, (CEN) | Kolkata



My ego should die

I want to share the experience I had as one of the students of Vidyajyoti College of theology, Delhi, who participated at a three-day immersion programme to Varanasi. It was led by Fr Anil D'Almeida SJ, Professor at Vidyajyoti. I went as a seeker, driven by a quest for meaning, truth and understanding amidst religious animosity in contemporary India. The well-known philosophical analogy of four blind men describing an elephant helped me understand the plurality of gods. I perceived 330 million gods of Hinduism as diverse manifestations of one God. The lives of Hindus are intricately connected with the River Ganga. Along its banks, there are over 80 Ghats, though we could only visit a handful. Pilgrimages to these sacred sites offer devotees a renewed sense of purpose. However, politics, commercialization and tourism affect the impact of these sacred sites. A significant religious activity at the Ghats is the Ganga Aarathi. People believe that attending this ritual will free them from their sins and provide peace to the souls of their ancestors. The way people took part in this ritual, with faith and devotion, deeply affected me. I witnessed two cremations at Manikarnika Ghat, which reminded me that my ego should die and actions influenced by the ego are meaningless.

Despite being a sacred place to people of various religions, Varanasi has never faced serious communal conflicts. I learned from a priest in the diocese that leaders from different religions, along with professors from Banaras Hindu University (BHU), actively protested against communal violence, demonstrating a collective commitment to harmony.

St Mary's Cathedral in Varanasi stands out for its unique architecture blending Hindu religious ideas. This distinctive design fosters inter-religious dialogue, welcoming Christ Bhaktas in large numbers. The Varanasi Diocese, which organizes sound and light shows on the life of Jesus, also hosts iftar parties and invites the Muslim leaders.

| Joseph Jerard, (KAR) | Delhi

<p>Prayer Intentions</p> <p>May, 2024</p>	<p>FOR THE FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS AND SEMINARIANS</p> <p>We pray that religious women and men, and seminarians, grow in their own vocations through their human, pastoral, spiritual and community formation, leading them to be credible witnesses to the Gospel.</p>	
<p>June, 2024</p>	<p>FOR MIGRANTS FLEEING THEIR HOMES</p> <p>We pray that migrants fleeing from war or hunger, forced to undertake journeys full of danger and violence, find welcome and new opportunities in the countries that receive them.</p>	<p>Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network</p> 



WHAT DO YOU SAY?

STANY D'SOUZA, SJ
President, JCSA

“If I have a voice...”

You have surely heard about six lane expressways, Vande Bharat trains, malls, shiny airports, multi-storied buildings, ‘the strong and vibrant India’... But have you heard about people who struggle to find jobs, battle to live amidst the spiraling inflation, poverty, deprivation and social justice?

The above is indeed a depressing picture. But what is more disheartening is what Mallika Sarabhai said during an online conversation. Beginning with the greatest infestation, which is fear, she said: ‘We are a nation of terrified people... we look behind our shoulders all the time ... whether someone will tap on our jaw... trigger a valley of hatred ... pilloried...’

One can easily see that the edifice of a greater, bigger and stronger India is built on the vulnerable backs of the poor and the vulnerable.

Amidst a dark picture of our country, we have been through a long process of national elections. As usual, the poor and disadvantaged enthusiastically cast their votes proportionally more than the rich and the upper castes. However, the question is whether the country will provide for the active participants in the universal franchise adequate resources and opportunities to bloom and blossom so that there will be a smile on their face?

Since the 1991 economic reforms, all the allocation of resources has been done according to the market-based policies, which are unequal in endowments and opportunities, and which dissuade the governments from their role as instruments of social inclusion, and perpetuate inequality and injustice. Hence, the governments after governments have failed to commit to the causes and aspirations of the poor.

When the copy of this issue of *Jivan* reaches your hands, a new government will have been formed at the Centre. Is it unrealistic to expect a better future for our country, especially for the poor and the marginalized? Is it merely idealism to dream and exert pressure on the government to deliver a better life for the poor, and work to reduce inequality, provide employment and protect the environment?

In this context it is important to recall the last words of Sarabhai in the interview. She said: ‘Whatever has to happen will happen. My becoming a coward and not a seeker of truth and justice is not going to make me like myself when I wake up in the morning. If I have a voice, I must use it for all those who do not have the voice or who do not have the luxury ... If I throw that away, what worth is my life? ... my destiny ... genetics ... education ... isn't worth it ... my life is worthless.’

We have a mission of reconciliation and justice. We need to engage, empower and elevate the poor with equality and justice. What do you say?



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

M.A. JOE ANTONY, SJ
Editor

To a quiet place for some rest

Those days I didn't know what to tell my classmates when they would ask on a Thursday or Friday morning, “What are you doing this weekend?” The honest answer would have been, “Well, I haven't really thought about it.” Those American students would plan and prepare for their weekend that began on the Friday evening and went on till Sunday night. They would plan where they would go and with whom and what they would do – just to relax.

Things may have changed now. But those days they said it is true for all Indians. What would you think of when you had so much to do? You thought about what you would do, how you would do it and who could help you. What is really important is that the work had to be completed. Alright, what will you do when all your work is done? ‘Hm.. let's see when it is really over, if it is over.’

Those who were unkind used to say that Indians neither really worked during the week nor did they enjoy the weekend. In contrast the Westerners worked really hard during the week and really enjoyed themselves during the weekend. The rest and relaxation during the weekend readied them for work again on Monday morning.

Now we all know the common human need for rest and relaxation. We know also what happens to workaholics who ignore these.

Even God rested for a day after six days of creative work. Seeing the consequences of ceaseless work in his disciples, Jesus tells them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.” (Mark 6: 31)

If a superior, therefore, asks, ‘Why do you need a holiday?’ or ‘Why would you ask for a sabbatical?’ they cannot be leaders who have Jesus as their model.

I hope you have had or are having a few days of holidays. May they relax, refresh and recharge you!

We are happy to highlight in this issue AICUF's one hundred years. The student movement's centenary is truly something we Jesuits can be proud of. Will its future be as impactful as its past?

By the time this issue reaches your hands we would have learnt who is going to rule us for the next five years. Let us hope and pray that the news we hear on 4 June may gladden the heart of every true Indian who cherishes the idea of India!

He forgave the murderers of his parents

- VJ Seminar on peace and reconciliation

Vidyajyoti Institute of Religious Studies, Delhi, organized a three-Day International Seminar, called IRENIC-2024, on the theme, "Peace and Reconciliation: Journey Towards the Reign of God." It was held on 27-29 February '24.

After Fr. Raj Kumar, the principal of Vidyajyoti, welcomed the guests, the chief guest, Cardinal Antony Poola, inaugurated the seminar. He highlighted a few of Vidyajyoti's achievements and encouraged the faculty and students to continue to contribute intellectually and socially to the mission of Christ. Archbishop Anil J.T. Couto, of Delhi congratulated the VJ Family for taking a step towards bringing peace and reconciliation to this tumultuous world. In his keynote address, Bishop Lourdu Anandam of Sivagangai emphasised the essence of 'Public Theology and Ecclesial Leadership in Peace Building.' He stressed that our theology should not confine us to seminaries or institutions but should lead us to engage with people of different backgrounds.

Fr. Lancy Lobo, SJ, of the Indian Social Institute, Delhi, presented his paper on 'Sociological Perspectives on Reconciliation and Peace' and provided a vivid analysis and proposed practical suggestions for renewing peace in secular and religious societies. The third paper, 'Theological-Biblical Foundation' was presented by Fr. Valan C. Antony, SJ, with a response from Fr. Benny Thettayil, CMI, Director of Samanvaya Theology College, Bhopal. In his paper, Fr. Valan highlighted different biblical figures, especially St. Paul and Philemon, who played instrumental roles in bringing peace to the people. The first day concluded with a group discussion where participants shared their views on peace and reconciliation and how these could be implemented in various aspects of life.

The theme for the second day was 'International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives.' Dr. Marcel Uwineza, SJ from Hekima University, Kenya, presented a compelling case study of Rwanda, exploring themes of reconciliation and memory. The participants were deeply moved when he narrated his personal experience of forgiving the murderer of his parents and siblings during the apartheid. Dr. Clarence Devadoss discussed peace practices and inter-religious living in Malaysia-Singapore, while Fr. Bernardus Dirgaprimawan, S.J., shared insights on Bible-Quranic hospitality towards peace from an Indonesian perspective. These presentations offered diverse and thought-provoking inputs for the Indian audience.



Fr. James Ponniah from the University of Madras shared his views on sacred grounds, shared deities, and sacred harmony. Fr. Walter Fernandes, SJ focused on inter-ethnic conflicts and peace measures. Fr. Sahayaraj, Arul Kadal, Chennai, responded to these papers. Frs. Lawrence Antony, Anil D'Almeida, and Dominikus Surkristino presented their perspectives on intra-religious conflicts and peacemaking from the three major religions: Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. Engaging in discussions and Q&A sessions provided the participants with a comprehensive understanding of global perspectives on peace.

The third day focused on 'Best Practices in Reconciliation and Peace.' Dr. Manidra Nath Thakur from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Prof. Dr. Jaspreet Kaur from St. Stephen's College presented papers highlighting the significance of peace and reconciliation in contemporary society. A panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Daisy Panna, MBBS, featured perspectives from Fr Binoy Jacob, Director of Loyola Institute of Peace Initiatives; Adv. Sr. Sneha Gill, PBVM, Supreme Court Advocate and Former Minorities Commission Member; Rev. Fr. Fransiskus N.L. Teluma from Sanata Dharma University, Indonesia, and Dr. Sanjana Simon, Trans Rights Activist.

The discussion touched upon topics ranging from JCSA perspectives to transgender peace efforts, offering a holistic view of the various dimensions of peace-building. Indeed, it was a well-presented and eye-opening panel discussion. The sessions concluded with a synthesis session, emphasising the importance of peace as a sure way forward. The seminar concluded with a visit to Sapka Ghar, where Khudai Khidmatgar (K-K) volunteers gather to work towards their mission of promoting peace and harmony, providing participants with a practical understanding of peace initiatives. ❖

Sch. Pravin Jose, SJ (JAM)



Jesuits must be proud of AICUF's 100 years

Jesuits who shaped AICUF: Fr. P. Carty SJ (1924–1949), a professor of economics at St. Joseph's College, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, founded the Catholic Young Men's Guild (CYMG) in 1924, primarily for the Catholic students to deepen their faith, find its intellectual dimensions, and be its witnesses. It functioned in the form of study circles and discussion groups. *The Rally* was the official organ of the Guild. Catholic Young men's Guild became All India Catholic University Federation and Fr. Leguen, S.J. (1950–52) succeeded Fr. P. Carty as its Director and Editor of *The King's Rally*, and his presence in the movement was brief.

Fr. Pierre Ceyrac (1952–67) succeeded him as the National Director in 1952. He was thinking big and bold. National Congresses brought students from different parts of India. The very first Congress drew more than 2700 students. Students were made to realize that they should have contacts with the real world outside the campus. 'Work camps' were organised in remote villages, and they became the model for the government to start the National Service Scheme (NSS). Fr. Lawrence Colaco SJ (1967–70) succeeded Fr. Ceyrac as the National Director for a brief three years.

Then Fr. Claude De Souza (1970–1982) became the National Director of AICUF. This was the time when the radicalization of the student movement took place. He was able to change the movement from 'social work' to 'social action'. Many NGOs were formed by the former AICUFers, and many of them were involved in the liberative struggles of oppressed people and sectors such as Dalits, women,



children, and the landless, among others. A national seminar on 'Marxism and Christianity' in December–January 1970–71 was a turning point in the ideological orientation of the movement. It was AICUF that introduced 'Exposure' and 'Immersion' programmes in the training sessions, followed by a serious social or structural analysis.

Fr. Leo Tagore was the National Director of AICUF from 1982 to 1989. 'Back to the campus' and 'University to the Masses' were the two thrust areas that emerged in the famous 'Mylapore Minutes' of the movement. Students returned to campus after getting involved in the struggles of the people. AICUF also introduced a new term, 'Campus Culture.' Through this, the students were able to map completely various aspects of an educational institution. AICUF witnessed a crisis in 1987 when a non-Christian student was elected as the President of AICUF. There was a general acceptance

of the ideology that 'to be one hundred percent Christian is to be one hundred percent secular and human'. The Christian aspect of the movement was debated during this time, and finally, in the National Consultation of AICUF in 1988, many of the issues such as 'Christian identity', 'Secularization' and 'Student Centrality' were discussed, incorporating such epoch-making ideas. A National Consultation was held in 1989, and it accepted the recommendations of the Constitution Committee and gave the movement a written Constitution for the first time.

Fr. Manuel Alphonse SJ (1989–1995) was appointed the first National Advisor (till now it was 'National Director')

of AICUF. The new Constitution gave full autonomy to the States. Each State gained the freedom to have any name for the movement. The Gujarat movement is AGSDM (All Gujarat Student Development Movement), and in some of the colleges in Karnataka and elsewhere, it's 'Students for Secularism' and 'Students for Democracy'. It was BACSA (Bangalore Catholic Students Association) in Bangalore and SOSA (Student Organisation for Social Action) in Andhra Pradesh.

AICUF also established National Commissions on Women, Dalits, and Tribals. There were major changes in the form and structure of AICUF as students from marginalised communities became members of AICUF.

Jesuit Fathers K. Amal (1995–2002), Henry Jerome (2003–2010 and 2013–14), Selvin (2010–2013), and Emmanuel (2014–2021) and J. Benjamin (since 2021) worked with the new structure, strengthening the State units of AICUF, while at the same time strengthening inter-state collaboration on the thrust areas of AICUF.

The strength of the movement is that the advisers at the various levels (national, state, regional, and unit) accompany the students in their struggle for and with



the people of the oppressed sectors. Some Jesuits became full-timers in the movement either when they were doing their regency or soon after their ordination. Fr. Cedric Prakash, a doughty fighter for Human Rights in India, was a full-time member of the movement, found his vocation in the movement, and became a Jesuit. Fr K. Amal who later became the National Adviser and Fr Maria Augustine, who became the State Adviser were earlier full-timers..

Ideologues of the Movement:

While the movement had national Directors and, after the adoption of the Constitution, national advisers, state, regional, and unit advisers, the movement has been guided by some great Jesuits and lay persons as trainers. Till the 1980s, both social and theological reflections were given by Frs. Sebastian Kappen, Samuel Rayan,



Ms. Iris Almeida went from AICUF to IMCS (International Movement of Catholic Students) and later worked in Canada with Human Rights movements and was instrumental in the founding of the ICC (International Criminal Court) through the Rome Statute in 1998. ICC was the first mechanism to bring the rogue leaders before the criminal court for trial and punishment. Mr. Gnana Prakasam founded LRSA (Legal Resources for Social Action) in Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu, trained many for the Panchayati Raj institutions, joined Amnesty International (AI), and worked in its London and Hong Kong offices. Cecil Noronha became an IAS officer, and Shashi Minz became an IRS officer. Mr. Henry Tiphagne was a full-time member of AICUF before he founded Tamil Nadu People's Watch to monitor HR violations and take up campaigns against custodial torture. The moment there is any news about torture and custodial death, he is at the forefront raising his voice and demanding action.

Contribution of AICUF to the Nation: The singular contribution of AICUF to the nation has been the concept of human rights introduced by AICUF through the 'work camps' in the 1960s and the launching of NGO's and CBO's in the 70's and 80's. AICUF supported and was part of many people's movements, be it the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) of Ms. Medha Patkar or the National Fisher Folk Forum launched by Fr. Thomas Kocherry. By this time, AICUF was fully involved in the environmental movements against big dams at Koel Karo and the shooting range at Netharhat.

AICUF made a significant contribution to the creation of Jharkhand - a state for the tribal people. AICUF also contributed substantially for the RTI and RTE (Right to Information and Right to Education) Acts to become enforceable laws. Ex-AICUFers of the movement introduced Human rights education in educational institutions. One would find at least one person with the AICUF background in people's movements, social action groups, or groups that fight for human rights in India.

Future Directions: One of the great contributions of Jesuits through higher education was to launch a movement like AICUF a hundred years ago. By any standards, its contribution to society at large has been substantial. Jesuits must find new ways to support and take forward this movement into the 21st century for the next seventy five years. ❖

Dr. Bernard D'Sami is Senior Fellow, LISSTAR, Loyola College, Chennai. He was the National Lay Animator of AICUF and Co-editor of Rally and Editor of FAR.

and George Soares Prabhu. Social Analysis was given by Frs. De La Gueriviere (often called G)) and Stan Lourdusamy. Later, Fr. Manuel Alphonse provided the social analysis and a great lay leader, Mr. Ossie Fernandes, founded the HRF (Human Rights Foundation). Prof. S.J.A. Packiaraj and Prof. Bernard D'Sami became the first lay national animators of the movement, conducting several training programmes on the movement's history, ideology, and challenges. Fr. Ambrose Pinto was instrumental in leading the movement to fight communalism.

Impact of AICUF: Some of the ex-AICUFers who played a major role at the international, national, and world levels of civil society are: Ms. Margaret Alva, PS Sangma, M.M. Jacob, and Mr. Bala Pazhanoor were Union Ministers, Governors, and Speakers of the Lok Sabha. Dr. Babu Mathew was the director of Action Aid and professor of labour law at the National Law School in Bangalore. Dr. Raj Kumar went on to become the Secretary General of ICMICA (a movement of Catholic intellectuals). Dr. Victor Karunan succeeded Dr. Raj Kumar as Secretary General (ICMICA) and later joined UNICEF, working in New York at its headquarters and later as the country representative of Malaysia.

Together through Lent and Ramadan

This year Ramadan coincided with Lent, offering a beautiful occasion to make of this time a moment of interreligious dialogue and learning. I relocated to Delhi for work a few months ago. A providential meeting with Fr Joseph Victor Edwin SJ, a professor of theology and Christian Muslim relations at Delhi's Vidyajyoti College of Theology and Secretary of the Islamic Studies Association, led to my being introduced to a little booklet titled *Journeying with Muslims: Listening, Praying and Working Together* by Cardinal Michael Louis Fitzgerald.

Fr Edwin spoke to me of an initiative that some Christian friends had embarked on: to accompany our Muslim brothers and sisters throughout Ramadan by reading a daily excerpt from this booklet. At the end of Ramadan and after celebrating Easter we were to meet online together to share the experience.

I found the idea very appealing, as I felt a great need to learn more about the beliefs of my new Muslim friends in Delhi. 10 March marked the start of the holy season during which Muslims fast every day from dawn to sunset. That morning after my customary meditation on sacred Christian texts, I read a chapter from Cardinal Fitzgerald's little book.

Day after day I discovered the titles of the Suras in the Holy Quran, contemplating their spiritual wisdom. I felt I was entering into a heart-to-heart dialogue with Muslims. It was a discovery for me to learn that Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is the most joyous month for Muslims around the world, even though it is a month of fasting, as it is also a month of prayer, reflection, and community. 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.

Like Lent, Ramadan invites believers to return to their spiritual core. Like Lent it is a moment to pause, turn the noise down and be more attentive to the life of the Spirit. I felt one with my Muslim friends in this time of deep self-reflection and reassessment of my relationship with God and my fellow human beings.

The day of our online meeting arrived. It was such a joy to connect across continents with friends from Islamic, Baha'i and Christian faith hailing from India, Italy, Algeria and Congo. Professor Gaetano Sabetta expertly moderated the session, switching effortlessly from English to Italian to ensure that the sharing of all present was fully and faithfully conveyed. After an initial prayer each participant shared the experience of having lived a truly meaningful Ramadan,



Pic courtesy: arabiclanguageonline.com

sharing one's own faith with others of a different belief, in a discovery of shared fraternity.

Professor Nadjia Kebour, a lecturer at the Missiology Department of the Pontifical Urbaniana University, Rome related how the atmosphere of Ramadan is hardly felt in Italy, where she lives now. It made her recall what happened in her hometown in Algeria where the joy of Ramadan and each day's Iftar is felt throughout the community. Yet she felt deep joy when the students and staff greeted her on the feast of Eid, and she sincerely felt the participation and closeness of all. Fr. Hemprey from Congo, a student of Prof. Nadija shared his gratitude for the witness she gives to her faith in their university.

Silvano and Angela from Salerno in Italy are of the Baha'i faith, a tiny minority in the country. Angela shared how she is learning the Arabic language and is studying the Koran to be able to know better her friends of Muslim faith, recounting a number of episodes of offering prayers and concrete help to people of other faiths. Experiences were shared on the insights gained in accompanying our Muslim friends this Ramadan, rediscovering the attributes of God like Forgiveness and Mercy. Fr Edwin shared about the beauty of the symbolism of Sura 95 al-tin (The Fig), which vividly expresses the fruitfulness of man's life and destiny when lived in communion with God.

We concluded by reciting together the first Sura of the Koran, the "Al-Fatiha" in English, Arabic and Italian, giving praise to God. The online session was truly an experience of brotherhood and sisterhood, a communion of the celebration of the abundant life in God that we are reminded of through Easter and Eid. ❖

Ms. Rose Aloysius is a Chartered Accountant from Mumbai. She is deeply passionate about the culture of unity and universal brotherhood and is very active in formation programmes done for teens and youth and in Ecumenical and Interreligious dialogue.



AICUF: A Students Movement that has always celebrated

All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF) is getting ready to have the Centenary Celebration this year, 2024, with a history of ten decades of celebration of young students and their youthful advisers. Those who know AICUF will feel happy to recall that every gathering in AICUF has been a celebration. Right from the inception, the Chaplains and Directors and others in governing positions have affirmed this.

Every member of CSU (Catholic Students Union or as fondly called Catholic Service in the University by the great Fr. Pierre Ceyrac, SJ) or AICUF member was happy to go to a meeting and they did it cheerfully. They attended study sessions, preceded by social work, social service or social action. Some members were ecstatic, some jubilant, and others were pleased. Thus, from the view of the student members, it has been one hundred years of joyful celebrations, punctuated at times by brief moments of sour or bitter feelings.

From the time of Fr Peter Carty, SJ of 1924 to the present National Adviser, Fr J. Benjamin SJ, AICUF has always been celebrating as a movement. From its inception (1920s), with Fr Carty, Catholic Young Men in their Guild (CYMG) to 1940s, Catholic Students in their Union (CSU) got 'informed' and 'inspired' (*Carty, The Rally*) to move into a Federation in South India along with International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS). Beneath all dominant discussions were cheerful concern and care of the neighbours.

Every transition in AICUF brought bafflement and wonder. The early 50s gave chance to the members of the Federation in the nascent independent India to raise the slogan, "We are India, we are the revolution" (National Congress I, 1952). In the mid-fifties, the Constitution of AICUF was reviewed. The sixties paved way for a high level of awareness on justice, especially in the early seventies. The student members of AICUF were angry about the plight of the Indian people and declared they would work for transformation towards a revolution: "We were born in an unjust society, we are determined not to leave it as we have found it (Poonamallee, 1970-71). It was righteous anger against social injustice.

The then National Director, Fr Claude D'Souza, SJ, who guided the student members with the Poonamallee



Declaration, Goa Statement (1971) and Project Know India (1972) vividly recalled the impact of the seventies in 1998 AICUF national consultation thus: “The new orientations of AICUF which the consultation in Poonamallee brought about is a paradigm shift from a Church-centered, inward looking, exclusive organization to people-oriented, kingdom-oriented, outward looking and inclusive movement; from an organization that emphasized relief and development activities and leadership training to becoming a means for social change, to liberation, structural change and leadership formation.”

As in all human endeavors, the ambivalent dimensions were found in AICUF Movement which was a Federation structurally. Then in 1989, a ‘phoenix’ event happened. The earlier phase of AICUF disappeared and a new AICUF emerged. Fr Manuel Alphonse, SJ, the new National Adviser, collated the impacts after 5 years in 1994: “The possibly greatest result of the processes around the 1989 Convention and later has been the significant emergence, within AICUF, of the ‘first generation students’ from the marginalized sections of Tribals, Dalits, and Women”.

The State Adviser of Bihar, Fr Beni Ekka, spelt out the challenge before Adivasis: “ In the context of today, the tribal communities need to keep and promote their uniqueness and simultaneously need to be integrated with the Indian polity, the greater society” (ibid, 68).

The Dalit world view came out as a declaration by Dr Perinbam Antony Raj, SJ: “I believe that I am a human being and I am conscious of it. As a human being I never consider my fellow human beings as strangers or aliens. This conviction is the guiding principle or philosophy of my life and it should be for all. Human relation is possible for me only with those who share a similar world view and ethos”.

AICUF Women’s voice had an inner core of pragmatic idealism, expressed by Ms. Vani Joga, the then National full-timer: “We are dreamers. Dreams of making this society a ‘just one’ is all that we see. Woman and man will make it a just society. We, in AICUF, do

believe in this philosophy, but we may have to erase the so-called “distinction illusion from the conscience” of our male-student members and, to some extent, our women-students too!”

AICUF’s Documentation Centre became vibrant with students who did research and deep study. The AICUF magazine, *The Rally*, reached the hands of the students and others regularly every month with thematic issues on thrust areas. *The Rally* started using a simple language to make students understand the articles.

From the beginning till date, AICUF has introduced to the students ethnic societal groups in India, personalities, their places, functions and varieties of resources. The Centenary celebrations may highlight individual luminaries. However, there were two categories of individuals: student leaders and advisers who were on the frontline. But there was an equal number of great contributors who were on the back stage. The exposure camps, and great events like congresses, consultations and conventions, seminars, leadership camps, meets of commissions and forums – all enlightened AICUF members. Ex-AICUFers became resource persons, teachers and educators.

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They bring to us a
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One hundred years! They bring to us a great sense of concern and care, wonder and bafflement, satisfaction, justified anger against injustice, reflection and retreating from land, hamlet and slums, re-visiting world views, while celebrating in every decade and in every gathering. The extra-ordinary experience has been able to *inform* simple innocent students and *inspire* many committed leaders. It introduced local and global issues to different students on different levels and helped them respond to these issues. May it be possible for AICUF Movement to be a phoenix once again to declare ‘Education, Solidarity and Struggle!’ and to have a joyful celebration of human life! ❖

Mr. S.J.A. Packiaraj is a former HOD of the Department of English at Loyola College, Chennai. He was the National Animator of AICUF for five years.



My journey with the AICUF

My journey in and with the AICUF began in 1968, when I began my graduate studies at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. Those post - Vatican II days were defining moments of grace for the Church; besides, India, as a fledgling nation, was breaking into adulthood.

For the AICUF, that era was historic indeed! Its visionary chaplains, animators and guides, geared the movement to prophetically respond to the challenges of the times and to the cries of the poor! It was a daunting task indeed to make the Catholic university students become women and men for others, who could radiate spiritual depth, intellectual rigour and social activism. I and several of my peers have benefitted tremendously from the formation received in the AICUF and have put the same to great use over the years – for the Church and country! Fifty years later, as one looks back, a feeling of deep gratitude overwhelms one. This centenary year of the AICUF is fraught with newer and more different challenges.

The Church is in a significant phase of its Synodal journey; besides, the country is on the throes of a Constitutional crisis. For youth today, particularly those in the AICUF, given the many distractions with the rapid technological progress and arrival of artificial intelligence, the going will not be easy. The greatest challenge to the movement today is to reinvent itself, to provide the spiritual depth and intellectual rigour which is so desperately needed and above all, to be visible and vocal on behalf of those who need us the most.

AICUFer since 1968; AICUF North West Regional President (1970 - 72); AICUF National full-timer (1972-73)



Ms. Jenny Toppo

A way of life for me

“The purpose of ideology is not to set people right. It is to equip them to fight for their own right.” Terry Eagleton. The reason why AICUF has been sustainable for 100 years is, I think, AICUF's ideology. It shapes the student's life and moulds their views, helping them see the social reality. AICUF has been a gathering of young minds advocating for change, igniting social progress. From marches for the rights of marginalised to environmental protests, AICUF has always been challenging the status quo and protecting the environment. Utilizing social media and creative tactics, the movement mobilizes youth for more than a just society. Ideology of the movement now has become a way of life for me. The way I think of society and my social concerns have been shaped by the principles and activities of AICUF. I feel proud to be an Adivasi and AICUFer.

A part-time animator of the Jharkhand State unit of AICUF, Ms. Jenny Toppo represented the AICUF at the IMCS World Assembly in Zambia in 2019.

An Interfaith Iftar in Varanasi

An Interfaith Iftar was held at the Bishop's House in the Cantonment, Varanasi, organized by Bishop Eugene Joseph of Varanasi on 23 March '24. Fr. Anil D' Almeida SJ, a Comparative Theology professor and Indologist, who was part of the organizing committee, highlighted that although Varanasi is primarily known as a holy city for Hindus, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant presence of Muslims within its sacred boundaries. The atmosphere of the interfaith congregation was filled with positivity as the Azan and Maghrib prayers echoed in this Catholic place, he added.

After the Iftar, Mufti of Benares Abdul Bathin Nomny led the prayer, symbolizing unity and harmony among the various faiths. A diverse range of people, including Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Kabir Panthis, and other religious-minded individuals, participated in this beautiful display of brotherhood and sisterhood.



Bishop Eugene Joseph of Varanasi emphasized the importance of collective efforts in promoting and safeguarding human dignity and religious freedom across all nations. This event is proof of the power of dialogue and the Church's role as a bridge-builder in fostering harmony in society, he said.

Iftar is the evening meal that breaks the fast observed by Muslims during the month of Ramadan. Many Muslims, Christians, and people of diverse faiths hold iftar as an expression of religious and social solidarity.

Our Delhi Correspondent

Honourary Doctorate to Fr Ignacimuthu



St. Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK) organised the fifth Convocation ceremony on 19 February '24 at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, New Town. During the convocation, SXUK

conferred the Doctor of Science (D.Sc, Honoris Causa) on Fr Savarimuthu Ignacimuthu, SJ. (MDU), a bio-scientist, renowned for his notable contributions in academics and research works. SXUK flew him all the way from the Creighton University, USA to receive this award.

Dr. Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for 'Sustainable Energy for All' was the Chief Guest, who delivered the convocation address. He congratulated the university for providing quality education and its various efforts to develop society.

Dr. Somak Sen



Holidays can make us Normal humans and saner Jesuits

There was a time when all the 'formed' Jesuits in the old Madurai Province were almost forced to go for annual holidays to Kodaikanal, a summer resort, a fantastic place for rest and annual retreat. The reasons were that many Jesuits - both locals and foreigners - became ill or died due to the excessive heat during the summer; and they deserved holidays after slogging throughout the year in the mission fields.

I become nostalgic, thinking about the time when we, the Juniors from Beschi College, Dindigul, were shepherded by the good old Fr. Lawrence Sundaram, our Juniorate Dean, to La Providence in the Kodai hills, a serene place resonant with the sweet birdsong and the mini waterfalls and rivulets. Fr. Sundaram would take us for long walks every day around the Kodai Lake and to places of interest. He would encourage us saying that after some practice we would get 'mountain legs.' It came true one day, as we were able to walk up to Berijam Lake, more than 22 kms away.

Feeling privileged to spend holidays in an enviable summer resort, being far removed from the hustle and bustle of cities, relishing the freedom from classes, assignments and exams, enjoying the visual beauty

of forests and lakes, breathing clean fresh air, feeling proud of great 'achievements' like climbing mountains, and strengthening the bond among us Jesuits by pulling others' legs, leisurely conversations and loud, youthful singing... were a bundle of rare gifts and priceless experience! The summer holiday happened to be an excellent treat whose sensual memories will linger forever.

During the following three summers, Fr. Vincent Miranda, the wise and affectionate superior for the scholastics at Berchmans Hall, Chennai, told us strictly not to ask for exemption from going to Shembaganur for holidays. Each year, we had an extraordinary time as we had Quinzaine, which means a period of 15 days of rest and excellent food, entertainment, with a new superior just for those 15 days. Thanks to the practical and sensible French Jesuits who initiated Quinzaine!

Who among us doesn't need the time for rest, a salubrious atmosphere for relaxation, and nutritious food for recuperation? Is it the luxury of only the affluent and the glamorous film stars? Sabbath is not only the day of the Lord, but it is also a day for the family to be together and for the poor to be relieved from daily toil.

However, we, Indians, think poorly of the indispensable vacation from time to time. Our culture's craze to invest in gold and property is allergic to 'wasting' money in travel and in rewarding oneself duly with a few days off from regular drudgery.

If we have the heart to be still, sitting under the canopy of a beautiful sky, and enjoying those mesmerizing ranges of hills, or on the beaches of deep,

our innermost thoughts and inclinations objectively so that discernment is made relatively easy.

No doubt, work is indispensable, sacred and rewarding; it purifies us; offers us an identity; and gives meaning to our life. Viktor Frankl said in his famous book, *Man's Search for Meaning* that along with love and ability to manage unavoidable suffering, work can give us meaning in life. However, becoming a



unfathomable oceans, under the shade of lovely trees, all of us will be enlightened like the Buddha. Even if becoming an enlightened person is not in our bucket list, we'll, at least, calm our anxious minds, reduce our psychological stress, and loosen our taut muscles and become resilient in our workaday world.

A holiday may mean getting lost in nature like the great Romantic poet, William Wordsworth, or St. Kateri Tekakwitha, referred to as a 'child of nature', beloved St. Francis of Assisi, who considered nature as a "sacramental expression of God's generous love", or our own Father Ignatius who shouted in ecstasy, "Sanctas Trinitas!" We are sure to treasure such moments of experiential joy of being one with nature.

If we could practice mindfulness when we are surrounded by beautiful nature, we'll store positive images in our subconscious; serenity will be enshrined in the core of our beings; a subtle joy will seep into our tumultuous lives; an oasis will appear as we journey through burning deserts; and we can see our lives and

workaholic is not a virtue; Will not Jesus say to us, his disciples, "Come away, and rest a while"?

A vacation offers many benefits like a change in our daily life, and change of work that's desirable. Otherwise, life becomes dull and colorless, daily routine becomes insipid, our executive mind becomes ineffective, and even ministry becomes a mere routine. A change of place will be refreshing, replenishing. A vacation offers us an opportunity to learn about many things such as new cultures, geography, tasting different cuisines, listening to the dialect of a new place, peeping into the historicity of different nations and cities, relishing the art and architecture of various churches, temples and mosques.

A vacation will keep the mid-life crisis, mission fatigue and burn-out at bay. Holidays can make us 'normal' humans and saner Jesuits! ❖

Fr. M.A. Emmanuel Arockiam, SJ (MDU) is the Executive Director of the Department of Counselling Psychology, St. Joseph's College, Trichy, Tamil Nadu. He did His Ph.D. in Counselling Psychology at Marquette University, Milwaukee, U.S.



“A time to be born...”

In a beautiful garden, a honey bee flew from a rose to a lily, then to a daisy and from a daisy to a jasmine. It enjoyed the nectar in each flower. The honey bee had no worry, no fear but just flew from one flower to the other. Suddenly a sparrow, which was looking for prey, came down in high speed and picked up the honey bee. In a second the honey bee was gone.

I woke up and realized it was a dream. I realized I had dozed off while travelling in a train to Chennai. Since it was a sad, shocking dream, what I felt must have been noticeable to my fellow passengers. They looked at me strangely. They must have been thinking, ‘What is wrong with this young man?’



But I couldn't forget the honey bee. I had a window seat and so I kept looking out, enjoying the beauty of fields, tress and hills far away. But the honey bee kept disturbing me. A woman, who must be in her forties, was sitting opposite to me. She tapped on my knee and asked, "Did you have a bad dream?" I nodded my head. She smiled and said, "Don't worry. It was just a dream."

For a moment I saw in her a mother who tried to comfort me. That gave me the freedom to describe my dream to her, the dream of the sparrow and honey bee. She listened attentively and when I finished, she smiled again. She said, "Son, they call it the life cycle of a honey bee. A honey bee comes into the world, and enjoys life to its fullest. How does a honey bee survive? It depends on the nectar in the flowers. That is its food. While the honey bee lives with the flower's nectar, how will a sparrow survive? It needs the honey bee and other small creatures to survive. So it is all a cycle, son."

I was annoyed. "Well, imagine the honey bee was your child. What will you feel then?"

She smiled again and began to talk. "I am Mira. I am a teacher in one of the best schools in Chennai. When I was 24, as I was beautiful, my parents looked for a handsome guy and they found one. He was a doctor. He was as kind as he was handsome. After two years of happy married life I gave birth to twins. But we were horrified. Both the girls were deformed. The elder girl's head was abnormally big and the younger one's legs were abnormal. She had a hole in her heart. My husband could not accept these two babies. Even I found it difficult to call them my children. But eventually I found the strength to accept them and care for them. When we returned to our house from the hospital, all our neighbours looked at the girls and they could not hide their shock. They started distancing themselves from us.

"What about your husband?" I asked.

"Well, he was a loving, caring man. But after the birth of these children, he became a different man. He began to blame me for their abnormalities. He started to come home late after drinking. If I asked him why he was late, he would beat me up. When my maternity leave was over, I started to work again in the school. On my way to the school, I used to pass by a church. Since I was a Hindu, till then I had not bothered to go in. But that day I entered and saw a beautiful statue of a woman with the dead body of a young man on her lap. Seeing me looking at the statue intently, a woman who came in asked me, "Do you know who these two are?" I shook my head. She said, "The mother is Mary. The one on her lap is her son, Jesus." As I kept looking, thinking of her sorrow and grief, it seemed that the Mother looked at me and whispered something."

"What could it be?" I asked.

"My husband became an alcoholic and lost his job. His health began to deteriorate and he died on the fifth birthday of my twins. Three months later my babies too fell ill and died soon. I was broken, and could not accept all that had happened. But I kept going to that church on the way to my school to gaze at that statue. I thought she whispered, "I understand your pain. But move on." I did move on. My twins are gone, but now I have someone to care for. I adopted a girl, an abandoned baby."

I looked out and realized we were nearing the Chennai Central station. She looked at me and said, "So, son, honey bees will die. Honey bees will be born. Sparrows will die. Sparrows will be born. It's all a cycle."

I looked at her gratefully and said, "Thank you. You have taught me so much." ❖

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While the honey bee lives with the flower's nectar, how will a sparrow survive? It needs the honey bee and other small creatures to survive. So it is all a cycle, son.



AICUF and Women



Pic courtesy: unexploredjourneys.weebly.com

Through a gender lens

At this historical juncture, when the AICUF celebrates its centenary, looking at AICUF's journey through a gender lens is essential. The significant Poonamallee declaration, 1971, declared, 'We were born in an unjust society and we are determined not to leave it as we have found it'. This brought in an ideological and strategical shift in the AICUF from personality-cum-development oriented approach to a liberation-oriented and movement-centred approach.

This liberating development took place when the women's movement emerged across India. The gender consciousness in the AICUF too organically emerged in the 80s. The declaration

adopted in the 1986 Annual Women's Meet, which said, 'Identify and affirm that our primary task is the overthrow of Patriarchy and Capitalism' stood for another paradigm shift. This stand against capitalist patriarchy set a foundation to collectively look at the women's cause in the following decades.

Ensuring gender equality within AICUF:

This journey began with a self-evaluation of AICUF on 'the status, the role of decision-making and discrimination of women in the movement'. Women students felt strongly that achieving gender equality within the movement is key to fighting for the cause of women. This led the 3rd National AICUF Convention, 1989, to formally proclaim that

its thrust areas were the emancipation of Women, Dalits, and Tribals. This paved the way for a structural change in AICUF.

Empowering women's leadership:

The AICUF realized that if it ought to foster women's leadership in the larger society it has to first foster it within the movement. Following the 1989 vision, concerted efforts were made in the 90s to strengthen the leadership of marginalized students, and other women students. With Tamil Nadu pioneering this effort, in the early 90s, the women's commission was set up in most of the States and at the national level in 1999.

This ensured women's representation in leadership from the unit to the national level, though equal representation remains a challenge even now. However, though they were not many, women students emerged as strong leaders spearheading the student movements even at the Asia-Pacific level. Today several women ex-aicufers are leading women and Dalit movements, human rights, and social justice initiatives.

Addressing gender discrimination:

The organization of several women's students-only programmes, workshops, and conventions, publication of innumerable articles on women's rights in *The Rally*, organizing and getting involved in various campaigns and protests against the commodification of women and violence against them, in the last five decades have played a major role in empowering women students. These have helped build a gender perspective in the movement, address gender discrimination and collectively work with women's movements. At the same time, the demand of women students to give equal focus on empowering them while educating all (especially male) students on gender perspectives is yet to be

taken up. The movement has not paid adequate attention to sensitizing male students.

Building solidarity among the marginalized groups and students:

At a time when there was not much coordination between Dalit and Tribal students and students who did not belong to these marginalized groups, AICUF created a platform for collective reflection among all students on the challenges of marginalized groups. It did it through caste, class, and gender perspective programmes and workshops. This paved the way for a greater understanding of the intrinsic relationship among caste, class, and gender; and the importance of addressing intersectional discrimination. Further, it built solidarity among the different marginalized groups and students and led to a collective student voice against all forms of discrimination and oppression.

The present: We should note that AICUF commemorates its 100th year in a very challenging time. The patriarchy built on the premises of casteism and sexism, is trying its best to re-establish itself more vigorously and violently than before. Fascist forces have unleashed heinous crimes against women such as what we witnessed in Manipur, Hathras, and Jammu.

The future: In this context, how the AICUF should take forward the women's cause demands a serious reflection. Would it review its strategy to politically empower women students? Secondly, would AICUF initiate a self-evaluation on the two long-standing demands of women students: a) ensuring that women students have an equal role in decision-making and b) building a strong women's advisory team at the state and national levels? ❖

How the AICUF should take forward the women's cause demands a serious reflection. Would it review its strategy to politically empower women students?

Rajakumari Michael, called Raji by some, is Co-Convenor, Tamil Nadu Ex-Aicufers Forum. Formerly she was the Tamil Nadu Women's Commission Coordinator and member of IMCS Asia Pacific Team.

Ecojesuits propose Solar energy in all Jesuit institutions

Zonal level Ecojesuits meetings were organized in April, '24. The South Zone met on 5,6 April 2024 at the Archbishop's house in Pondicherry, while the West Zone Ecojesuits met on 11, 12 at Vinyalaya, Mumbai. The North Zone had its meeting on 14, 15 at St. Alphonse Social and Agriculture Centre, Woodcot, Kurseong and those of the Central Zone met on 16, 17 at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi.

At these zonal meetings ten points were taken up for the sharing, deliberation and discussion. **Actions done so far:** Each Ecojesuit presented a report of actions done so far in their Provinces in the area of ecology. We honestly admitted that

collectively as Ecojesuit network, not many things have been done at the Province level. A lot of actions and programmes have been done individually by the different institutions and ministries in the Provinces. **Empowered Ecology Commission:** As the field of ecology cuts across all our ministries, it must permeate all our ministries and institutions. Hence, we need to have an empowered ecology commission with proper vision, mission, mandate and structure to guide and monitor all our ministries in the Province. Coordinators especially of Social Action, Higher Education and School Education commissions have to be part of this network and



actively collaborate as they are important ministries in the Provinces.

Plans for the coming academic year: Each Province Ecojesuit will have the commission meeting to evolve the action plans for the next academic year by 15 June 2024 and start implementing them. Our Jesuit houses and institutions must be models of ecofriendly living, lifestyle and practices. Each Province will identify and develop one or two centres for training our students and people on ecology.

Zonal level action plans: West Zone: Eight Projects have been proposed for the West Zone and they will start realizing these plans once the Provincials approve them. I. Communication, Advocacy and Research - CARE: 1. Promote Natural Farming for sustainability through soil analysis, preparation and use of natural fertilizers using indigenous sources. 2. Work at conscientisation for the Elimination of the use of Fossil Fuels: collection and analysis of the available material, preparation of study material for use in schools, parishes etc and dissemination of this information through workshops and media platforms. II. Renewal Energy Network - REN: 1. Adopt Solar energy in all our Jesuit Institutions in the West Zone, with the goal of reaching full dependence on green energy within 3 years, as a demonstration of this possibility for the larger community. 2. Acquire and encourage the use of bio-gas plants for households in the rural areas, including our own institutions, as a replacement for imported LPG or firewood (using the expertise gained in Belgaum). III. Spirituality, Education, Awareness and Lifestyle – SEAL: 1. Create leaders through an Eco Club in each Jesuit School, which will network with other Schools intra-Province and inter-Provinces. 2. Form an effective Eco Group in every Jesuit Parish that will network with other Parishes, Social Centres and with Schools across the Zone. IV. Agriculture and Natural Resource Management – ANRM: **Create a model village** in each Province in the West Zone based on the SDGs 1-6, 12 and 13. It includes conservation and regeneration of natural resources, promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, of indigenous medicines and of alternative

energy, with research and documentation related to NRM. In the next six months each Province will identify the village (preferably a marginalized community) and conduct a baseline survey. **Create a Model Slum** in an urban area of each Province.

For these 8 Projects, every Province will take the responsibility for their implementation in the entire Zone, through active communication and sharing of expertise and funding sources. Each Province will have a coordinator for each Project, so that the 4 coordinators can be in active communication. 5. Networking partners: Each Province will identify some INGOs, NGOs, Civil Society Groups and Peoples' Movements and network with them. Thus, we will participate in their projects and welcome them to be part of our projects. South Zone has identified 'Friends of the Earth' and 'Auroville International Communities' as networking partners. Central Zone will network with Lokmanch – now called Ensuring Social Protection.

Roadmap towards COP – 29: In order to prepare ourselves towards COP – 29 in Azerbaijan: awareness generation or conscientization of our students and people on global warming and take up and promote adaptation and mitigation measures, making our legislators and leaders come up with ecofriendly policies and programmes through advocacy and lobbying and make them accountable in the actualization of these policies.

Meetings: We shall have at least one zonal level online and one offline meeting during the next academic year to review our plans and renew our commitment towards executing them. We shall have one offline SA Conference level Ecojesuits meeting sometime in March or April, 2025 at some common place to evaluate our work and plan for the future. We shall give visibility to our work by documenting our work, preparing small snippets and videos about our works, share and publish them in our Province newsletters, Conference website and Ecojesuit international newsletter. ❖

S.M. John Kennedy, SJ (MDU)



God calls us to Review and Reimagine



Pic courtesy: bien-voyager.com

How does an encounter with God transform people? Whenever a person comes to Jesus, he reviews the present predicament of the person and then Jesus reimagines the future of the person. The result is a miracle that gives a purpose and meaning to the life of the person. Then the person goes and proclaims what good the Lord has done for him (Mk 5:19).

Today God is inviting us to review our past and reimagine our future, so that the present becomes more purposeful and our future becomes more meaningful.

Review:

In Chapter 3 of the *De Status Societatis* report (May 2023), we are invited to review: i. who we are; ii. what we do; and iii. how we do. We are also invited to reimagine based on review, revisualization, revitalization (with men and mission) and revamping in order to return to our roots in order to find purpose in our life and meaning in our mission. This process is realized by simply reviewing so that we are able to reimagine what we are called to do.

Whenever we review, we revise and update our understanding of the world. This review is carried out cross-sectionally: the world we live in, our personal life, our ministry, and our leadership. This results in collaboration: Our mission is a 'shared mission' with our co-workers or collaborators. In our ministries, we need collaborators, not as paid employees but as companions who share the responsibilities in vision, administration, and the decision-making process. So far, our lay people worked for the Jesuits. Recently they have started working *with* the Jesuits; and soon Jesuits may have to work *under* the direction of lay collaborators in the spirit of synodality. In fact, we would be the collaborators in mission. We need to be converted to accept this inevitable change.

Reimagination:

Reimagination follows the review process. Reimagination is the evolutionary understanding of our vocation and charism. The starting point for the founding fathers was 'care of souls'.

It evolved over the years as ‘care of the whole person’ from inward looking vision to outward mission. Starting from spiritual ministry, it spread into education, becoming active with political awareness (through Jesuit Reductions), leading to working to protect human rights, and finding its meaning in preferential option etc. And now it has evolved as UAP/PAP.

Everything, 2021, p.22). The former is about what we want to be; and the latter is what we need to become.

We are invited time after time, to review and to reimagine in order to carry out our mission more and more meaningfully. At the end of the day we review our performance during the examen and we reimagine to do it better the next day. This is our personal way of proceeding. Let us ask God to show us the way and



“
Today God is inviting us to review our past and reimagine our future, so that the present becomes more purposeful and our future becomes more meaningful.
”

The triple question:

Thrice in life we say, ‘I am yours’. When God first called us, we said, ‘I am Yours’. When we are sent on mission, we say to the people in mission, ‘I am Yours’; and when we are finally called back by God, we shall say, ‘I am Yours’. For the Jesuits, the Spiritual Exercises are about how to live one’s own life; and the Constitutions are about how to live one’s life with others – with one’s fellow Jesuits and people in the mission (James Martin, *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost)*

to walk with us, doing our work for us and with us. This is what we are expected to do during daily examen, annual retreat, and during our evaluation of life and mission.

We know the triple question of Ignatius. Of the three questions, the first two, ‘What have I done?’ and ‘What am I doing?’ invite us to review. The third one, ‘What ought I to do?’ calls us to reimagine. ❖

Fr Francis P. Xavier, SJ (CEN) is now Program Director, DACA, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India. He can be contacted at francisx@gmail.com.

Jesuit Higher Education: IDENTITY, COMPLEXITY, MISSION

The Board members of the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU) met at the General Curia in Rome, on 25,26 March '24. It marked a pivotal moment in the ongoing deliberations on the promotion of Jesuit Identity and Mission of Jesuit higher education institutions worldwide. With representatives from all regional networks, the meeting delved into crucial topics ranging from strategic planning to the promotion of Jesuit values in a rapidly changing world.

The meeting started with reports by the Presidents of regional associations, highlighting key collaborations, challenges, and initiatives within their respective regions. From the increasing demand for Jesuit education in Africa to the financial challenges faced by some institutions, each presentation underscored the importance of addressing both regional and global issues while staying true to Jesuit values and mission.

Jesuit identity & mission: A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to serious reflection on the draft document on Jesuit identity and mission. There was a consensus among participants regarding the need for a greater integration of Ignatian principles and a recognition of the rich tradition of the Society of Jesus in higher education. The Ledesma-Kolvenbach model was highlighted as a potential framework to encapsulate the essence of Jesuit identity, with plans for further refinement and reflection in the coming months.

Interactions with Key Figures: The highlight of the second day was the interaction with Fr Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society of Jesus. He focused his reflections on three questions: 1) Does university apostolate of the Society of Jesus make sense? 2) Is the university apostolate possible? 3) Is the complex Jesuit university world governable? He underscored the vital importance of the higher education ministry which has the great potential to make a strong impact on the larger society.

The participants also had an opportunity to interact with Fr Jose Mesa, Secretary for Pre-Secondary and Secondary Education, Sr Nathalie Becquart, Undersecretary for the Synod of Bishops, and Fr Sebastian Jeerakassery, General Treasurer of the



Society. Their insights and reflections on governance, institutional autonomy, and the implementation of synodality in Jesuit universities provided valuable perspectives for the ongoing dialogue on the future of Jesuit higher education.

Together for navigating a complex world: One of the focal points of the meeting was the discussion surrounding the IAJU Strategic Agenda. This document will serve as a guiding framework for the association's endeavors in the coming years, emphasizing collaboration, innovation, and the promotion of Jesuit identity.

IAJU 2025: Looking ahead to the IAJU 2025 Assembly, discussions centered on refining the program content and structure to facilitate meaningful dialogue and engagement. Attendees reflected on the successes and challenges of past assemblies, focusing the next one on promoting Jesuit identity and mission in the context of contemporary issues such as artificial intelligence.

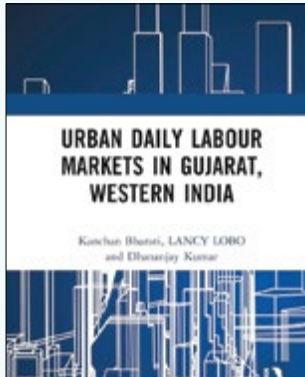
As the meeting drew to a close, several agreements were reached, including the confirmation of the Strategic Agenda, the appointment of a Program Committee for the 2025 Assembly, and the approval of the new IAJU website. These decisions reflect the collective commitment of Board members to advance the mission and values of Jesuit higher education in a rapidly evolving global landscape. ❖

Source: <https://www.jesuits.global/>



Plight of Labourers

Fr Lancy Lobo, SJ talks about his new book



Urban Daily Labour Markets in Gujarat, Western India
Kanchan Bharati, Lancy Lobo
and Dhananjay Kumar
Routledge, London and
New York
Pages: 252
Price: ₹ 17,167/-

What does this book explore?

This book explores one of India's most complex labour landscapes: the urban daily labour market. These markets form an important sector of the urban informal labour market and contribute significantly to the Indian economy. It presents an empirical, comparative picture of daily labour markets in Gujarat, Western India.

What does this study of urban daily markets in Gujarat reveal? What are your important findings?

The jobless in rural areas migrate to cities and park themselves at crossroads to be hired by labour contractors in the metropolises of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, and Surat in Gujarat. These labour markets consist mostly of inter-state and intra-state rural migrant workers suffering from multiple marginalities and vulnerabilities. They live in the peripheries of the cities and slums without any rights, entitlements, or services. They are not treated as citizens of the city. This book presents the working and living conditions of these workers, along with their spending patterns on food, health, education, and leisure.

The book also mirrors issues of these workers regarding their housing, safety, remuneration, and treatment with dignity.

Who is likely to benefit from your book?

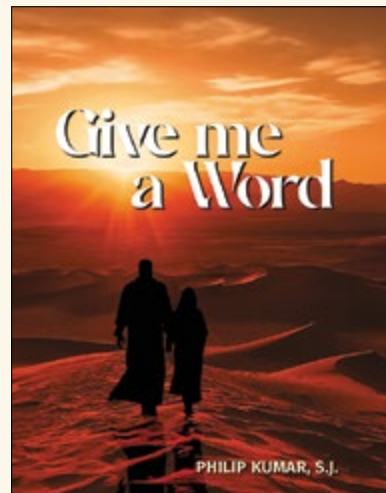
Nearly every city and town in India has urban daily labour markets. This book is an in-depth study that will interest students and researchers in labour economics, labour study, migration, urban planning, social work, sociology, anthropology, and demography. It will also be useful to NGOs/trade unions working with migrant workers, civil servants in the Labour Department, urban planners, and policymakers.

Fr. Lancy Lobo, SJ (GUJ) is the Founder-Director of the Centre for Culture and Development in Vadodara, Gujarat, since 2001.



Inspiration from the desert

Fr. Philip Kumar, SJ, (CEN) talks about his new book



Give me a Word
Philip Kumar, SJ
Gujarat Sahitya Prakash
Price: ₹ 150/-

How did this booklet come about?

I did my tertianship in Lebanon, which shares borders with Egypt, Israel and Syria where in the 3rd and 4th centuries the Desert Fathers and Mothers lived. During my tertianship I came across a

few anecdotes and sayings of these hermits. Inspired by the depth of these stories I collected more and have compiled them in this booklet.

What is the value of what these Desert Fathers and Mothers did and said for us today?

In order to be religious we need to have some basic dispositions and core values. Down the centuries Religious life has changed in many ways. But I am afraid that in this process we have slowly moved away from those basic dispositions and core values. I hope that these anecdotes and sayings of these hermits will take us back to those roots.

Who are likely to benefit the most from this booklet?

Men and Women religious and others who have chosen a consecrated way of life will benefit.

Fr. Philip Kumar, SJ (CEN) presently works among the fishing communities of Northern Tamil Nadu.



The Nun who built ‘an Empire of Hope’

Film: Cabrini (2024)

Director: Alejandro Monteverde

Run time: 145 minutes

Mother Frances Cabrini is America’s first Catholic saint. This biopic presents her heroic mission of charity among the poor Italian immigrants in New York during 1889- 1910.

Maria Francesca Cabrini was born in 1850 to a poor peasant couple in Lombardy, Italy, the youngest of 13 children, of whom only four survived. Francesca’s serious heart and pulmonary conditions stood in the way of choosing convent life – which was her dream. Her childhood dream was to go and serve among the poor in China. Although she could finally join the Sacred Heart of Jesus Congregation, she founded a Missionary Society with the purpose of realizing her missionary dream.

Repeated requests for Papal permission were initially ignored. Finally, when called to Rome, she had a hard time convincing the authorities to grant permission, especially since women were not allowed to do such work up till then. She gains access to the Pope (Leo XIII) and her zeal impressed him. In answer to his question what she wanted to do, she replies: “The world is not big enough for the things I want to do”. The Pope reminds Cabrini that she would be “the first woman to lead an overseas mission” and this would serve the Church “as proof of what women can or cannot accomplish.” He then directs her to New York where over a million Italian immigrants lived in dire poverty, social ostracism and despondency.

She and her Sisters landed in New York in 1889, where they face the stark conditions of the Italian immigrants. The very first sequence of the movie depicts their condition. Her first venture was to start a hospital for the poor and then an orphanage. American authorities treated them with racial prejudice, contempt and indifference. Cabrini is caught in the seamy underworld of New York. She had to reside in a brothel where she befriends a prostitute who becomes her follower, leading to conflict with the underworld. At first the bishop of New York was non cooperative, despite the Pope’s recommendation letter Cabrini had. The Mayor of New York treated her with disdainful chauvinism. Eventually he too becomes her admirer.

With dauntless courage, determination and prayerfulness Mother Frances wins her cause. When she collapses the first time, the doctor



notes her serious condition and tells her that she had only two years to live. Cabrini busied herself with her mission and lived another twenty years. The work she did in the service of the poor set a model to the governments too. By the end of her career she had founded 67 institutions across the U. S.A. Her work and that of her Congregation were lauded and celebrated by America.

She died in 1917, at 67. She was canonized in 1946. Her mission later spread to the Far East too. At one point in the story St Frances Cabrini declares that she wanted “to build an empire of hope” which she surely did. ❖

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.



Jerome Kulandaisamy, SJ (MDU)

Jerome became a Jesuit Brother and served as the Minister at Arul Anandar College, Karumathur, and Xaveriana, Tuticorin. When he completed his B.Ed., he was missioned to teach at Loyola H.S. School, Kuppayanallur and then at St. Xavier's H.S. School, Palayamkottai. When he saw his confreres celebrating the Eucharist and preaching homilies his earlier aspiration to become a priest resurged and he made a formal request. After a careful study of his aptitude, Fr. General permitted Jerome's change of status from "Approved Brother to Scholastic" in 1996. He was ordained a priest in 2001. He was a compassionate pastor at Thirumanur for five years, then he served as a teacher at Arul Anandar HS School, Oriyur, Carmel H.S. School, Nagercoil and again at Oriyur and Kuppayanallur as the Headmaster.



had to be amputated. After his convalescence, he was sent to Carmel H.S. School, Nagercoil, where he served as Vice Superior and Correspondent and he played a main role in the grand successful centenary celebration of Carmel HS School in 2023. Unfortunately, his physical ailments forced him to stay at Beschi Infirmary, Dindigul. His left foot too had to be amputated and he was bedridden. He expired at St. Joseph Hospital, Dindigul, on 29 March, which happened to be Good Friday. On the following day, Holy Saturday, a funeral service was organized at 3:00 p.m. at Beschi Illam. Fr. Thomas Amirtham, Provincial, presided over the requiem ceremony, Fr. Maria Joseph Mahalingam gave the homily and Fr. M. Devadoss, Socius, led the Prayer of Commendation and the Committal at the Beschi cemetery. May the soul of Fr. Jerome rest in eternal peace!

He ignored a foot injury, which became infected and he had to be shifted to Chennai where his right forefoot

| Maria Joseph Mahalingam, SJ



Joseph Maripuram, SJ (PAT)

Fr. Joseph Maripuram was called affectionately Joe or Mari by the Jesuits. He was loved and respected for many good reasons. A large number of Jesuits, priests, religious sisters and Catholics from Patna and other parts of Bihar attended his funeral service. The main celebrant at the Eucharist was Archbishop Sebastian Kallupura of Patna. Fr. Donald Miranda in his introduction said, "If we were to have an epitaph at the tombstone of Fr. Joe Maripuram, it would be 'Born to Fight'.



He was a fighter all through his life. He worked in Patna, Muzaffarpur and Bettiah dioceses. While he was the Parish Priest of Latonah Parish, he had to fight with the landsharks to get back the land belonging to the diocese of Muzaffarpur. Five years ago, a tumor was detected in his brain. He was operated upon in Vellore where the doctors found that the tumour was malignant

and the source of his cancer was the lungs and the cancer had spread to different parts of his body.

He did not go into a depression. But he decided to fight it. He had a tremendous capacity to bounce back every time. The doctors said that he was a living miracle.

He was a perfect gentleman with a welcoming, gentle smile. He listened with his heart, though nothing missed his observation. This helped him to understand the persons and situations. He was a much needed and appreciated leader in the province. His life as a Patna Jesuit can be seen as an excellent formator, a caring pastor and true community animator. He was respected and loved as a good Jesuit priest because he was close to Jesus and Mother Mary. Now he is there with them enjoying eternal Joy. May his soul rest in peace!

| Edward Mendonca, SJ & Jose Thayil, SJ



Maxim D'Mello, SJ (BOM)

Maxi, as he was affectionately called, was, in many ways, representative of the "little ones". Academically he didn't have high degrees to boast off, neither secular nor ecclesial. His education was basic, and skill-based. But he developed those skills, picked up new ones along the way, and placed all of this at the service of God's people. As a Jesuit Brother, his was the "lesser" vocation in a priestly Society, but he lived his brother's vocation with pride and joy.



He dreamed big dreams, but they were often impractical and unrealistic, but you couldn't write them off. I firmly believe that God reaches out to us in unexpected ways. He challenged me, as his Superior, to be open, to take a deep long look at the matter at hand, to discern which spirit was driving that dream, where God was leading us.

When the Talasari Mission was ready to expand its network of schools, Maxim was called upon to build 15 new buildings, some of which still stand today, others have been expanded and redeveloped. Under the watchful eye of Fr. Carsi SJ, he honed his skills as an architect and builder. But more than 15 buildings witness to his ability and commitment. With the support and guidance of Fr. Avelino Remedios, SJ, Fr. John Froz, SJ and others, Maxi built a team of Warli Artists and writers who contributed widely to the promotion of Warli Art and documentation of historical and cultural knowledge, helping the community find a voice of its own at the national and global level. The idea of the Adivasi Melawa was first floated in Talasari.

We need to thank God, for the gift of Br. Maxim. May God grant him his eternal Reward!

| Wendell D'Cruz, SJ



Food for the soul

Scarlet grew up in a traditional Irish Catholic family. As a child, she saw God as a dictator, not a loving father. She was anxious because her Dad was angry, violent and unable to show love. He did nothing to build a good interpretation of God and the Church. For years Scarlet felt 'lost.'

After marriage Scarlet resented being home to cope with the children, with whom she became authoritarian, "following my own mother's style — nothing out of place, neat and tidy, spic and span." However, after the third child, she recalls, "My husband and I both started to balance out more in our relationship, and we've survived as a result."

The picture of God that the Church, her parents and school presented was simply not enough. Scarlet needed more! Local Catholics had hardly heard of Vatican II. She said, "If one expected more than Mass, the Rosary and a cooked chicken for Father, forget it!" She felt angry about this stagnant and backward state of affairs. Feeling lonely and isolated, and resenting being so far out of the mainstream of Catholic life, Scarlet was thrown on her own resources.

She said, "My quest for 'something more' is the search for God. It's always been in me." As the children grew through their teen years, Scarlet yearned for and found daily quiet time to develop her spirituality. She also attended weekly Mass to experience the comforts the Eucharist could offer. She thinks that this is what saved her.

Over time Scarlet's life has mellowed. She has forgiven her parents and the Church. She is able now to say: "I've become more quietly spiritual; there is some regrowth happening; I have a sense of hope. As a life-long learner, I read spiritual books every day. These are stepping-stones in my quest for experiencing more; signposts along the way leading me closer to God. And it's okay not to know everything all at once. I feel that my desire to be on the path means that I am actually doing the right thing."

Thanks to her daily reading, and of her prayer, Scarlet is gentler with herself and family. She keeps a journal to help her reflect and grow. Best of all, she has surrendered her need to control and judge others. She says, "My family is happier with me now. I'm not so alienated, and I'm less



Picture courtesy: aleteia.org

stressed. In fact I think that these days, having simplified my life, I have an increased capacity to love. It feels like an ember within me that needs fanning into flame. I never lose hope of that rekindling happening."

Because Scarlet's spirituality is her core, she knows there is unimaginably more beauty, love and forgiveness than she thought and it's all connected. She's found peace where she can 'tap in' to God, so deep down, she's not alone. God's presence is the core of her being, "in the midst of my deepest depths, my pains and hurts God is real. At last, I can feel now that Christ is working within me, and leading me to understand the meaning there is in life, and how I'm becoming whole, and at last achieving my full potential. I take it as an affirmation that God never abandons me."

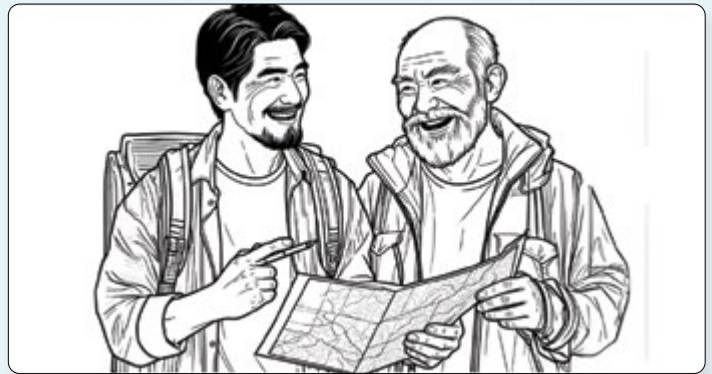
Despite the desperation of Scarlet's early life, she never lost her faith in God. She declares, "At last I belong. I know now that there is 'more,' I enter hallowed moments at the Eucharist. It is food for the soul. It nourishes me and gives life meaning. I also have a feeling that ultimately all will be well." ❖

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



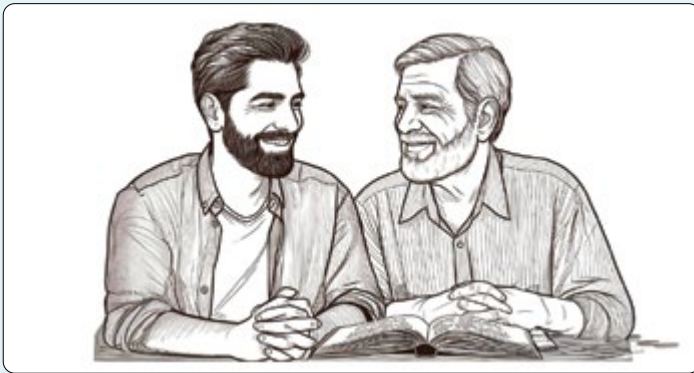
"For preaching a long retreat why do you need a donkey, Father?"

"When the novices find it difficult to discern, I let them use the donkey. Do you remember that a donkey helped St. Ignatius discern?"



"How is the progress of the merger of Provinces?"

"Hmmm. The strong one emerged. The weak one submerged!"



"The DSS document on 'collaboration' is inspiring. But what is shocking is it recommends collaboration even with... fellow Jesuits!"



"I am sure AI is Anti Jesuit! When I asked how Jesuits discern, it said 'They manipulate to the maximum and then leave it to the will of God!'"

Melwyn Pinto, SJ (KAR)

JESUIT HUMOUR

He is a...



When asked to explain the meaning of 'embarrassment,' Fr Pradeep Sequeira usually narrates an episode that occurred a few years ago. He was then the administrator of one of the Jesuit institutions of repute. One day, sometime in the afternoon, a nun came, accompanied by a young man, to meet Fr Pradeep in his office. "This is Mr William Bright, Father," the nun said, introducing her companion. "He is a research scholar doing his doctoral studies in the UK. He has heard about your institute and requests the pleasure of visiting it."

"Welcome, Mr Bright," said Fr Pradeep, shaking the guest by the hand, "I am glad to make your acquaintance. Won't you please sit down?" At this point, the nun probably felt she ought to have introduced Fr Pradeep to the visitor. So, she said to him, "Mr Bright, this is Fr Pradeep. Fr Pradeep is the administrator of this institute." Then, as if to complete the introduction, she added, "Fr Pradeep is a joker." Hiding his embarrassment, Fr Pradeep said to the visitor, "Mr Bright, I think what Sister means is that I have a sense of humour."



The Heart of the Lord

When I was a child, a beautiful picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus hung in my parents' bedroom. A warm, smiling Jesus lovingly pointed to His heart, pierced and crowned with thorns, in an eternal gesture of invitation. Whenever I looked at that picture, I felt good — embraced, loved, cared for — as if the Lord were inviting me to step into His joy and peace. My mother had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart; every First Friday, we would consecrate our lives anew to His love and mercy.

Each summer — usually in June — we celebrate the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and draw near to the tender mercy and forgiveness of the Lord. Poetically, the heart is a symbol of the human center — our emotions, loves, passions, desires, the force of the will. In his book “The Sacred Heart of the World,” David Richo explains: “Our heart is the soft center of the egoless self and it has one desire: to open. The heart is the capacity to open.... It contains our ability to reach out so it is the antidote to despair.... Contemplation of Jesus' Heart shows us how deep we really are, how vast our potential for love, how high our aspiration for the light.”

In the Gospels, Jesus' heart is moved with pity for the crowds (see Mt 9:36) and He tells us that He is gentle and humble of heart (Mt 11:29). The Sacred Heart of Jesus that began beating in the womb of the Blessed Virgin more than 2,000 years ago still beats today in the glorified humanity of the Risen Christ. And it will pulsate forever, pumping out the grace, mercy and life of God to all of humanity. In the Heart of the Lord, we experience the overwhelming mercy of God and His infinite desire to be in relationship with us.

Over the centuries, many Christians developed harsh images of God and Jesus as fearsome judges, distant from human affairs, ready to impose punishment for moral failure. The Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints became the friendly, approachable intercessors who would go to God for us, pleading for sinful and

erring souls. Jansenism, particularly prevalent in France in the 16th and 17th centuries, overemphasized the wrath of God, the unworthiness of human nature and fear as a fundamental response to the divine.

Viewed in this context, the apparitions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque manifest a need for a theological correction and a spiritual balance regarding popular perceptions of Christ. Jesus revealed to the saint His heart, burning with love for humanity. Pierced and crucified — offering salvation and mercy — Jesus' heart longs for us to offer our love and devotion in return. If some distorted forms of spirituality focused only on God's punishment, the Sacred Heart emphasized mercy. If many believers inordinately feared God, here divine love and joy were manifest. If Jesus had seemed distant and unapproachable before, the Sacred Heart beckons us to enter into the divine furnace of charity.



Picture courtesy: m.facebook.com

As St. John reminds us, God is love (see 1 Jn 4), the One who empties himself out for others, desiring our eternal salvation, seeking out the lost and carrying the wandering sheep home. The whole Christ event is a mission of mercy, as the Son, in radical obedience to the Father, becomes incarnate in our flesh — preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, healing the sick, forgiving the sinner, feeding the hungry and, ultimately, offering His life on the cross. Every word, action, gesture and attitude of Jesus manifests a perfect, pure and selfless love for each human person. If love means willing the good of the other, completely free of self-interest, we see the perfection of such charity in the burning heart of Christ. ❖

Courtesy: Simply Catholic

Bishop Donald J. Hying is bishop of the Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

WELL SAID

Holidays are a reminder that life is meant to be lived, experiences are meant to be cherished, and memories are meant to be made.

- Jeremiah Say

