

May - June 2019

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA

Gender Sensitivity and the Catholic Clergy



Shameless, Foolish, Insane

YOU come to us with your refreshing words,
Dancing and showering tiny little drops of trust.
Desiring to quench our thirsty beings,
Calling us to have faith in YOU.

But the flood of suffering sweeps us away,
And we begin to doubt your presence instead.
YOU come to us with your tender voice,
Humming and whistling in the gentle breeze.
Desiring to calm our restless beings,
Inviting us to hope in YOU.

But the storm of anxiety engulfs us
And we tend to lose hope instead.
YOU come to us with your soothing melodies,
Singing gently the good news of your love.
Desiring to fill our lives with your music,
Persuading us to love without measure.
But the thunder of violence deafens us
And we feel afraid instead.

But...

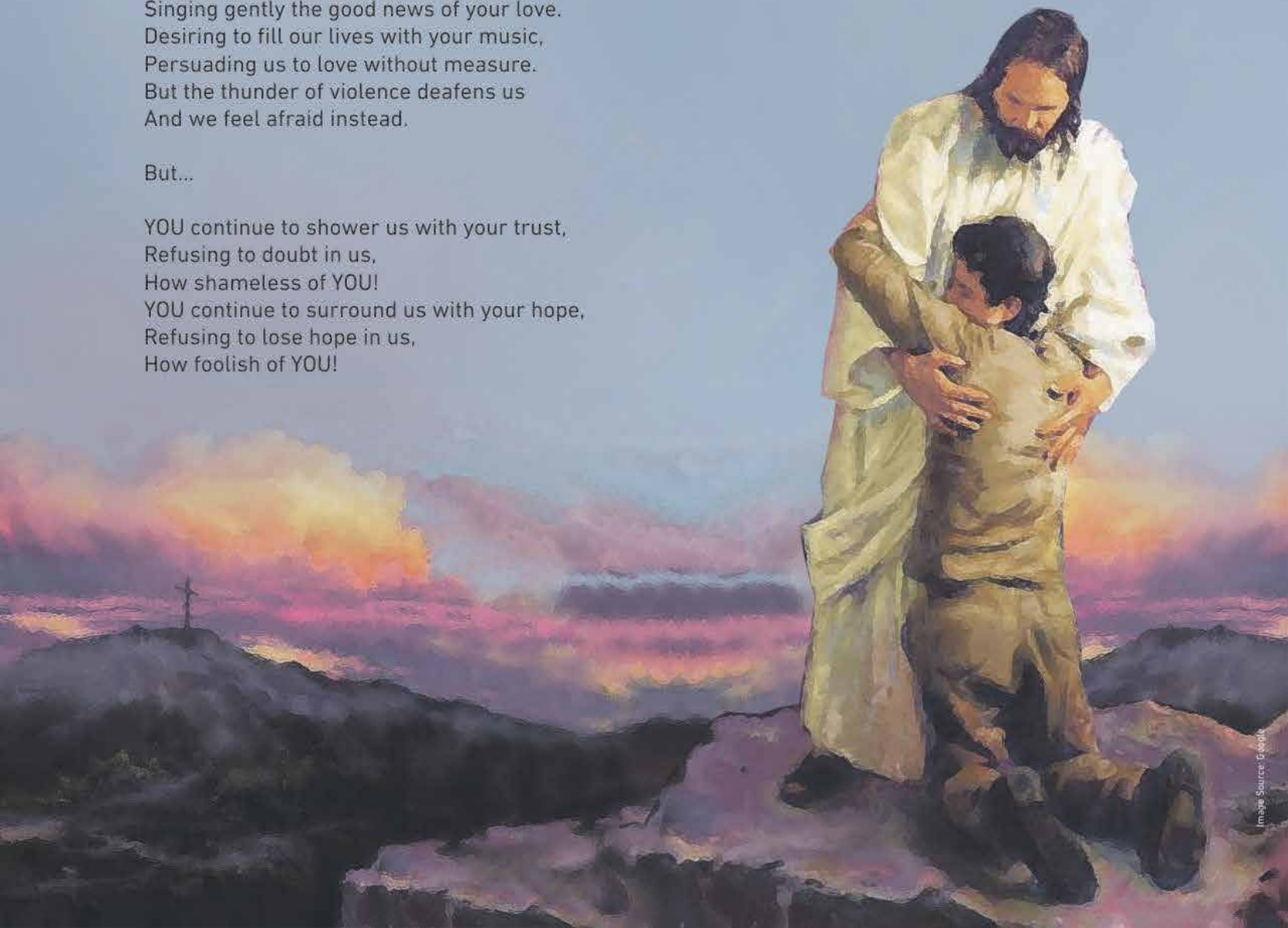
YOU continue to shower us with your trust,
Refusing to doubt in us,
How shameless of YOU!
YOU continue to surround us with your hope,
Refusing to lose hope in us,
How foolish of YOU!

YOU continue to bless us with your love,
Refusing to stop the music,
How insane of YOU!

Speechless this leaves us though,
We stutter to pray with heads bowed low,
For the grace to make us too,
Shameless, foolish, insane like YOU.

Jeevan Mendonsa, SJ
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(The author is presently doing licentiate studies in philosophy at the Gregorian University, Rome.)



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As a service of information for the South Asian Jesuit Assistancy, Jivan is sent to Jesuits and their colleagues, Collaborators and friends. Articles appearing in Jivan express the views of the authors and not of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. The Editor regrets he is unable to return any hard copies of articles or photographs sent, so please keep a copy of whatever you send for publication.

All material sent for publication may be edited for reasons of space, clarity or policy. Readers are requested to donate generously towards Jesuit ministries.



"Young retreat preachers checking on the new places they need to go for the greater glory of God!"



They are first year theologians, arguing if the TV coverage is of football or basketball!

Impressive, inspiring and informative March issue

I write this note to thank you all for the very impressive, inspiring and informative March issue of Jivan. Some of the articles are very substantive and scholarly. The setup and the presentation of the contents are of high quality. I congratulate you all.

I have been regularly following the thought of Stephen Hawking, and so I would have liked a more detailed account of the International Seminar. As far as I know, Stephen Hawking had a special realization and insight towards the end of his life. He stated that the phenomenon of creation, the universe is stupendous and awe-inspiring. There is a certain pattern of intelligence for the phenomenon of creation. I am also aware that he did not call it (intelligence) God. However, that is the right directness he discovered. Keep up your demanding work.

|| Bishop Thomas Dabre | Poona

My Vote

(Election, 29/4/2019)

How helpless is my single vote
When mobs more powerful than I
Can peddle hate both loud and sly
And undeterred gloat

So what! When my small vote is met
By others who will still be true
To causes we cannot forget
Then rising we can start anew

To touch each helpless, anguished pang
Answering human want and need
With promises expressed in deed
And hordes of hell defang

My single vote like David's sling
Could stall great menace in its wake
If daily I will undertake
To exercise that precious thing

|| Godfrey D'Lima, SJ | Nasik

Are we still interested in counter-culturalism?

For quite some time now, we have been thinking of trying to be counter-cultural in our institutions of higher learning. Yet, the recent scramble to attain 'autonomy' and 'university' status, by most of our colleges, shows that such dreams have been virtually abandoned. Even without being autonomous, our freedom is highly restricted today, at least in Maharashtra: we have no choice in selecting our students or our staff, who determine the ethos in our institutions. Students and staff have to be selected on the basis of criteria laid down by the government - students on the basis of percentage marks only and quotas; and staff having the NET/SET pass qualification, besides the Master's or Ph.D. This results in candidates with the best all-round abilities, the most deserving, the most intelligent and the most creative being left out. Potential staff with excellent foreign qualifications too cannot be selected. Sadly, our official qualifying exams give no importance to intelligence or creativity, and do not assess teaching-ability in the case of teachers. Some of our most outstanding teachers of the past would have found it almost impossible to clear these new qualifying tests.

The so-called 'autonomy' offered to colleges, gives only academic freedom to introduce new courses. It does not include administrative or financial

autonomy. The result is that, in practice, our freedom gets restricted even further, since we are still obliged to follow the above criteria in selecting staff and students. The new subjects we might choose to introduce will have to be such that they cater to the market-economy, otherwise funds will be difficult to come by. Managements will not be able to appoint the best staff or principals available, in order to run a good 'autonomous college' due to the NET/SET and other academic requirements. Most of their energy will have to be devoted to collecting funds needed to create the space and facilities required for new elitist programs and research. This will entail more and more collaboration with vested interests, big businesses and foreign universities. Programs with the stamp of the Jesuit vision will have to be sidelined or dropped in order to make way for an agenda demanded by all these new stakeholders. How will we be able to accommodate the poor, needy, exploited, and minorities when we are compelled to secure the help of the high and mighty just to survive? In such a situation, the dream of counter-culturalism in our institutions is bound to recede even further as we move into the future, preferring status over justice and needs of the vast majority of our people.

|| Joseph M. Dias SJ | Mumbai



POSA Speaks

George Pattery, SJ

Why Pathway for Jesuits?

It is common knowledge in villages that pathways are made by walking. By regularly walking, we create new pathways. The first of the four newly promulgated Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) speaks of the Spiritual Exercises (SE) as 'Jesuit Pathway to God'. Pope Francis said that the first preference was crucial because it formed the basic condition for the other three.

At a time when the Church was struggling with its second major internal division, when rampant clericalism was weakening it from inside, and when ambitions for 'worldly power and pomp' marked its style, Ignatius proposed a new pathway of reformation. It not only responded to the immediate challenges of the times, but seems to have captured the essence of a God-ward journey, perennially relevant.

What distinguished the SE in spite of its mediaeval vocabulary and scholastic style? How does it become a pathway? Among other things, one may point out the following: i) it starts on a universal human phenomenon of 'desire' for the 'more' - call it desire for the Ultimate or the Whole; ii) how 'desires' get choked by 'attachments' to ego/ riches/power and thwarts its flourishing; iii) it presents the case study - the pathway to freedom - in the story of Jesus with the classical call of the Two Standards; iv) it invites us to an eco-system of cruciform of dying to self-will, self-love and self-interest - a pattern written all over creation; v) it opens up the world of a labouring-love, God, in all things of this unfinished Universe.

This is not so much a Jesuit pathway, it is the pathway of all and for all: to journey untiringly to the horizon of love-compassion knowing well that it remains 'the incomprehensible, ineffable and bottomless-bottom' (K. Rahner). SE invites us to 'spiritual conversation' with all - with the sacred and the profane. The secular is 'sign of the times' (Fr. Arturo) beckoning us to dialogue with all religions, cultures, ideologies and the marginalized. This challenges us to discernment.

A discerning 'heart and mind'! That is the pathway. It is not just one way, but infinite variety of ways, always surprising and at once transforming. Hence we have a poet in Hopkins, a palaeontologist in Chardin, a fire in Hurtado, a visionary in Arrupe, a seeker in Ricci and a firebrand in Stan Lourdu. Pathways are made by walking!

Iñigo was and is a pilgrim, ablaze with God! "... pilgrims place one foot firmly in front of the other, to fall in step with the rhythms of the universe and the cadence of their own hearts." (Nipun Mehta). Let us walk the pathway Iñigo trod, to retrace its infinite rhythms for our times.



Editor's Desk

Vinayak Jadav, SJ

Interculturality: Springing New Life

About two hundred Jesuits from the South Asian Assistancy gathered in an assembly from 25th-28th April in JDV, Pune. The participants reflected, deliberated and prayed on the theme "Interculturality for Reconciled Life and Mission." Following the mandate of GC 36, the assembly invited the entire Assistancy to reflect on our intercultural living and its dynamics so as to enhance the meaning and efficacy of our mission in today's multi-cultural world. Through ideological ups and downs but led by the Spirit, the assembly embarked upon a journey grappling with the reality of interculturality. How does the process of interculturality help or hamper our life and mission and what does this entail?

First and foremost, the journey of intercultural living invites us to become aware of how seriously we are affected by this phenomenon called culture. Culture influences us in the way we think, feel, behave, create and destroy. These cultural influences shape our ways of being and doing. Am I aware and do I acknowledge how profoundly I am affected by culture?

In a pluri-cultural society, it is not enough to be aware of and acknowledge cultural influences. We need to accept and respect the cultural differences or diversity before jumping to challenging or critiquing them. "In my Father's house there are many mansions..." (Jn.14:2). As Jesus promises us a welcoming place, we are called to create a space of cultural sensitivity. Variety is the spice and diversity is the richness of life. Attitudes of dominance or superiority or hierarchy have no room in interculturality.

Cultural influences can be oppressive or liberative. Therefore, it is not enough to even accept and acknowledge the cultural influences but one needs to be critically open and courageously offensive about their oppressive dimensions. Mutual challenging is as much part of intercultural living as mutual acceptance and respect is. The bone of contention is which culture contains the truth and which decides the objectivity of truth? This dispute invites dialogue and interculturality feeds on dialogue.

Morality may be a contentious parameter for judging cultural values. Humanistic or liberative (evangelical) mission is the reconciling factor in cultural disputes. A mosaic explains the relationship of cultures and mission. A tiny piece of whatever colour, size or shape has a place within a mosaic, and in the mind of the master.

Interculturality is not just a means to the end - reconciliation in the face of conflicts. It is dynamic in itself and a way to new life. We are called to plough our cultural soil that may be hardened due to lack of openness. If we want something to grow, we must go through the pain of being ploughed. Cultural conflicts are the ploughing blades in the furrows of life. Interculturality is receiving the seed of new life leading to abundant life. May the season of Easter continue springing new cultural life in us and in our mission.

Easter Sunday Horror

It is with sadness and helplessness caused by the tragedy on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka, that brought mourning and pain to those who went to church for Easter services and to other places to enjoy the company of one another, that I pen these few words. I wish to express my affectionate closeness to the Christian community, and to the families of the victims who succumbed to that insane violence.

We condemn all acts of terrorism. To see an attack in Sri Lanka while people were in churches and at hotels is dehumanizing. These cowardly attacks, that must be condemned unconditionally, have shown how vulnerable this country still is to terror strikes.

The police have not yet named the organization responsible for Sunday's savage attacks. Why did the government not respond to stop such a hideous incident after having come to know of its possibility? No answer has been given.

Sunday's terror strikes were not aimed at a particular religious community. They were brutal attacks on all Sri Lankans and on friends of neighbouring countries who were visiting the island. Those responsible for the crime must be punished. All those who committed these acts of savagery must be made to pay for their crimes and their terror outfits should be rooted out completely and eliminated.

The hopes placed on the security forces and police personnel who are conducting the ongoing anti-terror operations to make the country safe for all ethnic and religious communities will soon become a reality.

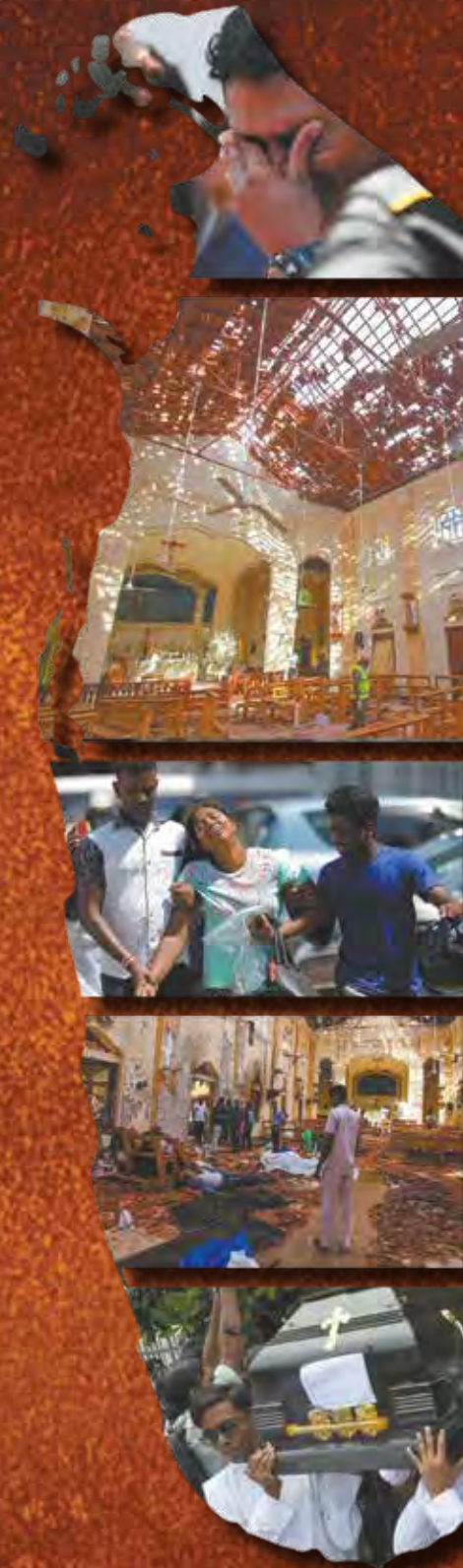
St. Sebastian's Church in Katuwapitiya, situated in a heavily populated Catholic neighbourhood north of Colombo, known as "the little Rome," is just a few kilometres from the Jesuit Provincial house. More than 122 people were killed there. When I visited the place it was very saddening to see bodies all over the church, blood on the pews and a destroyed roof. The victims include close relatives of some Jesuits. This parish had given many vocations to the Society in the recent past.

We reject all forms of extremism and stand for freedom of religion and the right to worship safely. Collectively we must find the will and the way to end such violence. We call on the Sri Lankan government to launch an impartial inquiry and to punish those found responsible.

The series of blasts mark the worst violence in Sri Lanka since the end of the civil war a decade ago.

On days when we celebrate Easter, the rising of the King of Peace from the dead, we offer our prayers for the victims and their families. We join with all people of goodwill in condemning these acts of terrorism. This evil cannot overcome the hope found in our Saviour's Resurrection that invites us to see beyond pain, sorrow, and suffering. It is a call "to get out of ourselves" and our small, self-created worlds of vainglory and selfishness. The aspirations and expectations of everyone call for freedom and peace. The Resurrection manifests a seamless fabric of existence. It lifts the veil that shrouds death and reveals to us the reality of life that spans beyond time and space. May the God of hope, who has raised his Son, fill all hearts with the desire for peace and unity.

Dexter Gray, SJ | Provincial of Sri Lanka



Solidarity with Sri Lankan People and Jesuits

We, the Jesuits of South Asian Assembly (JESAA 2019) gathered at JDV, Pune from 25th -28th April, condemn in the strongest terms the heinous terror attack and the gruesome serial blasts in the Churches and hotels of Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday 21st April, 2019, killing many innocent children, men and women.

We express our deepest empathy and condolences to the people of Sri Lanka, the families of the victims, to the Sri Lankan Church, and the Jesuits of Sri Lanka. We wish a speedy and full recovery to those who are injured.

We reaffirm that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and communal harmony. We reiterate that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed.

With everyone in Sri Lanka and especially with the Sri Lankan Jesuits and the Catholic Church, we, the Jesuits of South Asia, stand united to commit ourselves more courageously to conquer the forces of hatred and enmity and resolve to bring in reconciliation and justice to humanity marred and wounded by acts of terrorism.

The Spirit of God is active all across our broken world - the Spirit of the Resurrected Jesus who can help us all in this difficult situation that seems hopeless and can bring new life and healing where it is most needed.

We have no weapons but the friendship of the Risen Jesus who is our Consoler and Friend. We extend his friendship to those affected and brutalized by the terror attacks, even to those seen as enemies. This friendship opposes the dynamics of violence, gathers us as Friends in the Lord, and calls us to love and serve in all things, together with so many other friends with whom we cooperate, celebrate, communicate.

Faced with huge challenges at this moment, we still dare to dream of creating with you a different world, a world of peace and harmony, because we know the One whose "power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine" (Eph. 3:20).

We are with you, the people of Sri Lanka and our dear Sri Lankan Jesuits, and pray for you.

Signed by the Jesuits of South Asia gathered at JDV, Pune

Gender Sensitivity and the Catholic Clergy

“It is to be hoped that not even a whiff of scandal will embarrass any of our communities or institutions in the future.”

Arturo Sosa, SJ | Superior-General of the Society of Jesus



Image Source : Google



In recent times the Catholic Church the world over has been rocked by scandals of clergy sexual abuse. Victims are now being counted in the thousands, priests and bishops are being held accountable by courts the world over, bishops and cardinals have been removed from office, and the Vatican felt compelled to hold a summit of bishops in Rome for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults in the church.

Most of the discourse on sexual abuse in the Church however, has centred on the abuse of minors. The sexual abuse of women still lies in a grey zone, since adults are presumed to have the ability to say “No”, and/or report such abuse. Too often the sexual abuse of women is shrugged off as “consensual sex.”

Fiduciary Trust

Sexual abuse wherever it takes place however, is not about sex but about the misuse of power. Sexual predators are usually people in power who wait for an opportunity to exploit their victim's vulnerability. In a church setup, priests and bishops have a fiduciary relationship with their parishioners based on trust that does not have to be earned, but comes with the position and with early conditioning.

Clericalism

In the case of priests, the power that comes with their fiduciary role is reinforced by clericalism. Priests and people are taught that the priest is especially called by God and that he is “ontologically” different from other human beings (Catechism, 1994) because his soul is different since he is “configured to Christ” (John Paul II). The congregation is reminded of this every time they see the priest presiding at the celebration of the Eucharist.

This in turn breeds a disordered culture that is characterized by excessive deference to priests because of their presumed moral superiority. The link between clericalism and all kinds of abuse, including sexual abuse, is one that both Pope Francis and the Jesuit General acknowledge.

One dimension of clericalism that is often overlooked however, is the portrayal of the Church as a family with the priest as the “father,” the head who is the protector, the spiritual provider who controls the

sacraments and theology, the spiritual adviser who has a hotline to God, the learned expert who has all the answers and exercises unquestioned authority.

The non-ordained are conditioned to listen to “father”. In fact, just by addressing a priest as “father” the faithful acknowledge this hierarchy of power, and in using this title priests are exerting their power over the “laity” who are not trained, qualified, or experienced in matters of the faith.

Patriarchy

While all the baptized experience this power structure, for women it is worse because the priests are men and, like all men, society privileges them and socializes them to hold power over women.

In India, particularly, most women are victims of this socialization and do not have any personal agency over their bodies, their speech, or their lives. They are not expected to think, much less act, in opposition to male authority. It is not easy for them to claim power or to resist power. This is more pronounced in some parts of the country than others.

Catholic women

Catholic women are subjected to an additional brand of misogyny. Women's sexuality has traditionally always been seen as dangerous in the Church. They are either the “temptress” or “adulterous” - images that women themselves internalize.

Thus, when there is sexual abuse the woman feels she must be the cause of this “holy man of God” falling from grace and breaking his vow of celibacy. There is fear about speaking up and accusing someone who has a “good” name in the community. Is it right to destroy his reputation? Will she be believed? How can she prove anything?

Women Religious

At the bottom of this power pyramid is the woman religious with her vows of chastity, poverty and obedience to the bishop. Too often obedience is understood as subservience. Religious congregations have to depend on the goodwill of the local bishop for their existence in a diocese,

more so if they are diocesan congregations dependent on the bishop for major decisions, and finances. Life is much easier if they say, “Yes, your Lordship.”

‘Grooming’

In addition to these factors that originate in patriarchy and the particular nature of the church, there are factors that are particular to sexual abuse whether it occurs in the church or outside. An important one is ‘grooming of the victim’.¹

It is easy to resist the sexual advances of a stranger, but more difficult to resist when the abuser is considered a friend. Sexual predators usually groom their victim by worming their way into their lives. The victim is often someone who is vulnerable, already dealing with issues like the loss of a loved one, or a failing marriage, or even past sexual abuse. The predator usually starts with small gestures to test the waters - a hug, a kiss, groping. According to experts, often the victim doesn't even realize that sexual assault is happening. With time the predator gets bolder. At the same time he slowly strengthens the emotional bond.

Guilt plays a big role in the success of the predator's grooming. Priests can be attractive to women in their capacity to be caring and to offer a listening ear. Nuns who work in close proximity to priests often look up to them and seek their guidance and spiritual counsel. The priests may be the only male company they have. It is not unusual for the woman to initially feel flattered by the attention being shown to her. Sometimes a priest may spiritualize the entire abuse.

By the time the victim realizes what's going on, the feeling of responsibility and guilt is so strong that she does not know what to do. When such “friends” become abusers it can be very confusing for the victim. Often she does not even realize it was abuse till she gets out of it. As one survivor said, “I'm not sure what to call what just happened to me.” Many times it takes someone else stepping in and saying “this isn't a healthy situation.”

Breaking the Silence

What happens when the survivor does pluck up the courage to speak?

Most often she faces disbelief. Congregations tend to side with their pastor. Bishops are more concerned about protecting the image of the Church. The priest is protected by the brotherhood of the ordained. At best he will be transferred. He will always have a home in the church and often its financial and emotional support.

The woman has the most to lose - her reputation in the community, maybe a job or congregation and, if she is married, her marriage and family.

Maintaining Boundaries

Finally, the big question, can there be consensual sex? The answer is unequivocal: A sexual relationship between a cleric and anyone under his physical or spiritual care can never be consensual because the power differential is too great. People often make the mistake of calling it an "affair". According to Darryl Stephens, an ordained, Methodist ethicist, to do this is to focus only on the sexual relationship. In reality the issues are the cleric's "violations of the sacred trust of ministries, breach of fiduciary responsibility, violation of professional boundaries and abuse of power."²

It is vital to keep in mind that clergy have the greater ethical responsibility for keeping the boundary intact even if the woman initiates sexual contact. Clergy take a vow of celibacy and they are bound by canon law to uphold that vow which forms part of the sacrament of ordination.

Way Forward

So what is the way forward?

1. Give an unequivocal message to the clergy that all sexual or romantic relations are wrong. Educate priests on why they are wrong and how, and that priests have the moral responsibility to draw the boundaries;

2. Draw attention to how a whole climate of 'religious conditioning' leads to clergy sexual abuse;

3. Create awareness about the CBCI Gender Policy (2010) that mandates zero tolerance to violence against women. Implement the CBCI Guidelines to Deal with Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (2017) and create ethical codes similar to those for health professionals;

4. Put in place a total paradigm shift from treating the problem as one of sexual or emotional instability, to one of the abuse of power, viz. Clericalism;

5. De-emphasize the image of Church as "family" in favour of images of "community" in which boundary expectations are more clearly defined;

6. Demolish the structure of hierarchical leadership and reaffirm the equality of all persons created in the image and likeness



Image Source: theologygeek.com

of God, and the equality of the baptized in the church;

Differentiate between the sin and the crime. When abuse is seen only as a sin, Catholic theology of penance and forgiveness encourages the clergy abuser to acknowledge his sinful actions, seek God's forgiveness and sin no more. The survivors are encouraged to forgive those who have abused them:

This does not recognize the criminality of the act and its consequences;

It does not ask for accountability from the abuser or the system that formed, enabled and in the end, covered up for the abusive cleric;

8. Put clear and transparent policies,

structures and procedures in place to deal with cases of sexual abuse. They must cover all clergy including bishops, and must include:

Committees that include competent experts, not restricted to the clergy;

A support system for survivors that includes a therapist, family, friends, various experts, to enable emotional, spiritual and physical healing;

Mechanisms for restitution including financial;

Re-education and healing of offenders;

Clear procedures for following civil law;

Mechanisms for assistance and healing of the Catholic community.

9. Have recourse to laws of the land that protect minors and vulnerable adults against sexual abuse. While bishops exercise spiritual authority over priests, they cannot force priests to cooperate with investigations and obey when punishments are imposed. But the State can.

10. However, carrying out internal investigations without delay independently of civil proceedings is essential. While rape is a crime and consensual sex is not, consensual sex is a breach of the vow of celibacy

and attracts ecclesiastical sanctions.

If this happens, then the scandals that have brought so much pain, and anger in the Catholic Church can become turning points for action that is crucial to rebuilding the Church.

1. Clericalism: Enabler of Clergy Sexual Abuse", by Thomas P. Doyle. Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 54, No. 3, January 2006 (2006) DOI: 10.1007/s11089-006-6323-x

2. Ten Myths about clergy sexual misconduct by Darryl W. Stephens

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Jesuits and Geographical Exploration

Geographical exploration is a process that investigates the physical, terrestrial properties of a region so that one gets correct and reliable knowledge of the area. Perhaps many may be surprised to know that the Jesuits made substantial contribution to geographical exploration not only in the New World of the Americas from the 16th century onwards, but also in the ancient known countries where the geographical knowledge was limited and defective. A recent study reveals that more than 80 countries worldwide have brought out commemorative postal stamps in honour of outstanding Jesuits, a significant number of whom were eminent explorers - a lasting testimony to the invaluable contribution the Jesuits have made in this field. Since South Asia has also been an important beneficiary, this short paper will focus principally on Jesuit contribution to exploration in this region.

The Ignatian foundation of Jesuit engagement in exploration

Like all other ministries, geographical exploration is also intimately linked to the twin goals of the Society: Seeking the greater glory of God and the salvation and sanctification of souls. But Ignatius understood them in his own unique way. One of the most under-recognized contributions of Ignatius was his innovative and revolutionary Christian cosmology and its theologico-spiritual consequences. Ignatius grew up in the Christian culture which degraded the material universe as one of the principal enemies of the human soul along with the devil and the flesh, thanks mostly due to the Hellenization of Christian cosmology and worldview. Ignatius, on the other hand, pursued the original biblical Hebrew view, as articulated in the Book of Genesis. Referring to creation it repeats seven times: "and God found it good." Ignatius had a very positive view of the material universe. For him it was the Creator's masterpiece. Hence any serious study of this universe can only redound to the Creator's glory. In this regard Ignatius was one with the great founders of modern science like Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, etc. For him the universe was God revealing through the Book of Nature, and so was a sure path to the divine. This is the Christian cosmology and consequent spirituality underpinning the "Contemplatio ad amorem," of the Spiritual Exercises. Hence any serious study of the universe can only redound to the greater glory of God and promote the salvation and sanctification of humans.

Coming to the "salvation of souls," Ignatius understood it in a holistic, inclusive way. Although he recognized a distinction between body and soul, his insight was that both should be understood and appreciated as a unified whole. The physical/material dimension is also important. Hence he gave very clear instructions to his fellow-missionaries that while working in a



Jesuit missionaries Rudolfo Acquaviva and Francisco Henriques (dressed in black) in the Court of Akbar

Photo Courtesy: archaeology now

new land, they should pay close attention to the geographical conditions of the area, the customs, habits and beliefs of the people, paying due respect to them. He insisted that these points be included in the annual letters to the General's Curia.

Geographical exploration and cartography

Cartography is the science/art of making maps. Obviously this is inseparably interlinked to exploration, and so we find Jesuit scientists engaged in both. Coming to India, it may be noted that cartography was not foreign to India when the Jesuit scholars arrived. Vasco da Gama's Indian pilot used an indigenous map for his maritime activities. But as S.N. Sen, well-known historian of Indian astronomy remarks, they lacked scientific accuracy and reliability. Naturally, the contributions of European missionaries were outstanding indeed. According to Raymond Mercier, the geographical observation, in particular, of the Jesuit scientists "were fundamental in effecting the revolution in the accuracy of longitudes and latitudes."

Longitudes and Latitudes

Since the earth is curved, the exact location of a particular place is determined by its longitude and latitude. Longitude tells us how far a location is east or west of a universally accepted Prime Meridian (Greenwich Royal Observatory). Latitude, on the other hand, tells how far north or south of the equator a place is located.

Several impartial scholars have pointed out that in the case of



Jesuits in China; (from Left to Right) Matteo Ricci, Adam Schaal and Le Pere Ferdinand Verbiest

longitude and latitude determination the situation in India was very underdeveloped. Given this sad predicament of geographical exploration and cartography in India, the service rendered by the Jesuit experts was a blessing indeed.

Some Jesuit Pioneer Explorers in South Asia

Anthony Montserrat (1536-1600)

Montserrat was a pioneer in geographical exploration in India. His travel with Akbar from Fatepur Sikri to Kabul in 1581, gave him an opportunity to determine the geographical coordinates of 100 locations, and prepare the first modern scientific map in India. Though relatively small, this was considered “a tremendous improvement on all previous efforts. It was based on actual observations rather than on traveller’s tales.” “It gave a better idea of the Himalayas and of the upper course of the Punjab rivers, than Rennell had done nearly 200 years later.” James Rennell (1742-1830) is considered “The Father of Indian Survey.”

Anthony Rubino (1578-1643)

Rubino began his preparation of maps of the world already in the beginning of the 17th century. Being an Italian Jesuit cartographer, he calculated the distance between Venice and several towns in India.

Jean Richaud (1633-1693)

Richaud was one of the royal “mathematicians of France.” He

was reputed for making accurate astronomical observations and studying the geography of the region.

Jean-Venant Bouchet (1655-1732)

Bouchet concentrated on South India, and prepared a map in 1772. That the cartographic fraternity considered it to be “the first map of any merit,” is evident from the fact that Bourguignon d’Anville (1697-1792), noted French cartographer, used it for his well-known Carte de la Côte de Coromandel, published in Paris in 1753 and in London in 1754.

Jean Calmette

Calmette was another Jesuit explorer who made important contributions towards making maps of South India, despite his relatively short service in India (1725-1740).

Claude Stanislaus Boudier (1686-1757)

Boudier is considered the most important French contributor to science in India. At the invitation of Raja Sawai Jai Singh (1688-1743) of Jaipur, he undertook a 1000-mile long trip from Chandernagore to Jaipur, during which he determined the longitudes and latitudes of 63 Indian cities. He had close contact with the well-known Jesuit scientist Antoine Gauthier in China and shared data with him. Both d’Anville and Tieffenthaler used his data extensively. Furthermore, he contributed to the standardization of the Indian mile.

Joseph Tieffenthaler

Joseph Tieffenthaler (1710-1785), from Tyrol, Austria, spent



A recent study reveals that more than 80 countries worldwide have brought out commemorative postal stamps in honour of outstanding Jesuits, a significant number of whom were eminent explorers - a lasting testimony to the invaluable contribution the Jesuits have made in this field.”

42 years in India, doing extensive work in astronomy and geography. According to Moonis Raza, a well-known Indian geographer, “Tieffenthaler was a keen observer of geographical phenomena, had the background to understand them and had the ability to express them lucidly. His descriptions are known for their accuracy and are based on an acute sensitivity to and perception of the Indian reality.” He undertook more than 16 exploratory trips, kept clear records of more than 240 towns and villages.

Perhaps a most remarkable contribution of Tieffenthaler was the map he prepared together with Anquetil Duperron in 1784 of the Ganges and its tributary Ghaghara (Karnali) rivers. In this very important work he used his own travel and survey findings and the indigenous cartography available to him. John Bernoulli, the well-known astronomer and member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Berlin and of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg, “found the works of Tieffenthaler so much up to the mark that he actually undertook to translate and annotate several of them.”

Tieffenthaler was a great writer too with 40 works to his credit. His most important work was the Historical and Geographical Description of Hindustan in three volumes with well-prepared maps. James Rennell made use of his maps for his Memories of Hindustan. S.N. Sen writes: “Tieffenthaler, like D’Anville, not only endeavoured to make the most of the materials of the Persian and Indian geographers, but undertook to improve upon the existing tables of latitudes and longitudes by determining them himself.”

Francis Wendel (1726-1803)

Wendel, a companion and collaborator of Tieffenthaler, was noted for his high quality maps, particularly of the region of the

Rajputs and the provinces to the south and south-west of Agra. Rennell used his data for preparing the map of Hindustan.

Benito de Goës (1562-1607)

The thriller in the whole history of Jesuit explorations was the 4,000-mile long most daring, perilous and adventurous land-trip the Portuguese Jesuit Brother Benito de Goës undertook from India to China. Disguised as an Armenian merchant, he started from Agra in 1602 and reached within the Great Wall of China in 1605. He wanted to find out the veracity of two claims: Marco Polo’s Cathay was really China, and there was a Catholic community there. His fearless mission proved the first claim true, but the second was wrong, being based on the apparent similarity between certain modes of worship of the Buddhist monks and those of Christians. Goes died before he could reach Ricci, and his diary with precious details of his exploratory travel was lost.

Conclusion

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam (AMDG) is synonymous with a Jesuit’s identity. But being a “Contemplative in Action,” this striving for God’s greater glory cannot be divorced from the commitment to greater, selfless service of his brothers and sisters. The engagement of the Jesuits in science is a tangible expression of this foundational principle. Our short study of the geographical exploration of Jesuits in general, and in South Asia in particular, should be seen in this light.

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The graces and challenges of the Pakistan Jesuit Mission

In an interview **Fr. Juan Carlos Pallardel, SJ** (Mission Superior of the Pakistan Mission) shares with **Victor Edwin, SJ**, the graces and challenges of the Pakistan Jesuit Mission.



Fr. Juan Carlos Pallardel, SJ (Second from Right) with Jesuits and Collaborators of Pakistan Mission

Photo Courtesy: Victor Edwin, SJ

Congratulations on being appointed Mission Superior of the Pakistan Mission. Tell us something about the history of Jesuit Missions in Pakistan?

The Jesuits Mission in Pakistan has a long history. In brief we can identify three phases of Jesuit presence in what is Pakistan today. The first phase started in 1570 when Jesuits from Goa were invited to the Moghul Emperor Akbar's court in Delhi, and they moved with him to Lahore. We are talking about Frs. Monserrat and Rudolph Aquaviva. It was an important period that remains in the memory of Muslims in Pakistan. Even though it may seem strange this first phase has helped us to rebuild a presence in the academic world of Pakistan. The second phase of Jesuit presence in Pakistan leads us from Sindh to Baluchistan (Afghanistan). In 1888 Sindh and Baluchistan were entrusted to the Jesuits, specifically to the Jesuits working in Bombay. They served this vast territory until 1936 when they handed over the mission

to the Franciscans. Next year St. Patrick Cathedral Parish in Karachi celebrates 150 years! The third phase started in 1962 when Frs. Schulz, Butler and Schoackaert opened the mission in Lahore trying to realise the dream of the Archbishop of establishing a University College. It never materialized. Since then the mission has been first under the German Superior Province, then the Australian Province and for the last decades under the Sri Lankan Province. The Society has been engaged in multiple ways: theological reflection, parish work, schools, dialogue, study of Islam, and formation of the young and vibrant Pakistani Church.

2. What are the present apostolic ministries of Jesuits in Pakistan?

At present the Mission serves the Church and the country in multiple areas. We run three schools in a poor area of Lahore,

contribute to the formation of religious and clergy through teaching in the Seminaries and the formation programmes of Sisters. We have a spirituality centre (Loyola Hall) where we offer retreats, spiritual direction, counselling, and workshops. We also have a youth programme, MAGIS, and we continue the work of dialogue and study with Islam at the academic level re-engaging with Muslims scholars trying to create spaces of encounter and reflection. In the last few years we have also started travelling to different cities and dioceses providing spiritual support to religious. I should not forget that we run a candidate house - preparing young men for the Society.

3. What are the major challenges of the Jesuit Mission in Pakistan, and how do you respond to them?

The major challenge is personnel. We are a small team of 4 priests and 2 scholastics. The latter will go for philosophy in July. The Sri Lankan Province has been generous in sending priests and scholastics to Pakistan. In addition we have local vocations that need time to go through their formation. Meanwhile, we are trying to get Jesuits to join us in the Mission. The Provincial of Sri Lanka, the POSA and others are helping in this endeavour. An answer to this challenge is to invite Jesuits for short periods of time and for concrete activities. This allows us to serve the local Church in a better way. Jesuits from Sri Lanka, Philippines, and Britain have responded to our call and this has allowed us to provide spiritual care to religious during the summers. I hope this collaboration can continue and grow. This is the best way to serve Pakistan and have a serious impact. It will ensure continuity and quality that are essential in a country full of challenges.

4. Christians are a tiny minority among the overwhelming Muslim majority. Does Islamic faith impact Christian faith expressions that could open genuine encounter between the two religions?

I see this in two ways. First, there is a clear impact of the Islamic context in the ways in which the Christian faith is experienced and lived. Using Marshall Hodgson's categories Christianity grows in an Islamic context and naturally the impact is there and needs to be studied in a deep way. However, there is a second way to answer this question, I think there is a cultural substratum that it is common to Christians and Muslims, and that shapes both religious traditions and experiences. I feel this has not been sufficiently studied. In general, I think there is a serious need for Christian studies in Pakistan. It was present in the past but there is need for fresh and deeper studies along international standards.

5. Though Christian Muslim Relations underpin all your apostolic involvement in Pakistan, what are your plans for intellectual dimension of this particular

apostolate?

Last December in Negombo, Sri Lanka, four Jesuits of different Provinces answered an invitation to create a think-tank for reflecting and formulating a Project for Pakistan in the area of study of Islam and intellectual apostolate. Frs. Jean-Marc Balham, Victor Edwin, Felix Koerner and Heru Prakosa helped us to identify some areas of work for the future. They themselves have been engaged to collaborating with us in different ways. So the main idea is to consolidate a "Research Centre" in Lahore in partnership with Jesuits of other Provinces, Muslim scholars and members of other religious congregations. This is not only for working on dialogue but with a larger vision

oriented to contribute to fostering the intellectual dimension in the Pakistani Church. Thanks to the Kircher Network we will start supporting the Major Seminary with visiting professors from this year in order to contribute to the theological formation and reflection in Pakistan. I feel there is not only a need in the country but also a thirst at the intellectual level among Christians and Muslims. This is an opportunity for the Society - an opportunity to build bridges between Christians and Muslims, and to contribute to the intellectual life of Pakistan.

6. What are your plans for promoting vocations for the Society of Jesus?

For this year, Fr. Imran, the first Pakistani Jesuit, and Amir and Asim, our two scholastics are working on a plan for promoting vocations in Pakistan. This

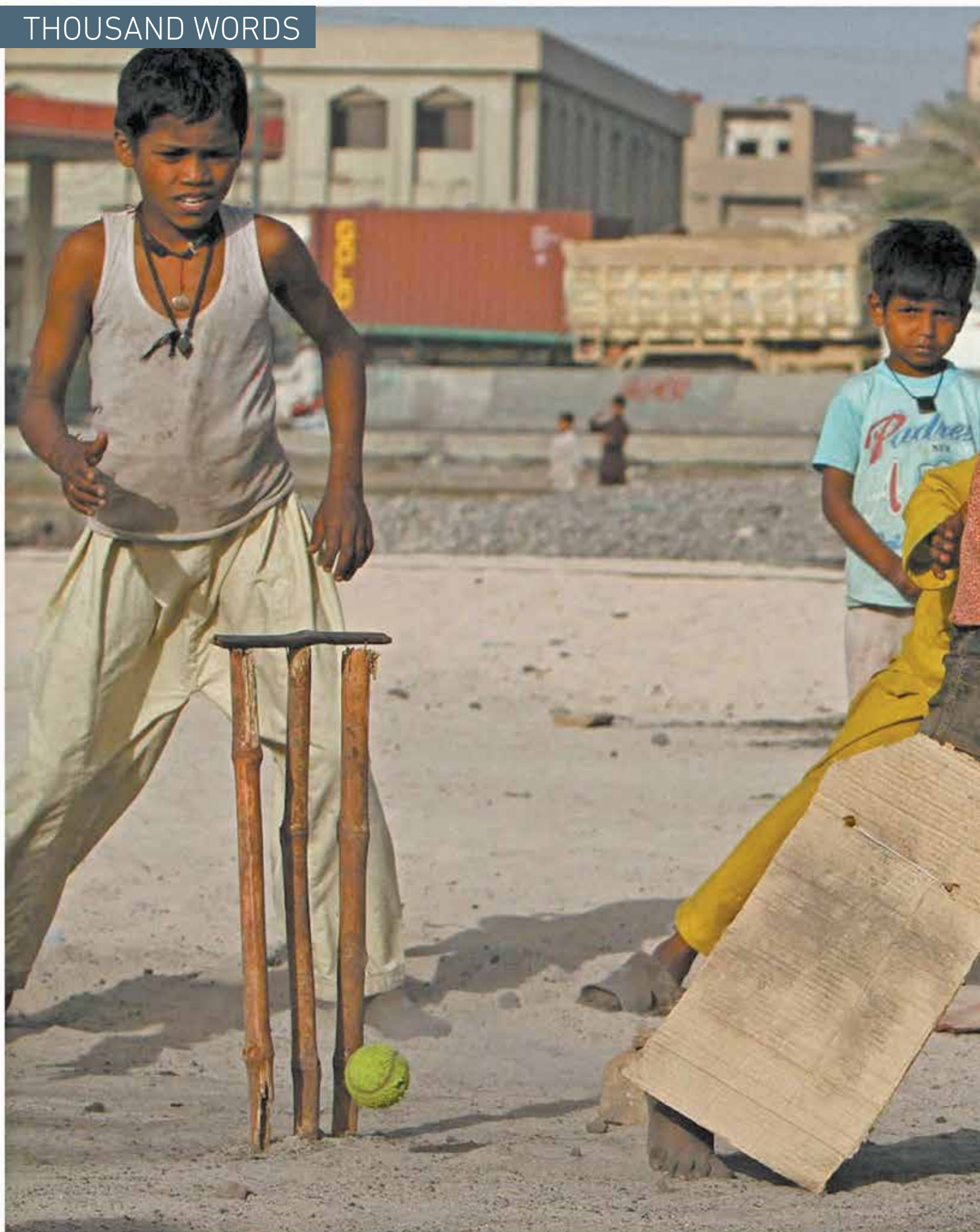
is in order to reach young people and, more importantly, to find ways to follow them in their journey of discernment.

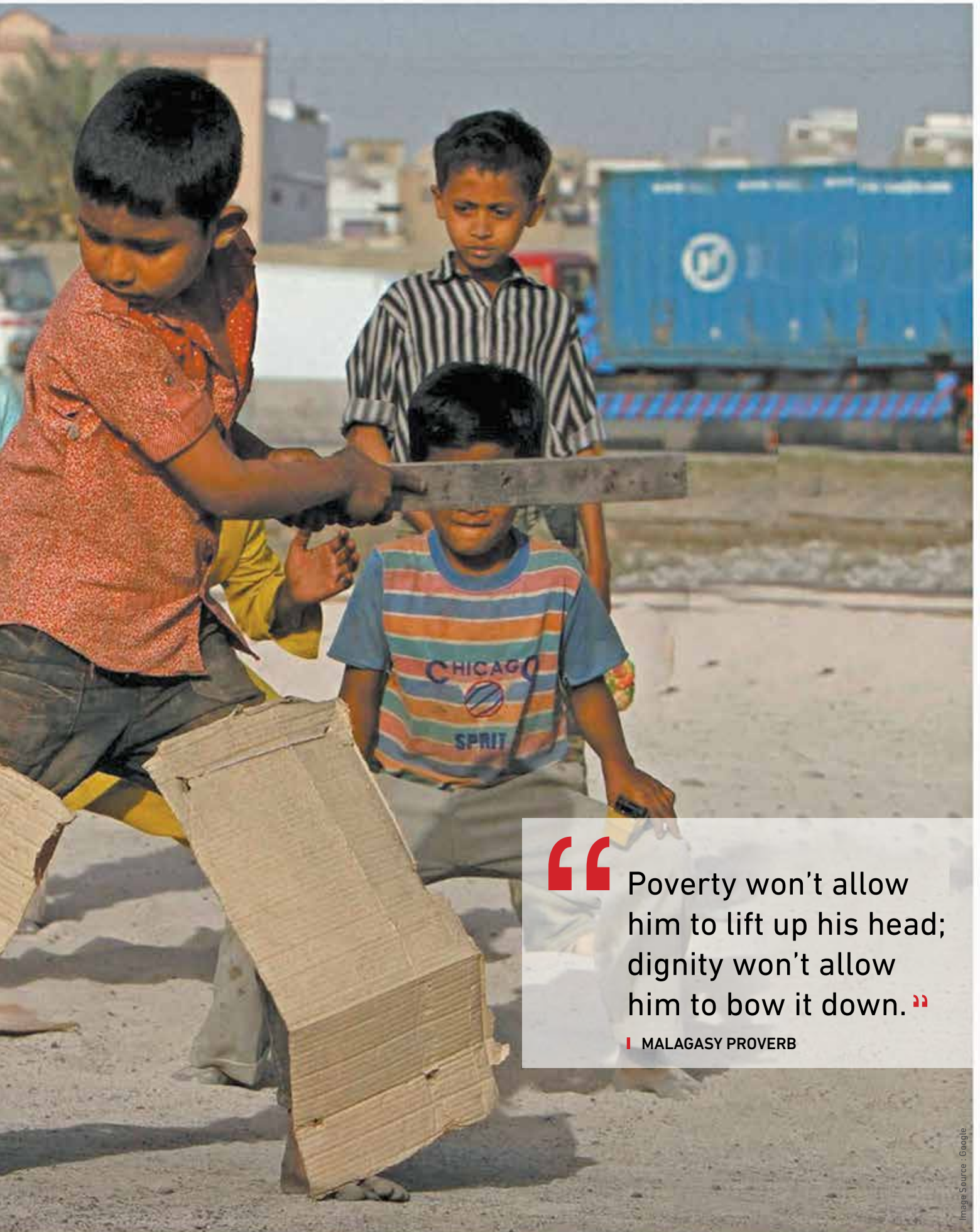
7. What are the ways in which Jesuits from other parts of the world could contribute to the Pakistan Jesuit Mission?

As I mentioned before, I think one important way is to support us in short term activities. This implies coming to Pakistan for a couple of weeks or a month to conduct workshops, retreats, teaching, etc. I believe that if a small team is set up it will be a great opportunity to (i) form local people for assuming these ministries, (ii) contribute to the growth of the local Church, and (iii) consolidate academic spaces of encounter and reflection with Muslims. The team can give continuity to the regular presence of Jesuits and, in synergy with others, make a real contribution to Pakistan. Pakistan is a fascinating country with a diversity of languages, religious heritages, cultures... Soon it will become the country with the largest Muslim population in the world.

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THOUSAND WORDS





“Poverty won't allow him to lift up his head; dignity won't allow him to bow it down.”

■ MALAGASY PROVERB



In the Spirit, from the Heart, to Practice

Jesuit Identity and Universal Apostolic Preferences

More than capturing our imaginations and awakening our desires, the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs), in my view, redefine and reconstruct Jesuit identity - who we are, and what we do; our being and our doing. The UAPs recapture the ways in which Jerome Nadal once characterized the 'Jesuit way' in a triadic framework: In the Spirit, from the heart, to practice. The life and mission of Jesuits should originate from the Spirit experienced in the Spiritual Exercises (SE), and must flow from the heart and culminate in service. The UAPs help us return to our roots and reconstruct our identity. We define who we are by discernment and the Spiritual Exercises (UAP 1); let people know about what we do by walking with the poor and the marginalised, and caring for the Common Home (UAPs 2 and 3); who we identify with by journeying with the youth (UAP 4).

For Nadal, all is done in and with the Spirit of God. The heart refers to the change within - from the heart of God to the heart of the individual. And the practice is the service component. The four UAPs help us reconnect to these original characteristic ways by which the Jesuits were asked to look at their mission and life. They take us back to our roots and redefine the Jesuit identity today in our context: who we are, how we live, and what we choose to do.

There is a deep connect between Nadal's triadic character of Jesuit way and the intent of four UAPs. In the context of the many religious congregations which existed in 1550s Jesuits were forced to ask the questions: 'Who are we? What are we? Whence did we come?' They had to define themselves on a consistent and ongoing basis. The very first effort was to communicate what the Jesuits were doing in different parts of the world by writing letters. Reading these letters was one way of achieving 'union of hearts' and defining what it meant to be a Jesuit. In September 1553, as John O'Malley tells us in his *The First Jesuits*, Nadal told Ignatius that the letters from the 'Indies' were edifying, and defined 'them' as Jesuits. Polanco sent circulars two or three times every year 'to the whole society' to define what was unique to the members of the Society as against those of other religious orders.

During his numerous visits around Europe Nadal's main task was to make Jesuits conscious of their identity. He explained the meaning of their Institute, how it was founded, and how they should define themselves. He used the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions to define Jesuitness. For him the triadic framework - "in the Spirit, from the heart, to practice" captured the core of Jesuit identity.

'In the Spirit': Discernment and the Spiritual Exercises

The SE gives us 'the Spirit' and makes us realise that there is a direct and ongoing sense of God's presence in the world. God dwells and labours in every creature in the world. The essence

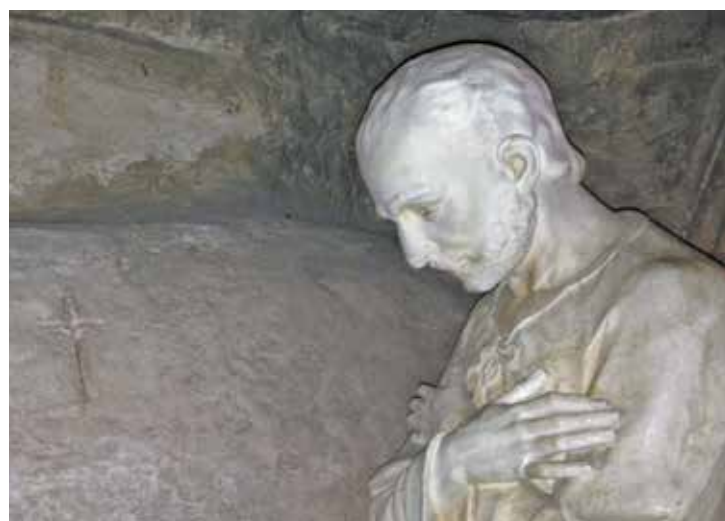


Image Source : Google

of being in the world and the end of human life is to realise this direct communion of creatures with the Creator (SE 15). The first UAP emphasizes showing a way to God. The way Jesuits choose to show a path to God is discernment and the SE as "a privileged instrument for making the life and action of the Lord Jesus present in diverse social contexts of today's world." The SE takes us "to a personal and communal encounter with Christ that transforms us." We want lead people to God through the SE and it is "our preferred way of showing the pathway to God through commitment to the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ in history."

If you choose to follow Christ then discernment should become a habitual way of making not only serious decisions at specific times in your life, but also of making everyday ones. Seeking and finding the will of God in our lives and in our apostolic works by having spiritual conversation is the Jesuit way of showing a path to God.

By emphasizing discernment and the SE, the UAPs reminds us that as Jesuits we are not merely social activists or educators but spiritual animators who are guided by the Spirit of the SE. We discern a way of going about our mission “out of a living faith that is incarnate and consistent, a faith nourished by familiarity with God that is the fruit of a life of prayer, a faith that enters into dialogue with other religions and with all cultures.” More sharply, the first UAP tells us clearly that Jesuits are discerning leaders and they resolve to form collaborators to become discerning leaders.

‘From the Heart’: Walking with the poor, and accompanying the Youth

For Ignatius, the Spirit moves the hearts. Toward the end of the Diary Ignatius again relates a strong experience or vision of the Spirit: “Throughout Mass I wept gently and abundantly, and after Mass as well; before Mass I felt the impulse to weep and felt or saw the Holy Spirit himself; all related with complete submission” [Spiritual Diary 169]. The Spirit moves the heart to accompany the excluded and the youth in whom we see

invites us to “help young people discern the path by which they can achieve happiness by contributing to the well-being of all humankind.” For us in South Asia, our attention should be drawn to the tension the young experience “between the drive toward cultural homogeneity and the emergence of an intercultural human society that respects and is enriched by diversity.”

‘To Service’: Collaborating in the care of Common Home

For Nadal, ‘practice’ meant ‘pastoral service.’ This idea of service comes from the love of Christ. To be with Jesus Christ, in the experience of the SE, is to serve Him. One who loves Jesus has to serve and vice versa. The message that God gave to Ignatius through the mystical graces that filled him from Manresa onward was a message of apostolic service - love should be shown in action.

This service we are involved in has to in collaboration with others while caring for the earth. Collaboration includes



Jesus on the Cross. Not merely doing something for them, but accompanying them in their journey of liberation.

The first companions viewed their life and works as something that came from the depth of their heart, leading them to being close to the poor and the youth - victims of abusive powers. The UAP says succinctly that “the poor and the young are a complementary and interwoven locus theologicus. Young people, most of whom are poor, face enormous challenges in our world today.” Moved by the suffering of “the victims of abuse of power, abuse of conscience, and sexual abuse... whose cry the Lord responds to with his liberating incarnation” we want to lead a life “closer to the poor, adopting a style of life and work appropriate to the situation so that our accompaniment will be credible.” More importantly, we want to keep the space of our institutions and community residences “open to young people in society and the Church... to youthful creativity, spaces that both foster an encounter with the God of life revealed by Jesus and deepen the Christian faith of the young.” The UAP also

“both participating in efforts to analyze problems in depth and promoting reflection and discernment that will guide us in making decisions that help to heal the wounds already inflicted on the delicate ecological balance.” Service implies being “actively present in this process.” As Pope Francis said in his address to GC 36, “initiating processes is different from occupying spaces, the Society initiates processes.” This is love in service. It is “a form of genuinely worshipping the creative work of God.”

As Jesuits, the UAPs remind us, our way of showing a path to God is discernment and the Exercises (in the Spirit), our way of life is one of accompanying the marginalised and the youth (from the Heart), and our service is through collaboration with others in caring for our Common Home (to Service).

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Ensuring 'No One is Left Behind': The Call of SDGs and UAPs

On 25th September 2015, the United Nations (UN) declared the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the 'global agenda' to be achieved by 2030. On 19th February 2019, the Society of Jesus adopted the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) for the next ten years (2019 - 2029). At the heart of the SDGs and UAPs is a common thrust: to ensure 'no one is left behind' and 'walk with those who are left behind'.

Vatican's recent International Conference on "Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Listening to the cry of the earth and of the poor", 7th - 9th March 2019, highlighted the importance of SDGs in addressing some of the most pressing global concerns today. Many leaders echoed the sentiment that "working for the attainment of the SDGs is a spiritual exercise and moral imperative."

To what extent do the global agenda and the challenges today affect the way Jesuits design their programmes in order to realign and reorient their engagements? How does our mission, motivated by faith and spirituality, engage us in global development discourse and practice?

Key features of the Society

The Society of Jesus, "seeking God in all things", is a universal organization with a presence in almost every country. With over 16,000 members, it is the largest male religious order in the Catholic Church. Guided by the rich tradition of Ignatian spirituality, Jesuits are committed to the universal Church, and to the greater good of all people for the "greater glory of God". Founded in 1540, the Society trains her members to adapt and change in order to move with the times and connect to the needs of the mission. Thus, the "least" Society has bequeathed a unique legacy to our world today.

In 1975 GC 32 provided the Society a definitive direction, declaring 'the mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement'. The Encyclical "Laudato Si" on Care for our Common Home was published on 18th June 2015. In it Pope Francis explicitly links the sufferings of the poor with environmental degradation, arguing vigorously for integrated solutions. In the latter half

of 2016, GC 36 confirmed its much-deliberated commitment to "reconciliation, peace and justice" with discernment, networking and collaboration as the way forward.

On 19th February, 2019, the Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr. Arturo Sosa, presented four Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) approved by Pope Francis to the entire Society of Jesus to show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment; to walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice; to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future; and to collaborate in the care of our common home. These preferences, as areas vital for our world today, will be the focus of the Society's attention over the next ten years.



Image Source : globalgoals

All these directives and preferences intertwine to create a common development agenda for the Society, to address the situation of the poor and marginalized of the world. The Society is thus able to position herself as a key player in development across the globe. As Jesuits, we have a legacy of development work in each of our Conferences, giving expression to our mission in a concrete historical context.

Key features of the SDGs

In September 2015, the 193 member States of the United Nations (UN) laid out 17 SDGs and 169 related targets to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect our planet.



The 'Agenda 2030' came into force on 1st January 2016 to achieve development that is fair, equitable, inclusive and environment-friendly.

The SDGs are universal: Involving all of us to build a more sustainable, safer, more prosperous planet, the SDGs are a global set of goals for sustainable development. The mandate of the SDGs applies equally to all countries.

The SDGs are ambitious: Inclusion is at the core of every goal and indicator, ensuring 'no one is left behind'. Most SDG targets are linked to elements of international human rights. The pledge to leave no one behind reflects the fundamental principles of non-discrimination and equality.

The SDGs are interdependent and interconnected: All the 17 goals are interconnected and interdependent. The success of one affects others. Thus, better health helps eradicate poverty and fostering peace and inclusive societies will reduce inequalities and help economies prosper. The structure of 'Agenda 2030' is integrating all the goals through the 'five Ps': people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. The interdependence and interconnectedness of SDGs have also provided for a possible partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including the government, private sector, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) to ensure the achievement of the SDGs. The SDGs also recognize that local people are better placed to both understand and respond to development challenges and thus ensure local ownership in development.

Key challenges and opportunities

a) Mainstreaming and aligning our mission with global agenda

The Society of Jesus has a long-standing history of engaging at local, national and global levels, championing the cause of the world's most vulnerable and the excluded, even in the remotest of areas where state institutions may be absent. Jesuit institutions have established themselves as important actors in development services through different ministries. They have acquired wide ranging experience and credibility in the development field, especially through educational and health institutions, and social centres.

Through its GCs the Society has gone through the process of discernment of the mission and preferential options. The UAPs are an example of the Society's response to the needs of the world, giving a direction and agenda to its members to follow. Thus, the Jesuits have the capacity to contribute effectively to the achievement of 'Agenda 2030'.

The Society needs to assess and connect its development engagements, especially those that are now well defined in the UAPs, with the global development discourse. With its wide geographical reach, engagements at the grassroots with marginalized sections, and well-organized development works, Jesuits could create a greater impact by aligning their work with the SDGs. Mainstreaming our mission would help organize our works and engagements more effectively; and aligning our mission with SDGs would help us unify our work, consolidating it for greater impact, effectiveness and visibility.

b) Consolidating our engagements through collaboration and networking

Goal 17 of the SDGs provides a framework for the widest possible partnership, collaboration and networking. The SDG framework provides an opportunity to work for development in inter-ministerial and inter-provincial networks. Though there is some collaboration and networking already happening, in the light of the GC 36, much more is expected. Building partnerships and federations will aid learning from each other, complement each other in development initiatives, and multiply successes and overcome challenges more effectively.

c) Explore the interplay of religion and development in the Indian context

Faith inspires, motivates and provides vision to faith actors for engaging in their mission and development activities. Missionary movements and the commitment to support the marginalised played a crucial role in inter-relating religion with development during the colonial period. It is observed that many moved out from their traditional sphere of working with the Christian community to secular circles, thus contributing to the plural, democratic and secular ethos of India.

However, in hostile political establishments, aggravated by right-wing politics, any developmental activity carried out by minority institutions is looked upon as allurements or incentives for conversion. Taking into consideration the political marginalization and shrinking space for minority institutions, the Society needs to engage in exploring the spaces for social and political interventions constitutionally.

The Society will be well placed if it positions itself and its development interventions in the larger global agenda and mission of nation-building. The SDGs provide an effective framework to carry out developmental interventions in the secular sphere and have great support from governments and other official agencies. Aligning our developmental interventions with the SDGs will open the doors to collaborate with government, provide an opportunity to dispel the misgivings associated with minority institutions, and will also be beneficial in mobilizing government resources.

The new frontier

The Society of Jesus has much to offer to the 'global agenda.' "A fire that enkindles other fires" (GC 35:2) is the power that dares us to row out into the deep and explore frontiers. The "fire within" and the numerous "inspiring fires" in our midst urge us to "draw from this well wherein the promise of resurrection lies" (Gustavo Gutierrez). Aligning with the SDGs is the new frontier that beckons us to ensure 'no one is left behind.' For "whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:41). Our mission is to transform the world. Let us walk together with courage towards this new frontier of SDGs.

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Religion: Peace, Fraternity, Dialogue

Pope Francis said, “Religions cannot renounce the urgent task of building bridges between peoples and cultures” (Speech in Abu Dhabi on 4th Feb). And this urgency was experienced as the Holy Father sent a video message to the people in the Arabian Peninsula greeting, “As-sal mualaykum!” - Peace be with you. The name ‘Francis’ always echoed ‘peace’ in the Church. Here we have a new Francis who imitates St. Francis of Assisi. He has also used the words, ‘human fraternity’, ‘reconciliation’, ‘peace’, ‘joy’ throughout his papacy.

‘The West is meeting the East’ was the one of the phrases that echoed during the visit of Pope Francis to UAE and his meeting with Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb. Br. Michael A. Perry, OFM, Minister General, addressed the Order of Friars Minor, the whole Franciscan Family, and all Muslim sisters and brothers, “Eight hundred years ago, our Seraphic Father St. Francis set sail for Egypt, finally fulfilling a long-held dream of reaching out to Muslims. He arrived at the camp of the crusading army, among Latin Christians who through years of preaching and the rhetoric of holy war had been taught to scorn Muslims” (Quaeplacuerint Domino [RnB 16.8] Rome, 7th Jan 2019). The world proclaimed this historical visit of Pope Francis as a commemoration of the eight hundredth anniversary of the great meeting between St. Francis of Assisi and Sultan Malik al Kamil. The visit of Pope Francis has also opened a new era of Christianity meeting Islam in its land. It has given a new hope for inter-religious dialogue and reconciliation.

The visit of the Pope Francis is an invitation to all people of goodwill to work for human fraternity. He said, “The time has come when religions should more actively exert themselves,

with courage and audacity and without pretence, to help the human family deepen the capacity for reconciliation, the vision of hope and the concrete paths of peace.”

Being a Christian means entering into the world with the Trinitarian communion. The incarnation mystery invites us into this great challenge - understanding the signs of the times (Mt 16:3). “The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and

called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need” (Human Fraternity, Abu Dhabi, 4th Feb 2019). In fact, “The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim

Christ ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ (Jn. 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself” (Nostra Aetate, 2).

Religion, however, is not meant only to unmask evil; it has an intrinsic vocation to promote peace, today perhaps more than ever. Without giving in to forms of facile syncretism, our task is that of praying for one another, imploring from God the gift of peace, encountering one another, engaging in dialogue and promoting harmony in the spirit of cooperation and friendship (Speech at the International Peace Conference, 28th April 2017). Pope Francis has invited all Christians saying, “I ask for you the grace to preserve peace,

unity, to take care of each other, with that beautiful fraternity in which there are no first - or second - class Christians.” He concluded his homily in UAE with a prayer for them, saying: “May Jesus, who calls you blessed, give you the grace to go forward without becoming discouraged, abounding in love ‘to one another and to all’” (1 Thess. 3:12).



Pope Francis greets Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, the grand imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar

love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men” (Nostra Aetate, 2). The “Human Fraternity” document which was signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb begins thus: “Faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved. Through faith in God, who has created the universe, creatures and all human beings (equal on account of his mercy), believers are

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Two Thesauruses by a Jesuit 'wordsmith'

The abundance of synonyms and near synonyms in a language offers wondrous possibilities for the precise expression of diverse shades of meaning. It also reveals and makes available to the user, the word-wealth of a language. Now, at last, Kannada (a Dravidian language) and Konkani (an Indo-European language) can boast of having full-fledged dictionaries of synonyms and antonyms, the first of their kind. Fr. Prashant Madtha, a Karnataka Province Jesuit, has produced an 800 pages dictionary of synonyms and antonyms in Kannada – Padanidhi, and a 500 page Konkani Thesaurus – Thesar.

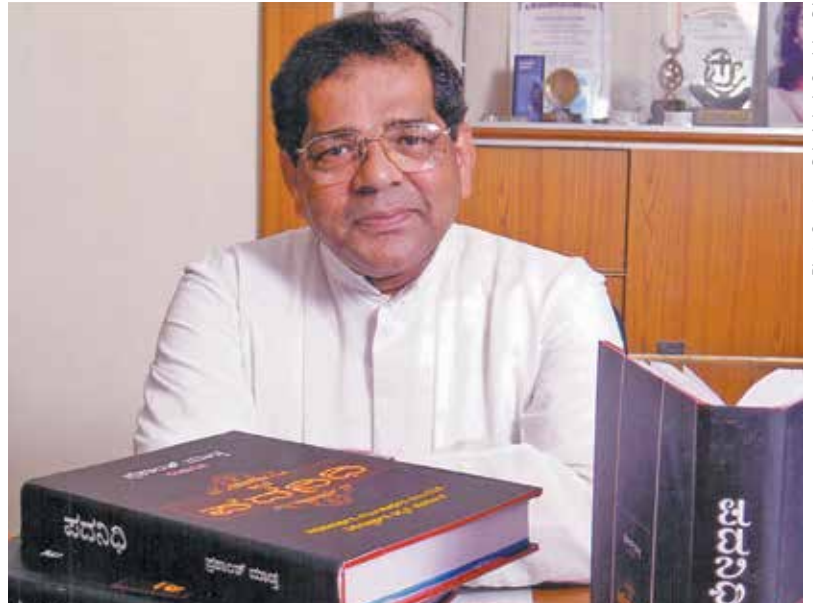
In 2007 Fr. Prashant Madtha completed his magnum opus in Kannada. In 2018 he published his Thesaurus in Konkani. These publications represent a pivotal moment in the history of Kannada. They contain far more than mere quaintness and charm of words.

In editing these unique dictionaries, the method followed is the one used by Roget in his Thesaurus in English. About 886 concepts in the order of a synonym and its antonym have been categorized in Kannada and one finds that some of the words have hundreds of synonyms. There are more than 16000 words with synonyms in this dictionary. One also finds relevant idioms and sayings alongside a particular concept. The words are collected from about seventy Kannada dictionaries, as the reference list at the end of volume indicates. A solid introduction narrating the history of Sanskrit, Kannada and English dictionaries of synonyms is given as also a philosophical discussion on the possibility of synonymy itself.

There are two main advantages of a thesaurus: the first one is that now there is ample choice in selecting words to express a concept. One can discriminate and tease out the exact meaning that one wishes to convey. For example the words 'mirth' and 'cheerfulness' seem to be synonymous at the superficial level but actually 'mirth' is an effort, whereas 'cheerfulness' is a habit of the mind. Mirth is transient and cheerfulness is permanent.

The second advantage is that a thesaurus displays the richness of a language. Many times one hears the complaint that Kannada does not have sufficient word power to express certain concepts. This thesaurus disproves this accusation. There are concepts here that have more words in Kannada than in English. For example, about one thousand five hundred words and idioms for the concept of 'death' and about two thousand words and idioms for 'anger' are recorded in this dictionary.

The Editor, Fr. Prashant Madtha, SJ was Professor of Kannada for more than 25 years at St Aloysius College, Mangalore and



Fr. Prashant Madtha, with dictionary of synonyms and antonyms in Kannada and Konkani Thesaurus

Photo Courtesy: Sch. Ashwin Cordeiro, SJ

was also its Principal for ten years. He was the PCF of Karnataka Province for seven years. Later he was appointed as the Principal of St Joseph's Evening College, Bangalore, and at present, he is the administrator of St Joseph's College of Commerce, Bangalore. He is a prolific writer in three languages - Kannada, Konkani and English. He has written 'On Eagle's Wings' - a lucid narration of the history of St Aloysius College, Mangalore. His translation of two mystical books of 16th century - 'The Imitation of Christ' and 'The Cloud of Unknowing' - have been appreciated as best examples of authentic translation. His book on child labour that was published by the Indian Social Institute, Delhi, has been translated into Hindi. He is a popular Konkani writer, famous for his humour. His articles in Konkani have been published in three volumes. He has also edited a volume of ten thousand Konkani idioms. He was a popular columnist in a leading Kannada newspaper for about eight years.

English and Kannada newspapers as well as the electronic media have hailed Fr Prashant's achievements and have called him the 'Roget of Kannada' and the 'Second Kittel' (Rev. Ferdinand Kittel, a Protestant missionary from Germany worked as a pastor in Mangalore and edited the first modern Kannada dictionary). He has already been conferred more than ten awards. In 2008 'India Today' selected him as one of the '50 pioneers of change in India.'

The author is currently pursuing second year of regency in Pannur Manvi Mission, Karnataka Province.

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Let him become what he desires to become



His flippant answers infuriated them. They smacked him, repeatedly punched him on the face causing him to lose consciousness, suffer a fractured cheek-bone, laceration on his cheek and bleed profusely. He ran for his life, but was trapped in a ditch. Almost half-dead, he lay motionless...

The sound of chirping birds and his father's voice woke him. "Krishna, Krishna, get up. It's already 5 o'clock."

Whenever Krishna was home he accompanied his priest father to the Sri Ranganathaswami temple on the bank of the Cauvery. After ablutions, besides helping his father to perform the rites and sprucing up the sanctum sanctorum, he kept listening to his father's chanting of 'slokas'. While devotees flocked to receive the Lord's blessings. Krishna

maintained a devout exterior.

Krishna's ambition since childhood was to become a teacher. Immediately after his plus-two results he made inquiries in almost every college in the State. Finally, he got admission to Loyola College, Chennai, to pursue his BA in English literature.

'How am I going to live far away from home' was his biggest worry. This was the first time he would be staying away from the comforts of home. Not a single day passed without phone calls instructing him how to behave, etc. Days quickly passed into weeks and weeks into months on the bustling campus. Krishna began to enjoy hostel life.

Once, as he was walking along the corridor, Krishna heard someone calling

out. "Krishna, could you please pass on this book to Prof. Chandra?" said Prof. Pincer. "Sure, Sir," said Krishna taking the book. As he walked he flipped through the pages. It had many pictures of an armed soldier.

"Sir, Prof. Chandra sent me to give you this book," Krishna said handing it over. Prof. Chandra thanked him. "Sir, what is the book about?" Krishna asked. "Oh! It is about the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola." "Who is he?" Prof. Pincer said, "He is the patron saint of our College. A great visionary..." He briefed Krishna about St. Ignatius. It was all so interesting that Krishna wanted to read the book himself. "Sir, I'd like to read it," he said. The Prof. paused a moment and said, "Okay, but you shouldn't lose it." Krishna promised to return it in a week's time.

Back in his room, Krishna started reading the book and found it extraordinary and gripping. The transformation of St. Ignatius from a life of vanity to one of sanctity captivated him. Soon Krishna began to read the Bible. He was struck by Jesus' words, "I no longer call you servants but I call you friends (Jn. 15:15).



Image Source : streetpsalms.org

'Jesus calls me his friend,' thought Krishna, overwhelmed with joy.

One evening his friends said, "Krishna, we're going to the chapel for the litany." "May I join you? His friends took him along. Soon Krishna began accompanying them to the College chapel on special occasions. Though he knew nothing of the prayers or rituals, he would sit in silence looking at the crucifix. An inexplicable joy overwhelmed him. In that stillness he felt a longing for the Divine. He felt the touch of the Master deep within. He responded, "Lord, lead me into your light that I may know you deeply, love you dearly and follow you closely." He kept his desire hidden, perhaps waiting for the right moment to reveal it. However, God had His own plan.

He went home on his semester holidays. One day his father, while looking for something found the Bible. He was puzzled. He immediately asked his son, "Krishna, what is this?" Stunned, Krishna kept staring at his father. His father asked again in a high pitched voice. "The Bible," said Krishna with deep reverence as if introducing his priest father to the Divine. "Why is it that you have it?" Krishna recited the name of Jesus a few times to muster his courage. "I read it. I love the Bible," he said. "What nonsense are you saying? Have you lost your mind?" his father yelled. Soon the entire family gathered around. They realised what was happening.

"I'm going to become a Christian," Krishna declared firmly. No sooner had he said those words all hell broke loose. "I will not let you do any such thing. I'd rather kill you here and now," his outraged father exploded. "Our tradition cannot accept this madness," said his mother. "Whatever has to happen, will happen. I am here to do my duty as prescribed by the Lord Jesus in the Bible. He is calling me, 'You did not choose me but I chose you.' No one can oppose God's will." Krishna was on fire. They did not understand his words, let alone accept. Not a day passed without the family members making every effort to make him change his mind. But the Spirit of God was working through him and he began to speak to them about Jesus.

This news spread like wildfire. People avoided him as if he had already become a Christian - something disgraceful in their eyes. One day as Krishna was returning after attending Sunday services at a nearby church a bunch of brawny men aggressively approached him and blocked his way. "What do you want?" he asked. They threatened him, "Don't become a Christian." "Who are you?" he asked. Standing menacingly in front of him they hurled racial comments at him. "What's your problem if I become a Christian?" "Don't irritate us. Do what we say." "I am free to choose what I want. Who are you to command me?"

They surrounded him and said, "You cannot become a Christian." "What if I do?" "We'll kill you," they blurted out. "I am not afraid. Who are you to kill me?" said Krishna. They began abusing

him. "You are insulting our religion." "No, I am not. I have the freedom to choose what I like." "What have you found in Christians that is so special?" "No comparison. I like Jesus so I want to follow him. Why should you bother?" "Becoming a Christian is a sin. Someone must have brainwashed you... to convert you. Tell us who. We will finish him off." "No one has tried to convert me. The Spirit of God has inspired me. I have found a community of love, worship, solidarity and brotherhood. There has been no external force whatsoever."

Krishna's words irritated them. They pressed forward to manhandle him. As Krishna was moving away one of the goons grabbed his bag and found the Bible. He tore it and flung it away. Krishna bent forward to catch it but could not. He pronounced the name of Jesus. "Stop saying that," they shouted as they throttled him. One of the goons slapped him. "Kill him. Kill him," they roared. They hit him over and over again.

When Krishna opened his eyes, he found himself in a hospital, surrounded by his grieving family. "Why should we see you suffering like this?" his father moaned. His mother was sobbing uncontrollably. He could understand the battle within her - love for her son and hatred for what he had done.

Suddenly some men barged in. One of them said to Krishna, "This is only a warning. If you still persist in wanting to become a Christian, you will pay the price." Krishna's parents were frightened by their warning. "When God is with me, who can be against me?" Krishna retorted. "Jesus is my Saviour. Soon I will become a Christian."

One of the bystanders lunged to hit him. The anxious parents cried out for help. "Who are you to punish him? Who are you to pass a verdict on him?" Krishna's father burst out in anger. Nurses, security guards and onlookers rushed in and pushed the goons out. Krishna was struck by what his father said: "Let him become what he desires to become."

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The significance of Theology in Jesuit Formation

I am a third year student at Vidyajyoti Jesuit College of Theology in Delhi. When I first came to Vidyajyoti, I did not have any clear idea about what theology was. There were only questions in my mind. I felt theology was just another step in my Jesuit formation - a very important one for ordination. However, today I'm grateful to God for sending me here. Studying, reading, reflecting and meditating on theological themes have broadened my vision. In this article I have tried to write down some of my personal experiences while doing theology.

A journalist asked Fr. Adolfo Nicolas when he was elected the Superior General of the Jesuits, "Who is Jesus for you?" He promptly replied "Jesus is everything for me. I will be a completely paralysed person without Jesus." As I come to the end of my theological studies, I feel the same. Jesus is everything for me. Without him my life would be meaningless.

As I reflect on my theological journey, the one image that comes to mind vividly is that of two lovers. They spend hours together trying to know each other better. That's what theology has done to me. It has made me to fall in love with the person of Jesus who is everything to me. Spending hours studying and reflecting on various topics in theology has helped grow in my love for God and come closer to Jesus. It has taught me many things about God and Holy Mother the Church. All of theology, especially Scripture, Church History, and Christian History has been important in my faith formation the last three years. The more I learned about Jesus' love, the more I was able to experience it. The more I understood about the Holy Spirit, the more I was able to appreciate the presence of God in my life.

"Heads, Hearts and Hands" is the very core of Vidyajyoti. The training one receives here makes one 'a man of God and man for others'. At Vidyajyoti contextual theology helps us to understand the reality around us in the context of the



Image Source : Google

Scriptures. It helps us to make sense of the world around us where there is so much suffering. Contextual theology involves experience, reflection, and action. It does not stop at the theoretical level. One invaluable aspect of the training at Vidyajyoti is the scope to think critically about the Scriptures and ask deeper questions. We go for ministry three days a week and have a pastoral reflection at the end of every month to know where we met God, and how to respond to the injustices we see.

Studying theology is one of the most devotional and inspiring activities at Vidyajyoti. The great thing is that intellectual knowledge has a way of running down and soaking your heart. The theological training I have received at Vidyajyoti has been outstanding and has equipped me to work effectively in my ministry.

Studying theology has had a significant influence on what I do. We live lives surrounded by things that are not right. All around us we find suffering and injustice. Studying theology has helped me to see more clearly the heart of God in the world's brokenness. It has made me realise that I am not only motivated but also equipped to serve the Lord in the brokenness around. I am better prepared

to serve Jesus in a higher capacity and am more confident of my ability to respond to his call because I know He has invested in me and has made me a better person through my theology studies.

I had many questions at the beginning of my theological studies. One of them was "Is theology really needed to know God? I am glad I found the answer to that. Every human being thinks about God and who God is. If you do not actively engage in theology it does not mean you have no idea about God. Theology has helped me to remove my wrong ideas about God and know God better.

Studying theology has enabled me both intellectually and spiritually. It has fulfilled my quest for knowledge of God. It has changed my life completely. I've learned more about what it means to really serve Jesus and His Church. My love and passion to spread the Good News of Christ has increased. I am learning and studying His word in ways I had never experienced before. I believe God has placed a love for theology within me. I love theology!

The author is from Pune Province doing third year theology at Vidyajyoti, Delhi.

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Jesuit South Asian Assembly (JESAA), Pune



Photo Courtesy: C. Joe Arun, SJ

The Jesuits of South Asia, two hundred plus, gathered in Pune from 25th to 28th April for a South Asian Jesuit Assembly (JESAA 2019) to explore ways to make their life and mission intercultural, viewing interculturality as an approach to promote reconciliation and justice. Interculturality defined as encounter between two cultures in which not only there is respect of the cultures of each other but also to go through inner transformation. At the inaugural Eucharist, having an intercultural reading of the passage on Samaritan woman in the Bible, Fr. George Pattery, POSA, said that we needed to move to common space where ordinariness rules supreme and basic needs were met. This is the space in which intercultural encounters happen. After the Eucharist, Fr. Joe Arun, Convener of JESAA, presented the agenda and dynamics to set the tone for the entire Assembly.

The first day the Jesuits listened to Justice Kurian Joseph and Professor Shiv Vishwanathan who spoke on 'Challenges to Secularism' and 'Intercultural context of South Asia', respectively. Motivating Jesuits to move to uncharted territory in their mission, Justice Kurian invited them to start schools exclusively for the students from below the poverty line. In his wide sweep of the analysis of Constitutional provisions, he took a sharp and incisive look at what really secular democracy was meant to be and how its tectonic plates were shifted by narrow political interests. In the afternoon, Prof Vishwanathan called Jesuits to look at interculturality as memory that makes people re-tell stories of encounter with nature, production of knowledge and invention of new democracy. Intercultural encounters must lead, he said, to cognitive justice, listening to oral traditions. More such encounters he felt must actually help look at the huge violence done to human bodies. That would, in fact, create intercultural space for reconciliation. The

presence of Prof. Shiv till the last day of the Assembly added a new flavour to the proceedings. The Assembly unanimously affirmed the event as a Spirit-led one and expressed the hope that Jesuit life in South Asia would be different because of this event

A panel of Jesuits, Frs. Jossie Lobo, Vinayak Jadav, Ranjit Kindo and Melville Pereira, presented their reflections on the theme 'Interculturality and Reconciliation', and highlighted how Jesuits in South Asia could make their life and mission intercultural. This led to a free-flow of interventions from the floor.

Fr. George Pattery put it succinctly: 'Being and doing things interculturality in its full sense is a new way of being Jesuit in South Asia'. The concept note circulated noted that 'Reconciliation as mission has huge significance for us all in South Asia. The fabric of life in South Asia is woven by diversity of cultures and religions. It is also the mine field of numerous and constant conflicts - cultural ethnic, caste, linguistic and national/global in nature.' The big question that confronts us is how we bring about reconciliation in these turbulent times.

The entire Assembly made effective use of spiritual conversation. This took all the participants to the heart level, and helped them stay with inner motivations and inner movements. After every main input, the participants went into small groups to have spiritual conversation to discern ways of how the life of Jesuits and their mission could become intercultural.

At the concluding session of the Assembly we had the gathering of fruits presented by Fr. George Pattery. He listed about

thirteen fruits beginning with an image of the sponge which at once soaks in water and dirt, but also holds beautiful flowers. He highlighted the effective use of spiritual conversation. Inner transformation and the call of being a new kind of Jesuit in South Asia marked the highlights.

The Assembly was indeed a convergence of the three streams of renewal efforts: Re-orienting for Greater Apostolic Effectiveness (REGAE) process which was initiated with the PHESAMA Statement in 2014, GC 36 and its central mission of reconciliation and the four Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs). As the group dispersed there was a glow of joy which emerged from the companionship and the energy after the

three days of spiritual conversations.

The organizing committee led by Fr. Joe Arun who was ably assisted by Frs. George MK, Ajit Xess, and Nithin Monteiro, did a magnificent work in organising the Assembly efficiently with meticulous planning and effective execution. The Assembly proceedings with action points are being gathered together to make a booklet that will be taken up by every Province as a way forward.

George MK, SJ

NEWS

GLOBAL NEWS

New Socii Conference in Rome

'Being Socius: a life of multi-faceted service' was the unstated theme of the conference for the new Socii in Rome from 18th to 23rd March, 2019. Besides the nine Socii from the South Asian Assistancy, four from Africa, Ireland, and Madagascar also participated. The Assistancy officials in the General Curia, Fr. Lisbert D'Souza, Fr. Vernon D'Cunha, Fr. C. Peter Raj, and Fr. Agnelo Mascarenhas meticulously planned and effectively executed the whole programme.

The topics dealt with were helpful and handy. Fr. Lisbert dealt with Mission of the Socii. He enlightened the participants with what is required of a Socii. He underlined the need to imbibe our spirit - Our Way of Proceeding. Fr. Pavul Raj gave inputs on Helpful Spirituality of Socii. Fr. J.A. Guerrero familiarized the participants with the Mission of the Roman Houses under the Society. Fr. Agnelo showed us how to use SJ Web Resources/Database on persons effectively. Fr. Antoine Kerhuel presented an Overview of Structures of Jesuit Governance. Fr. P. Cebollada shared about the Office of the Postulator General. The participants were also enlightened about New Vision of Formation. Fr. M. Ravizza animated the session. Fr. B. Malvaux extensively dealt on Juridical Matters and Practical Points. Fr. Charles Lasrado gave inputs on Financial Matters/FACSI and Socii. Fr. Aloysius Mowe shared about the Mission of JRS. Fr. Dardis made the group aware of the International Jesuit Communication Office and Socii. There was a very useful session with the Regional Assistants to clarify practical matters. Fr. R. Danieluk gave an input and led the group through a Guided Tour of ARSI.

On 20th March, before his trip to Croatia, Fr. General interacted with the participants.



He spelled out the importance of the role of a Socii and answered some of the questions prepared by the participants.

Most of the Socii were visiting Rome for the first time. They were elated with the Papal audience at the Piazza on Wednesday morning. They also visited to some of the houses and places of importance in the city - S.P. Canisio, Gregoriana, Bellarmino, and the Gesu. The Eucharist offered by Fr. Vernon in the room of Our Holy Father Ignatius at the Gesu was spiritually enriching. The visit

to La Storta was a meaningful conclusion of the programme. The Socii from South Asia were happy to meet the Jesuits from the Assistancy working or studying in Rome. The common sentiment was one of gratitude to God and to the Society. Besides being a deep spiritual experience, the programme certainly gave more clarity and confidence in the task that lies ahead.

Raymond Kerketta, SJ | Socius (Ranchi)



Negombo Jesuits act in the aftermath of the Serial Blasts

The Negombo Jesuits along with other priests and religious gathered for a meeting today (22nd April) organized by the Parish Priest of St. Sebastian Church, Katuwapitiya. His Lordship Bishop Antony Jayakody, the parliamentarian Hon. Minister Sajith Pramadasa and other Government officials with the police came together to discuss the final arrangements of the burial of those who died in the bomb blast on Easter Sunday. The funeral commenced in the afternoon of 22nd. 23rd April, was declared as a National Day of Mourning to commemorate those who died in the tragedy. His Eminence Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith presided over the Eucharist.

| Dexter Gray, SJ | Negombo (Sri Lanka)

NATIONAL NEWS

Dr. Hamid Ansari as visiting faculty of SXUK

Dr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari, former Vice-President of India has accepted the invitation of Fr. Felix Raj, Vice-Chancellor of St. Xavier's University, Kolkata, to join SXUK as visiting faculty. In a letter to Fr. Raj, Dr. Ansari (82) wrote, "I deem this a great honour and will be happy to accept it."

Details of his visits to the University and themes of his lectures will be worked out later. Dr. Ansari, an alumnus of the St. Xavier's College (1952 to 55) was honoured with the Global Xaverian Award by the St. Xavier's College Alumni Association in November 2018 in New Delhi.

"The former Vice-President has accepted our invitation to join the St. Xavier's University as visiting faculty. This is an honour to all of us at the university," Fr. Raj, told the media. The idea behind inviting eminent leaders like Dr. Ansari as visiting faculty is to "broaden our students' knowledge and vision," Fr. Raj said.

Ansari is a specialist in his field, a scholar and an academician. He has great experiences to share with our students. His experience as Vice-President, Ambassador and an Indian Foreign Service officer will enrich our students and throw challenges in their life. That is very important for students who are pursuing management and post-graduate courses," Fr. Felix Raj said.

The University is planning to invite more eminent persons as visiting faculty. The list includes the former Governor of West Bengal and former national security advisor, M.K. Narayanan, Kaushik Basu, the current President of the International Economic Association, Mr. Jawhar Sircar, Ex CEO of Prasar Bharti, and Shashi Tharoor.

After former Vice-President Dr. Hamid Ansari, former Bengal



Fr. Felix Raj presenting the Global Xaverian Award to Dr. Hamid Ansari in November 2018 at New Delhi.

Governor M. K. Narayanan is set to join St. Xavier's University, Kolkata as a visiting professor.

Narayanan, who was also the third National Security Advisor of India, is an alumnus of Loyola College, Chennai. The 85-year-old will start lectures on the New Town campus from the new academic session starting from July 2019.

| Felix Raj, SJ & Somdatta Basu



Fr. Emidio Saliba SJ (DUM)

Fr. Emidio Saliba was born in 1942 at Hamrun, Malta. After his secondary education at St. Aloysius Jesuit College, he joined the Society of Jesus at Naxxar in October 1958. After his juniorate he volunteered for the Santal Mission, and arrived in India on 7th August 1962.

On arrival, Fr. Emidio studied Hindi and later on picked up Santali and Bengali. He completed his philosophy at Pune and theology at St. Mary's, Kurseong. He was ordained at Sahibganj on 25th March, 1971 and made his final commitment in February 1977. Though somewhat shy and a little diffident, his availability for mission was exemplary and noteworthy. He carried out his duties conscientiously and humbly. Regular at prayer, Fr. Emidio was a community man. He was a pleasant person with a sense of humour. He was unassuming and respected others and their opinion. He loved to be with school children and the youth. He served as Vice-Principal of St. Xavier's, Sahibganj. He was

the Headmaster at Mundli and at Hathimara middle schools, Director of candidates. For twelve years he was the Rector of St. Xavier's Sahibganj and then of Jisu Jaher novitiate. He was a competent English language teacher. He taught in schools, in the common juniorate, in the candidate house and the novitiate. He served as treasurer in several Jesuit communities and institutions.

Fr. Emidio was always above petty feelings and always supported and encouraged others. In his final years, suffering from cancer, Emidio revealed his deep faith in the Lord and total surrender to His Will. He has left his Jesuit companions and outsiders a legacy of faithfulness, simplicity, prayerfulness and the practice of poverty. Fr. Emidio Saliba remains an inspiration to all who knew him.

|| Paul Aquilina, SJ



Fr. Marcel Benedict, SJ (DAR)

Fr. Marcel Benedict was born on 4th February 1946. He joined the Society of Jesus on 15th August 1971 at Vinayalaya, Bombay. He was ordained a priest in 1981 in his home parish, Sacred Heart Church, Darjeeling.

One remembers him as always smiling. He was a good teacher and a musician. He was characteristically kind to all, this in spite of the ill health that plagued him all his life. Towards the end, it was arthritis and heart problems that taxed his failing strength.

His apostolic works focused mainly on education and pastoral work. He was Parish Priest at St. Paul's, Kurseong, St. Francis Xavier Church, Sakyong, St. Vincent de Paul, Hatighisa and St. Xavier's Church, Gayabari. He was headmaster of St. Vincent's School, Hatighisa and St. Peter's Primary, Gayaganga.

It was his last assignment as the Chaplain of Navjivan hospital that brought the best out of him. This compassionate and sensitive ministry endeared him to the suffering. Everyone who came to the hospital revered him. Although unable to walk he offered the Eucharist daily in the hospital and visited the patients, comforting them. He was truly a man of God.

He died of a heart attack in his room on 21st March 2019. The nearly 15000 people who attended his funeral was ample testimony to the life of grace that flowed from this humble Jesuit priest. May his soul rest in peace!

|| Shajumon C.K., SJ



Fr. Alban D'Souza, SJ (GOA)

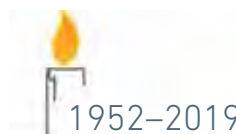
Alban was big built with a broad chest and strong arms. But he was gentle. Alban endeared himself to all with his humour - many a times with a straight face. At times you had to read between the lines to get the subtle words he used. It was his ready wit that often caught you off guard.

Alban joined the Society in June 1969 and was ordained in 1982. He spent about 10 years in the education apostolate after which he took to the training of youth. He began conducting development programmes for students in Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges. After an MA in counselling from Loyola University, Maryland, he began training programmes for lay counsellors. This was his pet project which led him to write two books: A Facilitator's Handbook and The Beginner's Handbook for Resource Persons and Trainers". Alban did well educating young people, handling school administration, preaching, helping people develop

themselves, and training lay counsellors/trainers.

Over the past year and half Alban had been battling illness with grace, acceptance, and peace. Treatment, diagnoses, operations, and more treatment took a toll on his health. He began to lose weight but not that twinkle in his eye. During his sickness, Alban was his usual self narrating anecdotes and laughing at some jokes, putting his visitors at ease. Alban knew many were praying for his recovery but he had surrendered his life to the Lord. At the appointed time, 15th March, around 3.00 pm Alban got the final call: "Come to me, you who are heavily burdened and I will give you rest." (3 months short of completing 50 years in the Society). May the Almighty grant him eternal rest!

|| William Rodrigues, SJ



A “GREEN PARISH”

In a city mainly known for noise and air pollution, the Parish Pastoral Council of Holy Family Church has taken a stand for ecological awareness. Fr. Vincent Vaz, the Parish Priest, has taken inspiration from Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'* in his approach to “caring for the common home.” He has asked all the parishioners, young and old, to take personal responsibility for educating their fellow humans about contemporary ecological challenges and to suggest concrete actions to combat those challenges. In a “middle class” socio-economic environment he felt that his mission was to push his congregation from simple knowing about the sad state of the environment to actually doing something to improve it. Among the changes made:

Composting bins installed and parishioners urged to bring their organic waste

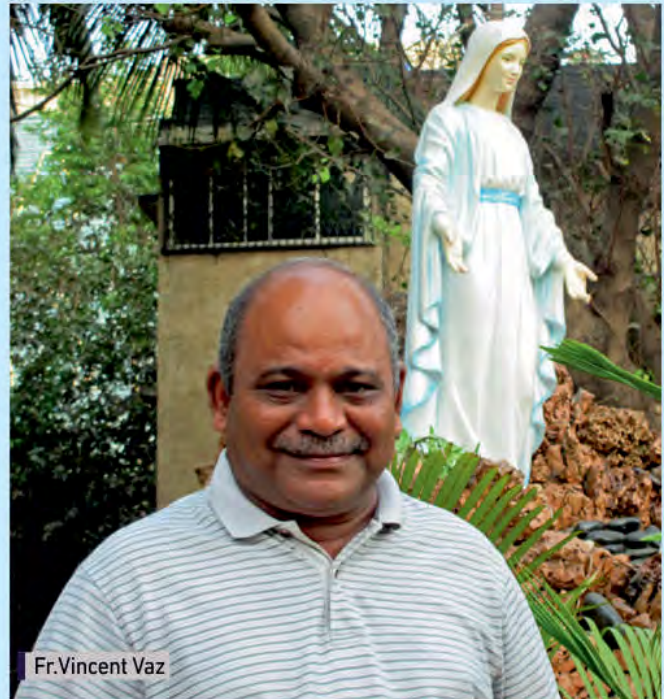
Only potted plants used to decorate the sanctuary to protect trees and plants

The main billboard at the entrance to the parish grounds announces “Holy Family Green Campus” and highlights the precepts that ensure the ecological character of the parish



The deceased are buried in shrouds rather than caskets. This reduces the use of rare and precious wood.

Fr. Vaz was excited to see “Care for the Common Home” as one of the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus. With Pope Francis and the Jesuit General, Fr. Arturo Sosa, calling for the protection of the



Fr. Vincent Vaz

Image Source: Jesuit News

environment, especially in areas where ecological challenges exacerbate the plight of the poor and marginalized, Fr. Vaz believes he can build on the momentum of the parish and give new impetus to the 'green parish' project launched several years ago.

Committed to tackling ecological challenges at the local level, Fr. Vaz understands that it is just part of his parish mission. In an environment in which Christians are a minority he knows that this interest in ecology can further isolate the parish from her neighbours. Therefore, together with green initiatives, the parish has encouraged, hosted, and participated in interreligious dialogue and action - an invitation to all “people of goodwill” to come together and work for the common good.

On 18th Nov. 2018, the parish joined the Sikh community on the church grounds to serve meals to underprivileged families. This is only one instance of an event under Fr. Vaz's leadership that broke down barriers between people of different religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

[Adapted from Jesuit News]

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

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No Odds Unbeatable



Image Courtesy: Dr. Sr. Beena Jose, CMC

The perception persists that the scientific world is alien territory for religious leaders and scholars, particularly for women. But this is fast changing, especially in the Indian Catholic Church. In this "The Road Not Taken" episode I discuss one such person - Dr. Sr. Beena Jose, CMC.

Hailing from a remote village in North Kerala, having lost her father when in her teens, and left only with a brother and a widowed mother, Dr. Sr. Beena Jose, had all the odds against her becoming a successful religious sister-scientist in the male-dominated world of science. But her committed life is an inspiring affirmation that science and success have no gender, colour, caste or creed. What counts is hard work and selfless commitment to develop one's God-given talents. She chose Chemistry and topped the university in both B.Sc. and M.Sc. To everybody's surprise, in a world of career-chase and sexual-liberation, with such excellent academic credentials, she chose to become a Carmelite nun.

A loyal and happy religious sister, she never allowed her scientific talents and leadership qualities to slacken and

with away. On completing her Ph.D. in Chemistry, she joined Vimala College, Thrissur, Kerala. Still in her early forties, she has already published about 50 research papers and presented many more in various scholarly forums worldwide. She has guided many doctoral students, held many administrative positions - currently she is the Principal of Vimala College. National and international awards too have been accompanying her illustrious career - from Santa Clara and Berkeley in the US, to Oxford in the UK, etc. Her paper in Bioethics, critiquing Craig Venter's claim of laboratory synthesis of life, was so highly appreciated that she was invited to present it in more than 9 university centres, mostly in the US.

What is conspicuously religious about all these is the inconspicuousness of her person and attitude - simple, unassuming, gentle and cheerful. Traditional religions in general, religious life in particular, are at crossroads today. Some scholars today think that many aspects of consecrated religious life have to be reconceived, if it is to survive. However, it is heartening to know that, despite all these odds, there are religious, consecrated persons who find meaning and relevance today.