

February, 2026

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA

VOCATIONAL QUOTIENT

When and why should we assess it?

| Salamanca Conference
| AMDG: A Quiet Restlessness

| Give 'leologies'!
| Dismantle Clericalism!



An unscheduled Lent

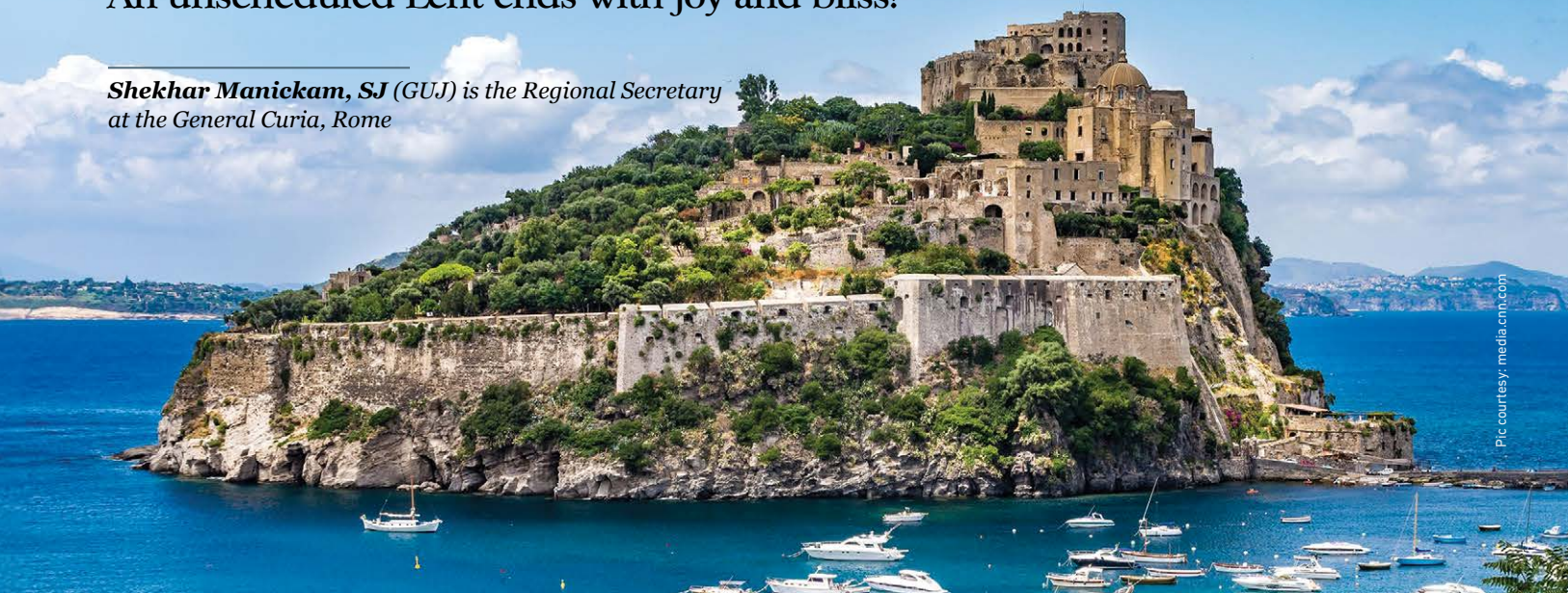
Strolling on the road, the pilgrim undertakes
An elated ego trip within, crowned with medals
In an upbeat mood upon a hill in Ischia Island
Immersed in the radiant beauty around,
The breathtaking spectacle transports him to paradise

Hell breaks out! In the depth of the vast sea,
Whirled, pulled, tossed, choked and finally,
The pilgrim is about to drown in the dark
The jaws of death ready to swallow him.
Heaven came down! He knew not whence!

A light from a tunnel swiftly lifted him up to
The Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent,
Ceaselessly loving and labouring in the universe - Yet,
Unseen, Unheard and Silent is He - Why?
A question for an unending Lent. A gloomy journey?

'Complete He alone is! He alone completes!
His grace is sufficient, yes, sufficient
So seek God and His Love-Mission alone!
Enlightened, the pilgrim breathes freedom and relief
An unscheduled Lent ends with joy and bliss!

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

What would Mary do without them?

Thanks for a good Christmas read. I enjoyed the contributions of young Jesuits in the Nov-Dec '25 issue. Their prayers to baby Jesus are a good measure of Jesuit formation both in terms of their perception of their mission, as well as their sensitivity to the vulnerabilities of the community. The letters to the editor too were well written. Glad you were able to encourage a new batch of writers and give them so much space.

I particularly liked Milroy Fernando's article from Sri Lanka. Besides reminding us of the South Asian character of *Jivan* it was eloquent, touching and stirring. I hope Jan Richardson's 'Wise Women Also Came' will prompt the presence of women besides Mary in our cribs this year. What would Mary do without them - the local midwife, the innkeeper's wife, maybe a guest at the inn, seasoned mother of three?

My Christmas prayer is that Kochurani Abraham's call to collectively resist oppression, as part of the Christmas challenge to hope, will find an echo in the hearts of *Jivan* readers.

| Astrid Lobo Gajiwala | Mumbai

Felt challenged

The article written by Fr. Anthony Dass, SJ in the Christmas 2025 issue of *Jivan* has had a lot of impact on me. He has clearly explained how important it is to speak well of others. As we all know, we are in a world that is temporary, but we often forget it. We fail to see the goodness in others and focus on their mistakes. The article helped me reflect upon myself. It challenged me to carefully avoid speaking ill of others but, on the contrary, to encourage others and speak well of them. We need to be fair to people even in their absence.

| Sch Sathwik, SJ | Trivandrum

To bear much fruit

The Society of Jesus, known for its unwavering commitment and altruistic service to the Catholic Church, has given us 53 saints, 158 blessed ones and 15 venerable servants of God. To that glorious list, Archbishop Eduard Profittlich SJ, a shepherd who never abandoned his flock, has been added this year. Fr. Hedwig Lewis SJ's article 'Lessons from the life of the new Jesuit blessed' in the October '25 issue of *Jivan* is a call to the Jesuits of South Asia to bear witness to Christ, and to proclaim the gospel not from the pulpit alone but through our presence amidst the suffering humanity and our adversaries.

Fr Hedwig has compared the martyrdom of Bl. Eduard with that of Fr Stan Swamy SJ. Both of them knew what the cost of discipleship was. Jesus has pointed out that it is the grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies is what bears much fruit. (Jn: 12:24). Bl. Eduard Profittlich SJ's martyrdom invites us to emulate his life of faith, fidelity and courage to serve in the vineyard of the Lord and bear much fruit.

| Sch. Alfwin Cross, SJ | Trichy

Beautiful and meaningful

I enjoy reading JIVAN and I liked a lot the Christmas issue which had meaningful articles, centered on the meaning of Christmas today. I was particularly drawn by the article "Christmas continues wherever vulnerability meets loving care" by Dr. Meath Conlan. I was struck by the lines, "I will pray for eyes to recognize the Infant's presence in every person who depends on care, every soul who offers gratitude despite suffering, every moment when human fragility reveals divine love." The cover picture too was beautiful and meaningful. I wish you and your team a very happy New Year.

| Sr Mary DePenha, MSCJ | Mumbai

Prayer
Intention for
February '26

For children with incurable diseases.

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.



Pic courtesy: scrippsang.com



WHAT DO YOU SAY?

STANY D'SOUZA, SJ
President, JCSA

Are we guilty of 'generational arrogance'?

While reading an article recently, I came across a concept called 'generational arrogance', which summarizes a quote by George Orwell, a well-known political satirist, who authored the famous novels *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*. Orwell has many famous quotations. You have surely heard one of them: 'All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others', which, as it did at that time, mirrors contemporary geo-political situations as well.

The concept 'generational arrogance' comes from Orwell's quotation: 'Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it'. Although this short and sharp line sounds innocuous, it discloses and disrupts widely accepted mind-sets of people of all times. This quote questions the belief that every generation is more enlightened, morally superior, and more intelligent than those who preceded it. It also challenges generations who believe that their intelligence is superior, their information is better and their values are purer than all others.

The danger of 'generational arrogance' is overconfidence and indifference. When a generation assumes it is smarter, it stops listening. It either dismisses people and their history with disdain or judges them with scorn and scepticism.

Almost seven years ago, the Society's third UAP invited us, Jesuits, 'to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future.' It is time now to pause and ponder whether we are guilty of 'generational arrogance', or showing humility and generosity by empowering our youth.

Truly, youth can usher in a new lease of life. But it is not easy to attract them. Mere words without witness do not appeal to them. The UAP succinctly states, 'To accompany young people demands of us authenticity of life, spiritual depth, and openness to sharing the life-mission that gives meaning to who we are and what we do.' In other words, one needs to go through personal, communitarian and institutional conversion to accompany youth.

Youth symbolize energy, enthusiasm, change and transformation. We need to engage them if we dream of a better tomorrow. Hence, let us dump our 'generational arrogance' and transform existing spaces for meeting and working with youth into places of mutual listening and open dialogue. By so doing, would we not be collectively creating a hope-filled future for all? What do you say?



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

M.A. JOE ANTONY, SJ
Editor

Why would they refuse?

It is hard to believe that this could happen to an Indian Jesuit working in Sri Lanka. On 7 February last year, while going on an outing along with other Jesuits, he suffered a small cut on his little toe. Since the big city was four hours away, they took him to three different hospitals nearby and all the three of them refused to admit him or give him first aid. He could go to the big city only the next morning but, by that time, the toe had become infected and gangrene had set in and so it had to be amputated! Why would three hospitals refuse to give him the urgent help he needed? Because he was a "foreign national."

Well, the Indian Jesuit's real life story does not end there. He had to get back to India and stay at a hospital for three months, because he needed two corrective surgeries! While St. Ignatius read during those days when he was convalescing after surgery, this Jesuit 'wrote' a book during those days in the hospital. Read this issue carefully and find out who this Jesuit is and the name of the book he gave birth to on his hospital bed.

Sr Nancy Vaz, in her article, narrates an incident when she and her fellow Sisters complained to the bishop, regarding an unfair demand made on the Sisters by the local priests. The bishop's response can be cited as a classic example of toxic clericalism which our beloved Pope Francis denounced so often. Read Sr Nancy's 'Listen to Her!' article to know how the bishop responded.

Many American priests and bishops do not want to speak about what is happening in and to their country, after Donald Trump became its President. But a well-known American Jesuit writer minces no words in describing what the U.S. did in Venezuela on 3 January '26 as an "illegal, unwise and immoral war". Read his article on page 11.

By the way, whenever you talk of Venezuela, are you conscious that our dear General, Fr Arturo Sosa, is from that troubled country? What is happening in his country must make his heart ache. Together we must pray for all the people of that country.

Learning to say yes with Mary

Fr. Learoy Rodrigues SJ's article, "Journey with Mary as We Begin a New Year," in the January 2026 issue of *Jivan*, touched my heart deeply and renewed my love for Mother Mary. He beautifully shows how Mary's life speaks to our own, teaching us to accept our weakness with humility and to trust God even when the future is uncertain. I truly believe it was Mother Mary who gently led me to the Society of Jesus. From childhood, shaped by my parents' devotion, I found peace before her statue in my parish church. In every trial, she has remained my silent strength and tender refuge. I am grateful to Fr. Learoy for this moving article. It reminds me that to walk with Mary is to learn faith in darkness and the grace to say each day a simple, trusting "yes" to God's will.

| Sch. Jermy Joseph, SJ | Mumbai

Heavenly melodies

The heart-warming article, titled "Broken Strings Make Heavenly Music", by Raju Augustine, SJ in the October '25 issue inspired me. The young violinists from Darjeeling's Gandhi Ashram coming to Kerala and performing for special children was a soul-stirring experience. These talented musicians

transformed their violins into voices of hope and harmony, proving that true art can shine even through adversity. Each note carried the spirit of perseverance and friendship, resonating deeply with the audience. Their music beautifully bridged the cultures of Darjeeling and Kerala, leaving behind an unforgettable message that broken strings can still create heavenly melodies.

| Lestern D'Souza, SJ | Thiruvananthapuram

May our words heal our communities!

The article, "Speak Well of Them!" by Anthony Das SJ in the Christmas issue of *Jivan* is an eye-opener. It portrays the dichotomy present in every religious community. It challenged me to deeply examine my actions while dealing with my community members. Yes! Gossip truly erodes trust and wreaks destruction on the loving bonds within communities. While gossip destroys, fraternal correction has a rightful and necessary place in community life when done with love, humility, and concern for the other. We cannot get rid of gossip all at once, but we can curb it step by step. May our words encourage, correct and heal our communities!

| Raymond Martel, SJ | Thiruvananthapuram



Please note!

The results of *Jivan* Short Story Contest 2025 will be announced in the next issue of *Jivan*, dated March 2026.



Vocational Quotient

while recruiting and accompanying those in formation

A young man walks into the office of the Vocation Promoter and declares he wants to become a Jesuit. The Vocation Promoter says to himself, 'Four guys left the Society last year. Won't it be very useful if we have a device or a system to test whether or not this young man does have a vocation to the Society?'

Have you heard of MVQS - McCroskey Vocational Quotient System? Just as we can discuss intelligence quotient and emotional quotient, we can speak about vocational quotient.

MVQS is an analysis of the vocational quotient of a job-seeker by synthesizing his/her profile and comparing it against the twenty-four vocational traits required for jobs in a database. Similar to the MVQS in the corporate world, we, the consecrated people in the Church, need to develop a system to analyse a candidate's suitability and growth,

at the time of recruitment and during the course of formation.

I would define vocational quotient in the consecrated life as the ability of a candidate to align factors such as his interests and capacities with the requirements of the order/congregation, given its charism and the mission it has chosen.

There are umpteen criteria to check one's vocational quotient. Here, I propose five traits from the perspective of the Society of Jesus:

A. Five traits that the candidate must have:

These are five important traits the candidate must have. But who will assess if the candidate has them or not? Both the candidate and the accompanier should do it at the time of recruitment.

1. **Desire for God and prayer:** Faith in God and desire for prayer are the foundation of

the consecrated life. In fact, faith in God is the starting point of the vocational quotient. If there is no faith, the vocational quotient can be said to be zero. Unlike the jobs analysed in MBQS, the consecrated life is a matter of life - not of profession. It is faith in God that sustains the individual through the ups and downs of his life, since God is the origin, the goal and the driving force of vocation. Realizing this truth, he has to submit himself entirely to God. Hence, prayer becomes a means of growing in his commitment to this call. Here, prayer is not a mere set of formulas that one recites individually or in community; rather prayer is a relationship. Unless there is a growth in this relationship over time, there is no progress in one's vocational quotient.

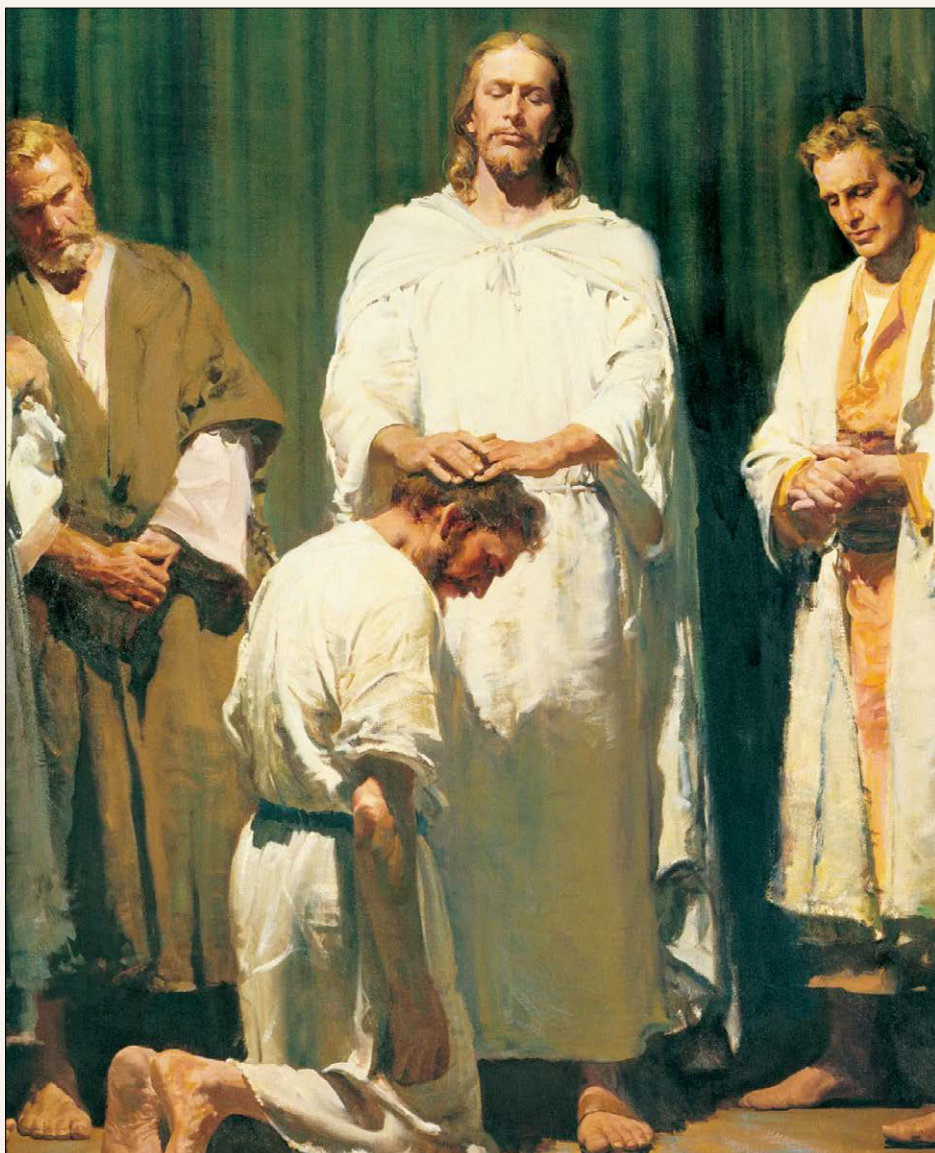
2. **Generosity:** One who is not generous with his time, talents and his own self, cannot be a consecrated person. Whether it be in a contemplative or active life, generosity towards God and others is essential. Sometimes, the consecrated life is not a person's free decision. The person may have failed at everything else and thought of consecrated life as the final refuge. This means that for him consecrated life is not a means of self-offering, but survival. It is possible to discover one's vocation through life experiences; but if someone chooses the consecrated life just to survive, he will not be generous. Sometimes, the parents or benefactors make the choice - not the candidate. In these cases, unless the candidate makes the choice his own, generosity remains minimal.
3. **Capacity to Learn:** In the past, the parish priests were the most educated people in their communities, sought after for various types of guidance – be it spiritual, social or emotional. But today, many are equally or more educated

than the priest. So, a consecrated person should have a good level of education and so as a prerequisite a strong capacity to learn. This capacity is not just for gathering information and degrees, but also being able to think analytically and synthetically, and act wisely and competently. Of course, the consecrated life is directed towards a life of holiness, but the consecrated life is also directed towards service and growth of the other. A candidate who has little capacity and openness to learn cannot be of much service to others.

4. **Desire for Growth:** Mediocrity has no place in consecrated life. When referring to certain persons, if people say, 'This person has never changed,' they are referring to a person's inability to grow. When growth is normal and natural, if someone does not want to grow, change or make progress, something is wrong. This problem could exist in those who have chosen consecrated life as a mere haven for survival, rather than as means of self-offering to love and serve God and people. Anyone who is not desirous and open to growth and guidance, cannot grow in vocational quotient. For, 'I cannot give what I don't have.' If I myself have not grown, I can be of no use to others in their growth.

Vocational quotient in the consecrated life is the ability of a candidate to align factors such as his interests and capacities with the requirements of the order/ congregation, given its charism and the mission it has chosen.

5. **Indifference and Detachment:** More than ever, especially in today's context of consumerism and relativism, spiritual indifference and detachment are of utmost importance to a consecrated person. To be swayed by one's own interests and passion with no regard for moral values, is considered a fashion. Added to that is the phenomenon that allows one to consume anything anywhere, even those that are not essential, just with a click. The consecrated person has to be someone who is not carried away by peer pressure, advertisements and fads, but is indifferent, which means free from any attachment or addiction, realizing that he is created



3. Capacity to Learn is sublimated to Capacity to Discern.

4. Desire for Growth gives way to Self-transcendence and Self-sacrifice.

5. Indifference grows into the Third Degree of Humility as proposed by St Ignatius.

It is possible to reach these evolved traits only if the traits mentioned earlier were found at the initial stage of one's life, because the latter is a mystical and apostolic edifice built on the former which is the human and spiritual foundation. An individual should consider going ahead and the persons-in-charge should consider promoting him further, only when the individual is progressing in this path – a sign of progress in the vocational quotient.

With the advancement of technology, the Church today should consider developing softwares, just like in the business world, to lead the candidate and the formators towards better recruitment, better discernment and better formation. For that purpose, these five pairs of traits can be further divided into

primarily to praise, reverence and serve God and, thus, to help others and himself to move towards that God (Principle and Foundation).

B. Five traits that the candidate must manifest during formation:

Obviously the candidate himself and the formator should assess these during the course of formation, particularly by the time a candidate completes his candidacy and novitiate.. They must see if the candidate has these traits in order to evaluate progress in the vocational quotient.

1. Desire for God and prayer becomes Ease in Finding God.
2. Generosity turns into Efficaciousness in Gratuitous Service.

quantifiable units, and more traits can be added.

Of course, vocation is a grace which cannot be objectified. But just as the use of psychological tools and academic grade systems contributes, the use of technological tools can certainly contribute to assessing and boosting the vocational quotient of the consecrated persons. This will make the consecrated life more credible and appealing. This, in turn, can make it possible to live the consecrated life with greater peace, joy and enthusiasm. ❖

W.K. Pradeep, SJ (KHM) was the Region Vocation Promoter for five years. He is currently doing his Tertianship at Sitagarh, Hazaribagh.

JAMIA conference in Colombo

The JAMIA (Jesuits Among Muslims in Asia) Conference, 2025, was held at the Caritas National Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 27 to 30 December 2025. The Sri Lanka Jesuit Province played host to the Assembly, with Joseph Victor Edwin SJ as the overall convenor. The Conference brought together Jesuits and their collaborators from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, India and Pakistan.



The participants were a few; the Conference however provided ample opportunity to deeply reflect over the engagement of the Society of Jesus with Muslims, given the complexities and challenges of Asia. There were two overarching themes: i) Presenting Christ in Islamic contexts and ii) Muslims and Christians in multireligious contexts. Scholarly papers, interspersed with grassroots engagements, were presented by the participants on inter-religious dimensions. There was a session on Jesuits who pioneered dialogue with Muslims in various ways and how we should learn from their rich legacy.



During the in-depth spiritual conversations, the participants shared with each other their consolations and desolations, the challenges they faced and what more needs to be done. Some of the points that emerged from the Conference were: the need and importance of building bridges and deepening the bonds with Muslims in every possible way; to strengthen JAMIA as network; to get more younger Jesuits engaged in this ministry.

We visited the Tulana Research Centre for Encounter and Dialogue founded in 1974 by Jesuit Fr. Aloysius Pieris, the Asian liberation theologian and had a profound interaction with him; to the famed Jami Ul-Alfar Masjid, called the Red Mosque, and meeting with the Imams there; and to the Kelaniya Buddhist Temple, a sacred Buddhist site.

For all present it was a very enriching Conference with a renewed commitment to make JAMIA more relevant today.

| Cedric Prakash, SJ (GUJ)

“We too will shine!”

Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi, successfully organized its annual Bal Mela on 13 December 2025, under the inspiring theme “Hum Bhi Chamkenge” (“We Too Will Shine!”). Despite facing several challenges and uncertainties, the event drew over 500 children and volunteers, transforming into a vibrant celebration of talent, creativity, and community spirit.

The programme was formally inaugurated by the chief guest, Mr. John Dayal, former president of the All India Catholic Union. Fr. Sunil Crasta, director of Chetanalaya, archdiocese of Delhi, served as the guest of honour. Both dignitaries shared insightful stories and motivational reflections, encouraging the children to nurture their dreams and embrace their potential.

The day’s festivities featured engaging games, fun activities, and colorful cultural performances. Key attractions included fifteen interactive stall games, a giant balloon slide, and a trampoline, filling the air with laughter and excitement. The children, from poor backgrounds, came from ministry sites where Vidyajyoti



students conduct tuition classes. Beyond entertainment, Bal Mela carried a deep formative value.

In line with the Universal Apostolic Preference to walk with the excluded, the event gave Vidyajyoti students an opportunity to make a deeper commitment to the cause of the poor and the marginalised in their future ministries.

| Sch. Seby Varghese, SJ (BOM)



Trump's foreign policy: A disaster for America and the world

The foreign policy of President Donald Trump combines the worst of isolationism with the worst of interventionism in a uniquely disastrous way.

He began his presidency as a firm isolationist. His “America First” policy promised to focus on domestic issues and stay out of foreign wars. Trump immediately alienated allies by insulting Europe and threatening to abandon NATO, which has been at the center of American bipartisan foreign policy since the end of the Second World War. For more than half a century NATO was a deterrent to Russian aggression in Europe. This deterrent kept peace in Europe until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 when everyone rejoiced at the end of the Cold War.

Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine showed that the Russian empire was not dead, simply wounded and vengeful. While traditional Republicans would have responded with alarm to the invasion, Trump simply did not care. In addition, he felt betrayed by Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who did not help him against Joe Biden, while at the same time Trump was being cultivated by Putin, who did support him against Biden. In Trump's egocentric world, it did not matter if Russia swallowed Ukraine.

During the postwar era, the United States and Europe presented themselves as the promoters of democracy and human rights. Too often their actions did not match their rhetoric because they were willing to side with anticommunist dictators who would support their political and economic agenda. Under Trump, the

rhetoric is gone. The Trump administration does not even pretend to care about democracy, human rights, political refugees or victims of natural disasters.

“America First” isolationism also led Trump to upend the global economic order that saw free trade and economic integration as a way to pull poor countries out of poverty, reduce prices for consumers and increase worldwide wealth.



Pic courtesy: Reuters.com

Free trade did improve the lives of many, but it also destroyed the livelihood of small farmers in the Global South and industrial workers in the United States. Economists with their economic models did not anticipate the social and political consequences of upending the lives of millions of people who are more than just interchangeable parts in a big machine. American workers and their families were hurt and felt betrayed.

Trump responded to the pain and anger of American industrial workers by cutting off immigration, rejecting earlier trade agreements and embracing tariffs. This upending of the global economic order further alienated allies and, more importantly, caused economic chaos by throwing a monkey wrench into a system of supply chains and markets as countries responded with their own tariffs.

No one would argue that the pre-Trump world economic order was perfect, but where a scalpel needed to be carefully applied, Trump wielded a machete. The result is a bleeding corpse. American farmers have lost foreign markets and immigrant workers. Raw materials and parts from foreign sources are more expensive for American businesses.

Trump economic policy also allowed politically connected supporters and industries to get tariff exemptions while consumers and small businesses suffered.

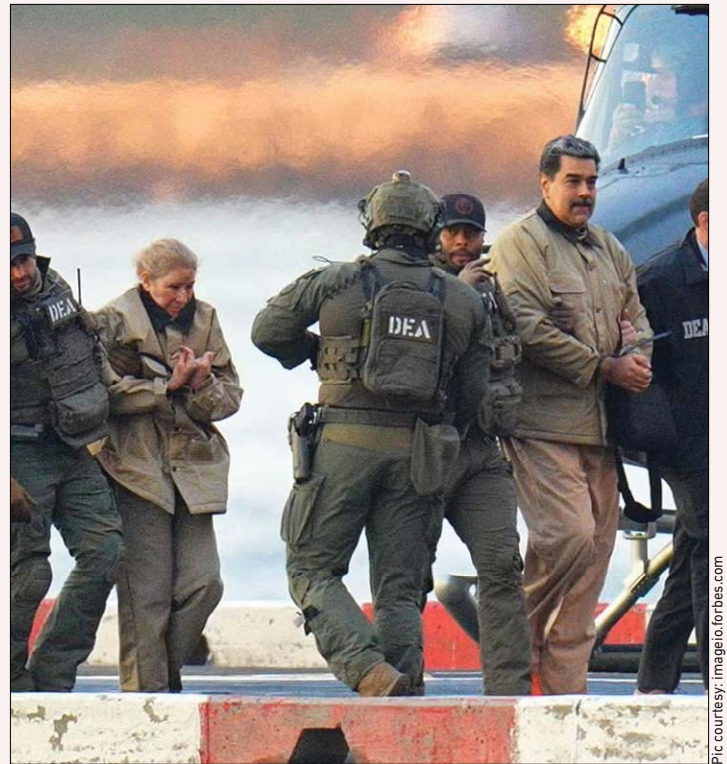
The result of Trump isolationism is that the world is less safe, and no one is better off economically except billionaires.

Add on top of this Trump's recent turn to interventionism. While he campaigned as the candidate that condemned American involvement in foreign wars and attempts at regime change, he has now attacked Venezuela and kidnapped its president, Nicolás Maduro Moros. While the kidnapping of the Venezuelan president was executed with military precision, what is next is not clear. Trump said "we're in charge" of Venezuela. "We're going to run the country until such time as we can do a safe, proper and judicious transition," he told reporters. That is interventionism by definition.

Trump seems to think he can do intervention on the cheap by intimidating the country into doing his will. But Maduro's allies are still controlling the military and the government. They are unlikely to surrender to his will without a fight. Further intervention would require boots on the ground as in Iraq. If he attempts to bomb the government into submission, he may end up with another Libya as the country falls into chaos.

Trump does not pretend he is defending democracy and human rights. He is not supporting the installation of the actual winner of the last Venezuelan presidential election. Trump bluntly says it is about oil, even though American oil companies are not eager to invest billions in Venezuelan oil production granted the political uncertainty. In addition, since Venezuelan oil is high in sulfur and difficult to refine, it sells for about \$15 a barrel less than Brent crude oil, which is currently selling at about \$60 a barrel. Despite Trump's infatuation with fossil fuels, Venezuelan oil may not be a good investment, especially now that wind and solar energy is cheaper than fossil fuels.

Trump's war is illegal, unwise, immoral and a waste of money. It harms both Venezuela and the United States. Worst of all, it encourages Putin to continue his war in Ukraine and gives the green light



to China to use its military to take over Taiwan and bully other Asian nations.

Trump's mix of isolationism and interventionism is disastrous for America and the world. Pope Leo XIV, on the other hand, urges international relations be based on truth, justice and peace. "The good of the beloved Venezuelan people must prevail over every other consideration," the Pope said, according to Vatican News, the Vatican's official news agency. At his weekly Angelus prayer on 4 Jan '26, he urged the world to guarantee "the sovereignty of the country, ensuring the rule of law enshrined in the Constitution, respecting the human and civil rights of each and every person, and working together to build a peaceful future of collaboration, stability, and harmony, with special attention to the poorest who are suffering because of the difficult economic situation."

The Vatican warned America against invading Iraq, but we did not listen. In our arrogance and ignorance of history, we keep making the same mistake — first in Vietnam and then in Iraq and Afghanistan. Will Venezuela be next? ❖

Courtesy: National Catholic Reporter, 7 Jan 26

Thomas Reese, SJ is a writer and author and a former editor-in-chief of America magazine.



Salamanca Conference for a Synodal Church

A Conference, called 'Ignite the Way', was held in Salamanca, Spain from 23 November till 3 December 2025. The Discernment and Planning Apostolate of the Jesuits initiated this project to train facilitators of discernment processes in response to a felt need for a synodal Church. There were 103 participants from countries in Latin America, Asia, Europe, etc. There were 12 participants from India.

The overall aim of the meeting was to develop essential skills for facilitation of common discernment, explore diverse approaches for Discernment in Common in our organizations and cultures, explore rules for discernment, and arrive at an agreed core curriculum and form centres of good practices within each geographical location. Fr. Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, invited the participants to make good use of the conference and profit from it to initiate synodal processes in their respective provinces/conferences/dioceses. "Each of you must leave here with a plan to share skills and train people in the discernment necessary in community and synodal processes."

At the beginning of the conference, a panel of three participants - Gabriel Coté, Susan Goncz, and Joe Xavier - shared on accompanying Discernment in Common in a religious congregation and in a diocese. Later, James Hanvey, Hung Pham, Jossie de Mello threw light on theological and biblical foundations of synodality. Sr Nathalie Becquart and Giacomo Costa focussed on why synodality is so crucial for the Church. Three panelists - Ian Crib, Peter McIsaac, and Sr. Jeanne Hermine - came up with testimonies of accompanying synodal processes in their local churches and religious congregations.

José Garcia de Castro, while speaking on the history of our approach to Discernment in Common, stressed on appreciating the graces received, noting where we made mistakes, where Discernment in Common may have become ideological, or where the Society or the Church may have been too hesitant. José de Pablo and Juan Antonio Guerrero launched a discussion on building a discerning group.





Delegates from JCSA.

The input of John Dardis on “Inner disposition and Indifference,” invited the participants to introspect on how open we are to others changing our way of seeing, and what can help in obtaining the grace of indifference. Franc Janin stressed the importance of discerning spirits in a group. Later 29 case studies, based on real issues, prevailing in congregations or Church institutions were presented to the participants. José de Pablo stressed on key elements in a curriculum to form facilitators of Discernment in Common.

Paco Pepe Ruiz Perez urged the participants to form a profile of facilitators of discernment process, listing their essential qualities and core competencies. The participants were led to come up with practical steps in their geographical group, where they were urged to link the Salamanca experiences with their own selves, identify one’s own availability for trainings and begin to form small teams. It was clarified that we should include others who were not in Salamanca but who have the needed competencies. The participants were urged to use methods and work out a timetable in their geographical groups, based on some important questions, like ‘What happened in your personal story that brought you here? And ‘How has that been re-ignited at Salamanca?’

Every participant clarified their availability to offer trainings in 2026 and 2027 or just to offer advice and wisdom. James Hanvey and Christina Kheng connected the past days’ proceedings to the new days of the conference. Moreover, daily prayer, examen, Eucharist in different languages, discussion in smaller language groups, Emmaus walks for interiorisation, gallery walks, menti-meters, socials in conference meets, visits to the Ignatian places in Salamanca, all weaved into the conference, provided a wholesome experience.



The participants from India affirmed that synodality, discernment in common, and spiritual conversation are the needs of the hour. The absence of lay collaborators was seen as an invitation for us to promote mission partners. The initiatives will be actualized in four zones: North, Central, West, and South. The West and South zones have come up with two concrete pilot programmes for 2026-27. Learning from these programmes, the group will be ready to do more, eventually building a resource team at the South Asian Conference level, which will include clergy and women religious. At the West zone (Goa, Bombay, Gujarat, and Pune), Francis Pudhicherry will initiate training of laity, religious, and clergy for 4-5 days in 2026 – 2027. The North and Central zones will explore opportunities in dialogue with their respective provincials. The participants left with the resolve to make every Jesuit contribute in their own way to make the Church truly synodal. What Pope Francis gifted to the Church should permeate the universal Church through participation, communion, and mission. ❖

Joseph Cardozo, SJ (GUJ), who stays at the General Curia, Rome, is the Assistant Manager of this project for promoting synodality in the Church.



AMDG: A Quiet Restlessness

The phrase *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* (AMDG) – “for the greater glory of God” – is small enough to fit in a margin, yet vast enough to reorient a life. It carries a quiet restlessness, a refusal to settle for the merely good when something greater is possible. To live by these words is to permit one’s entire

but to depth: to the God who is always greater than human thought, effort, or understanding. Ignatius had already tasted the futility of lesser glories such as military honour, reputation, and the praise of others. When he encountered the living God, he discovered a glory that could not be possessed, only



Pic courtesy: breadhere.wordpress.com

being to be drawn toward God’s ever-expanding horizon of love. AMDG is not concerned primarily with quantity or achievement; it is concerned with orientation, with the continual movement from lesser love to greater love, from partial service to more generous self-gift.

St. Ignatius did not choose this phrase to encourage heroic deeds for their own sake. The word ‘greater’ does not point to competition or excess,

served. *Maiorem* became the measure of his love. To live for the greater glory of God meant allowing God’s presence to become more visible in the world through courage, humility, and compassion that exceeded the limits of mere duty.

This “greater” is neither loud nor grand. It seeks interior growth rather than outward scale. It reveals itself not only in public ministry or proclamation, but in the hidden fidelity of those who continue to

love when such love costs more than it rewards. AMDG presses the heart beyond complacency and beyond a safe or convenient goodness. Each time one is tempted to rest in 'good enough', a deeper question emerges: 'What more might love require of me now?'

To live in this manner requires discernment: the Ignatian art of choosing not only between good and evil, but between what is good and what is better ordered toward God's glory. Ignatius invites threefold attentiveness: to God, to the world, and to the movements of one's own heart. The greater path is often the one that awakens durable joy rather than fleeting satisfaction, the one that expands compassion rather than promotes comfort. The greater glory rarely aligns with self-interest. Instead, it draws one toward whatever magnifies divine love, even when this movement demands the surrender of ease, control, or certainty.

Once the heart learns this orientation, action follows organically. The greater glory of God calls for magnanimity – a greatness of soul that performs ordinary tasks with extraordinary care. Acting for God's glory is not ambition but excellence rooted in love. God is glorified when human gifts are fully alive yet humbly directed beyond personal acclaim. The magis does not inflate the ego; it stretches the heart.

Yet "greater" also leads into paradox. Sometimes the greater glory lies not in doing more, but in relinquishing more; not in rising higher, but in consenting to descend. The *Suscipe* prayer – "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty..." – suggests that surrender can be the most generous act of all.

There are moments when silence gives God more glory than speech, when forgiveness honours Him more than victory, when hidden suffering glorifies Him more than visible success. The greater glory expands one's very sense of what greatness entails.

The daily Examen sustains this desire. One looks back and asks: 'Where today did I choose a lesser good out of fear or convenience? Where did I reach toward the greater love, however imperfectly?'

Inspiration

During his year in Manresa (1522-23), Ignatius practiced extreme penances, seeking holiness through excess. Yet he discovered that such self-punishment led not to God's glory but to self-centred scruples. Over time, through prayer and the great illumination by the River Cardoner, he came to recognize that God's greater glory was found not in self-destruction but in freedom for love.

Gratitude arises for every glimpse of grace, and humility for every missed opportunity. Even failure becomes fertile ground, for the desire for the greater remains the seed of renewal. God's glory does not require perfection; it delights in desire that keeps turning toward Him.

With practice, *Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam* becomes more than a motto; it becomes a lens through which reality is perceived. It reminds the believer that every action, however small, can be expanded toward the

magis, the more. When fatigue sets in, it calls forth greater generosity, inviting one to consider what is still possible. When pride swells, it humbles: the glory is not ours but God's. When the world feels narrow or divided, it opens a wider horizon of divine love.

To live for the greater glory of God is to live awake to the endless more of God, to the unfinished summons of love, and to the profound rest that emerges not from ease but from purpose. The "greater" is never complete; it

is a lifelong orientation toward the fullness of God's life within us.

Every act of justice, every work of beauty, every moment of fidelity contributes its small radiance to that greater light. In this restless fidelity, the soul discovers freedom, joy, and belonging, realizing that God's glory completes, rather than diminishes, humanity. ❖

Hedwig Lewis, SJ (GUJ) is an educationist and writer and has served as a lecturer and principal. He can be contacted at hedwiglewis@jesuits.net.

“Each time one is tempted to rest in ‘good enough’, a deeper question emerges: ‘What more might love require of me now?’”

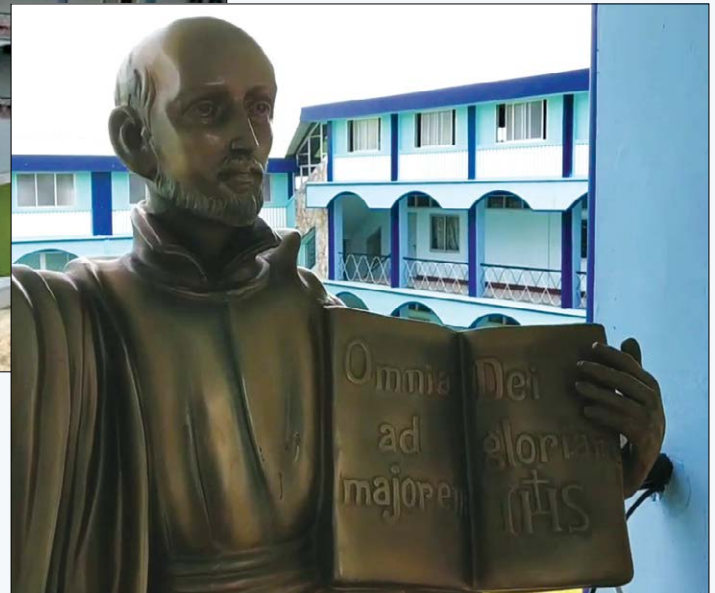


Let us practice giving leulogies!

Speaking about priests and the religious, Voltaire is supposed to have said, “They are persons who gather together without knowing one another, who live together without loving one another, and who die without mourning one another.” A senior Spanish Jesuit friend once told me that the Society of Jesus is like a zoo where you find all sorts of animals. That may be true, but we need not be animals that bite or back bite each other.

Every Jesuit is called upon to foster union of minds and hearts, so we become truly friends in the Lord. St Ignatius wrote in the Constitutions (No 655): “For the Society cannot be preserved or governed or, consequently, attain the aim it seeks for the greater glory of God unless its members are united among themselves and with their head.” Any number of letters of exhortation from Fr General will not do any good in fostering the union of minds and hearts, unless each Jesuit reimagines and restructures his body, mind and spirit constantly.

The reason for gossiping may be groupism in the community, based on caste, tribe, rite or language. Talking ill of Jesuit companions, among ourselves or others, needs to be rooted out.



“Whether they are dead or alive, speak well of them”. This well-written article by Fr Anthony Dass, SJ in the Christmas 2025 issue of *Jivan* stirred something deep within me. A eulogy (Greek for good word) is expressing admiration or showering accolades on a loved one who is no more. We have heard or presented many eulogies. Since a Jesuit is supposed to be a trend setter, I coin this new word leulogy, a word from my own personal pocket-dictionary. It is about admiring, appreciating and loving living persons, primarily fellow Jesuits. The word is my humble contribution to the English dictionary!

I am blessed to be at Ka Rympei Arrupe Jesuit Novitiate community of the newly-established Kohima Jesuit Province at Mawshohroh, Shillong, Meghalaya. I can honestly say that I can give leulogies about every single member of this community. I invite you to do the same in your respective Jesuit communities.

We Jesuits need to practice giving leulogies, especially during our dining table talk. Hopefully, all the ministers of our Jesuit communities who read this will paste the word leulogy on the salt and pepper shakers on our dining tables as a constant reminder to use it consciously and consistently in our conversations. If our interactions are peppered with leulogies of our Jesuit companions, the practice may spill over to our family circle and to the partners and stakeholders of our Jesuit mission. ❖

John Pradeep, SJ (KOH), is the Socius to the Novice Director at Jesuit Novitiate of Kohima Jesuit Province. He is also involved in the retreat ministry at Arrupe Renewal Centre, Shillong, Meghalaya.

Dalit thinkers deliberate at DACA

On 12-13 December 2025 Dr. Ambedkar Cultural Academy (DACA), Madurai, Tamil Nadu held its annual seminar on “Surfing the Waves of Challenges.” The seminar was centered on two sub-themes: i. ‘Scanning through barriers’ on day one, and ii. ‘Overcoming barriers’ on day two, with three sessions each day.

Bishop T. Sagayaraj of Thanjavur, in his presidential address, emphasized that the Church is of and for the poor. Fr. Thomas Amirtham, SJ, Provincial of the Jesuit Madurai Province, noted in his inaugural speech that individual efforts, combined with collective awareness and institutional support, can create a significant impact on our social and cultural landscape. He strongly recommended reservations in education and employment for Dalits, Tribals, and Aborigines. Dr. Lourdunathan stressed that we should belong to a God-centered religion - not a caste-based religion. Dr. Samuel Abraham, Professor at the University of Yamanashi, Japan, recalled the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and talked of the prospects for advanced healthcare technologies through international collaboration.



Bishop T. Sagayaraj

Dr. Gnanavaram Masillamani talked about poetic imagination for Dalit transformation, emphasizing critique of oppressive narratives and imagining an equitable future through visions and dreams of justice. Dr. T. Pathinathan shared how he overcame

discrimination through excellence in teaching and research. Subaltern leadership in Christianity was explored by Fr. Devasagayaraj M. Zacharias of Pondicherry-Cuddalore archdiocese. Sr. Sujata Jena SSCC, a grassroots activist from Odisha, spoke about the challenges and opportunities facing Dalit and Tribal Christians in Odisha. Fr. Maria Arul Raja, SJ highlighted the plight of Dalits and their potential for empowerment.

On the second day Fr. Francis P. Xavier SJ, shared how rising from crises can lead to leadership through achievements, emphasizing that challenges reveal one's strengths. Mr. Kulandai Francis, a Ramon



Magsaysay awardee, described his journey from poverty to empowering others via Self-Help Groups and integrated development projects, advocating for viewing the poor as collaborators and givers, rather than recipients. Fr. Selvaraj Arulnathan SJ, Director, Indian Social Institute, Bengaluru reflected on facing oppression in his youth and emphasized inner confidence and personal growth as pathways to liberation. Sr. Robancy A. Helen MMM, stressed the importance of courage for leadership and action over words.



Thomas Amirtham, SJ

Fr. Devasagayam SJ emphasized that social justice, rooted in Dr. Ambedkar's ideals, is about social liberty, not charity. Fr. Gnanaparagasm of Palayamkottai Diocese advocated for structural change, political involvement, and commitment. The final session examined leadership development through interdisciplinary approaches with educators Mr. Devaraj and Dr. John Mary highlighting the significance of excellence, resilience, and motivation.

The seminar concluded with a panel discussion featuring Frs. Maria Arul Raja, SJ and Selvaraj Arulnathan SJ, who emphasized that true leadership should be responsible and assertive, uniting various subsets of Dalit groups. This is an annual event organized by DACA, founded in 2000 by Fr. Antony Raj, SJ. The seminar provides a platform for intellectuals and social activists to develop strategies in order to empower the marginalized. ❖

| Francis P. Xavier, SJ (CEN)



Dismantle clericalism!

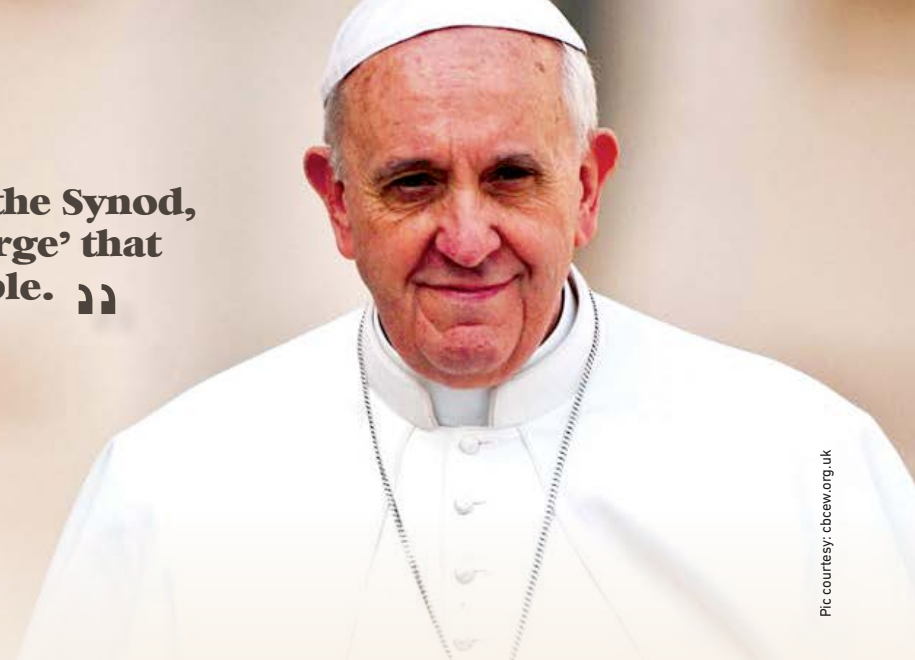
Several years ago, I was posted in a city where my community belonged to a big parish with six priests. We were expected to distribute communion at every Mass on Sundays. There were several Masses starting from 6am up to 10:30 in the morning, and two evening Masses. It was about a 12-minute walk to the church. We were all in active ministry, either in school, in the social centre, or the health clinic, in addition to pursuing studies. So Sunday was our only free day when we could attend to our personal work, cleaning our rooms, washing clothes, and catching up with household chores and college homework. Having to be present at every Mass took up virtually the whole day.

What made it feel so unfair was that when one priest was celebrating Mass all the others were in their rooms watching TV and did not turn up for the distribution of Communion. So, when the bishop paid our community a pastoral visit, we told him about our difficulty. This was his response and I quote "There was a time when women were not allowed to touch the sacred species. Now you are allowed. And you women are complaining?" This is the attitude we encounter in subtle ways and sometimes even overtly and aggressively.

In over fifty years as a religious sister I have met, worked, and



“Pope Francis intervened at the Synod, calling clericalism a ‘scourge’ that ‘enslaves’ God’s people. ”



Pic courtesy: cbcrew.org.uk

interacted with some fine priests who were deeply spiritual and really generous servant leaders both in the rural mission context as well as in city parishes. Working alongside these priests has been inspiring and energizing experiences in my life. Sadly, I must admit, these are a small minority. In conversations or discussions with most priests, unlike with other men, we sometimes feel like we’re being talked down to, patronized or even cut off and ignored if we dare to be more knowledgeable than the priest.

“In conversations or discussions with most priests, unlike with other men, we sometimes feel like we’re being talked down to, patronized or even cut off and ignored if we dare to be more knowledgeable than the priest. ”

Women are socialised from a very young age to smile, be self-giving, caring, obedient and compliant. Some priests tend to misread this as a sign of attraction to them and a willingness to cross the line. Taught to regard priests as ‘alter Christus’ many women tend to put them on a pedestal. Moreover, being totally dependent on priests for sacraments and spiritual needs renders us vulnerable and exploitable, and this sets the stage for spiritual and sexual abuse to occur unhindered. Hence proactive action to dismantle clericalism is crucial and urgent.

Sacred sacramental spaces are desecrated when: - the homily is used sometimes to settle scores, talk

down to, and berate the congregation - probing, pointed questions and unwarranted insensitive comments in the confessional leave the penitent feeling confused, humiliated and sometimes violated - the ever-present threat of withdrawal of the Eucharist is used to coerce Sisters to give in to the demands of the priest.

On a few occasions during discussions with priests, I have heard them say, “Power in the Church will not be handed down to you on a platter. You will have to fight for it.” I do agree with this. Women have always had to be in fight mode, whether it be in cricket or in the Church. Remember the suffragette movement?

For most of us it is not about wanting power, but about equality. It is simply the yearning to be free of the unending dependence on priests for our sacramental and spiritual needs. We want to be able to exercise our spiritual agency without the vulnerability that this dependence and clerical diktats bring with it.

The history of the Church is one of clericalism, ritualism, legalism, and dogmatism - none of which helps the growth of the kind of community Jesus wanted. We need to make the all-important shift from a western, male-centric way of understanding and defining God to a theology that emerges from the lived reality of women and men, and the experience of oppression and marginalization, one that finds resonance with the hopes and dreams of men and women everywhere. ❖

*A Canossian Sister from Mumbai, **Nancy Vaz, FdCC**, is a member of Indian Women Theologians Forum (IWTF). She works with women’s groups and is involved in ongoing formation.*



A book written on a hospital bed

Title: *Embers in the Dark – Ignatian Images of Hope in a Changing World*

Author: Donald Miranda, SJ

Pages: 200

Price: ₹ 325

What inspired you to write this book?

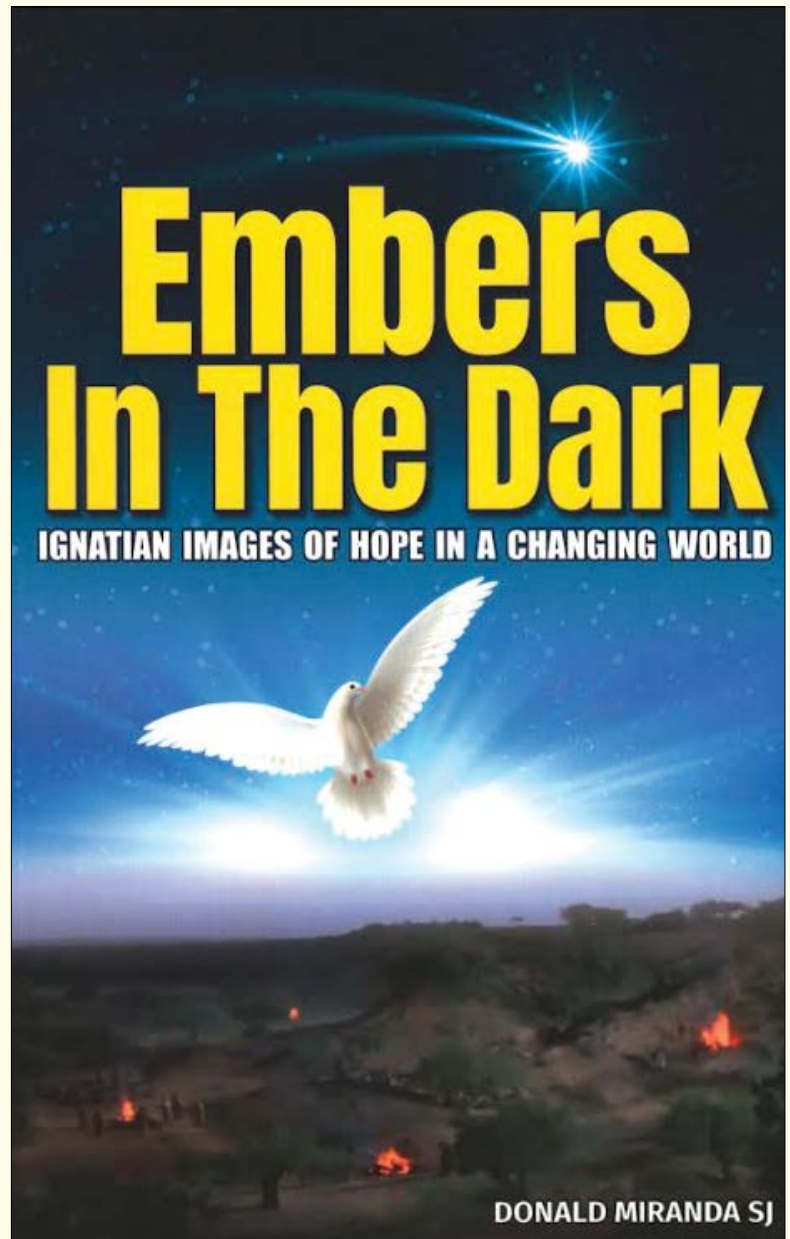
The book has been “brewing” inside me since the time of *Fratelli Tutti* by Pope Francis. I keep a journal of my inner experiences, which was a great help. However, the responsibilities of being the Provincial of Patna did not allow me the space and time to put the material together. Soon after completing six years as provincial in June 2024, I was asked to be the Instructor of the tertianship program in Kandy, Sri Lanka. On 7 February 2025, while on an outing with the tertians, I suffered a small cut on my little toe. The location was four hours from Kandy. Three hospitals refused to admit me and give me first aid, because of being a “foreign national”. By the time we reached Kandy the next day, the toe had become gangrenous with infection and had to be amputated. After the surgery in Sri Lanka, I spent three months at the Kurji Holy Family Hospital, Patna, for two more corrective surgeries. Most of the book was composed on the hospital bed!

Where does the title of the book come from?

In the Introduction I give a detailed description of what inspired the title, *Embers in the Dark*.

What are the Ignatian images of hope your book talks about?

The *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* is the template from which “Ignatian Images of Hope in a Changing World” emerge. I have simplified various themes in the *Exercises*, through personal experiences and anecdotes connected with daily living. ❖



Donald Miranda, SJ (PAT) is presently a Tertian Instructor at the Arrupe House, Jesuit International Tertianship, in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Enlarged Council Meets in Rome



Fr General Arturo Sosa referred to the Magi following a star, moving toward something greater than themselves, as he opened the Enlarged Council (Consiglio Allargato) meeting in Rome on 12 January '26. "The Council seeks to turn the broad ideas of "collaboration and networking" into a lived reality. It builds on the momentum of the Major Superiors' meeting in October 2025. While that meeting established why we need to work together, this Council is asking how," he said.

The Enlarged Council, held on 12-16 Jan '26, focused on five practical paths to reshape how the Society functions in a complex world:

- Finding a Shared Language: Being clear about roles so that partnerships are built on transparency.
- Prioritizing Relationships: Creating a "mission formation" that focuses as much on the people as the tasks.
- Reclaiming Our History: Remembering that the Jesuit story has always been one of collaboration with others.
- Shared Leadership: Deepening a commitment to "collaborative governance" that isn't just top-down.
- Discerning Together: Refining our ability to listen to the Spirit as a community, staying true to our Ignatian roots.

The Council considered vital reports concerning the role of women in the Society and the new apostolic opportunities emerging after COP30. Fr John Dardis,

reflecting on the week's progress, said, "What I'm taking away is that collaboration is fundamentally about the quality of our relationships. Whether it's a Jesuit superior working with a director, or our connection with lay colleagues, we have to grow in our capacity for deep, honest encounter. It's a lifelong process, and at its centre is always our relationship with Jesus Christ."

The Council also looked toward the future by welcoming the MAGIS team, who shared both the challenges and the incredible potential of young adult ministry today. Fr Partha Sarathi, who leads the MAGIS Digital Home in Chennai, India, spoke about the deep hunger young people have for communities where they can find hope and peace. "We are called to provide these spaces of encounter – places where they feel welcomed and truly accompanied." Fr Hakjoon Kim, who heads the organising team of MAGIS 2027 in South Korea, shared the exciting progress they have seen.

True to the Jesuit way, these meetings were rooted in prayer. Each day began with personal reflection, asking simple but profound questions like, "Where am I finding hope?" Fr James Hanvey served as the Council's "Reflector", whose task was to be the "thread" that connects one day to the next. ❖

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



The Irish priest who outwitted the Nazis

Film: *The Scarlet and the Black* (1983)

Director: Jerry London

Run time: 137 minutes

This cinematic version of J. P. Gallagher's historical war fiction, *The Scarlet Pimpernel of the Vatican* (1967) tells the story of Monsignor Hugh O' Flaherty of the Vatican Curia, who rescued thousands of victims of Nazi-Fascist cruelty during the World War II.

Even as it opposes Nazi-fascist ideologies, the Vatican, located in the heart of Rome as an independent state, maintains political neutrality. In September 1943 following the Italian surrender, the Germans take over Rome. The German SS General Max Helm and Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Kappler, Head of Police for Rome, meet Pope Pius XII to ensure Vatican's neutrality. To forestall their prisoners seeking refuge in the Vatican, the Germans pretend to seek permission to paint a border line across St. Peter's Square delimiting Vatican sovereignty in Rome. In fact, the Nazis had already started painting the demarcation line without his permission.

Secretly, the Vatican provided refuge to hundreds of Jews, Allied prisoners of war and political dissidents fleeing Italy. Under Mgr O'Flaherty, a lot of people worked in the group 'Rome Escape Line' with the tacit approval of the Pope, and the anti-Nazi German ambassador in Vatican. O'Flaherty, an Irish patriot in his youth, was an excellent boxer. His moral courage, resourcefulness and heroism along with those others - some of who became martyrs - effectively defeated the evil surrounding them. Knowing the Nazi tactics perfectly he outwitted them at every turn.

The conflict between the selfless O' Flaherty and the brutal Nazi Colonel symbolizes the battle between good and evil. It also demonstrates that the neutrality of the Vatican was not indifference in the face of injustice but an effective and practical mode of resistance. The murderous Kappler convenes Rome's Jewish Council, demanding an impossible 100 pounds of pure gold and 1 million Italian liras in exchange for "protection." Although O'Flaherty provides it, the Nazis renege on their promise and deport the Jews. His boxing skills and clever disguises help him survive an assassination attempt. When his collaborator Jack, an American soldier, is captured, and his code book is seized, threatening to unravel the rescue operation, O'Flaherty tricks Kappler at an opera house procuring his signature to forge a release order securing Jack's escape.



As the Allies close in on Rome in June 1944, Kappler, sure of his capture, meets O'Flaherty in the historic Coliseum and seeks his help to smuggle his family to Switzerland. The Monsignor chastises the unrepentant Nazi, but to Kappler's surprise, helps the Kappler family escape. Kappler is captured and imprisoned for life for war crimes. We are informed that O'Flaherty regularly visited Kappler in prison and, in 1959, received the Nazi into the Church. The United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia, and his native Ireland honored O' Flaherty as a hero. ❖

Prof. Gigy Joseph Koottummel, a former Professor of English, is a writer, translator and columnist.

Civil society groups condemn Christmas attacks



One of the initiatives from the civil society groups in Mumbai to protest and condemn the orchestrated attacks on Christians during Christmas 2025 was the Press Conference organized by the IRSC (Inter-religious Solidarity Council), whose convener is the highly educated and saffron-clad Prabhu Keshav Chandra Das of ISKON. The co-convenor is Advocate Irfan Engineer, director of the Centre for Secularism and Society CSSS) and the current host of SAMANVAYA, Mumbai. This meeting in itself is unique, since it was not called, or requested by, Christians. This was spontaneous and done at very short notice by the IRSC which felt that it needed to respond to the shocking spectacle of the vicious attacks on Christians.

There was a mixed group of around 45 people in the hall, consisting mostly of influencers and other leaders from all communities and a sizeable presence of those who did not subscribe to any particular religion.

In his brief but powerful speech, Tushar Gandhi, the Mahatma's grandson, expressed his solidarity with the Christian community, and invited his listeners to look at the Constitution of India and reflect on the values enshrined in it. He expressed anguish that when such brazen violence was inflicted on the small,

non-violent and service-oriented Christian minority with impunity, the larger population was largely silent. Mr Gandhi said that the Christian community should respond with courage and not bow down to the goons hired by their political masters to run amok. He called for a prolonged struggle against hate and communalism spreading at such an alarming rate.

Pastor Tribhuvan called for decisive law enforcement. Maulana Rooh-e-Zafar emphasised that such violations defy India's Constitutional right to follow any faith, urging a shift from hate to harmony. Fr Michael highlighted the surge in hate speech, threats, physical and mental harassment, and false accusations against Christians, who undertake humanitarian services as a part of their religious faith.

All the speakers unanimously condemned the violence and called for peaceful co-existence among followers of all religions. They urged on all to uphold Constitutional values and respect for religious freedom. They questioned the complicity of the State in the attacks. There was a suggestion from the floor that a helpline be made available. This was considered by the organizers. ❖

| Anthony Dias, SJ (BOM)



Pastors too can be effective leaders

Title: *The Shepherd's Compass*

Editors: Christu Raja, SJ & Antony Inico, SJ

Pages: 124

Price: ₹ 225.00

What inspired you to write this book?

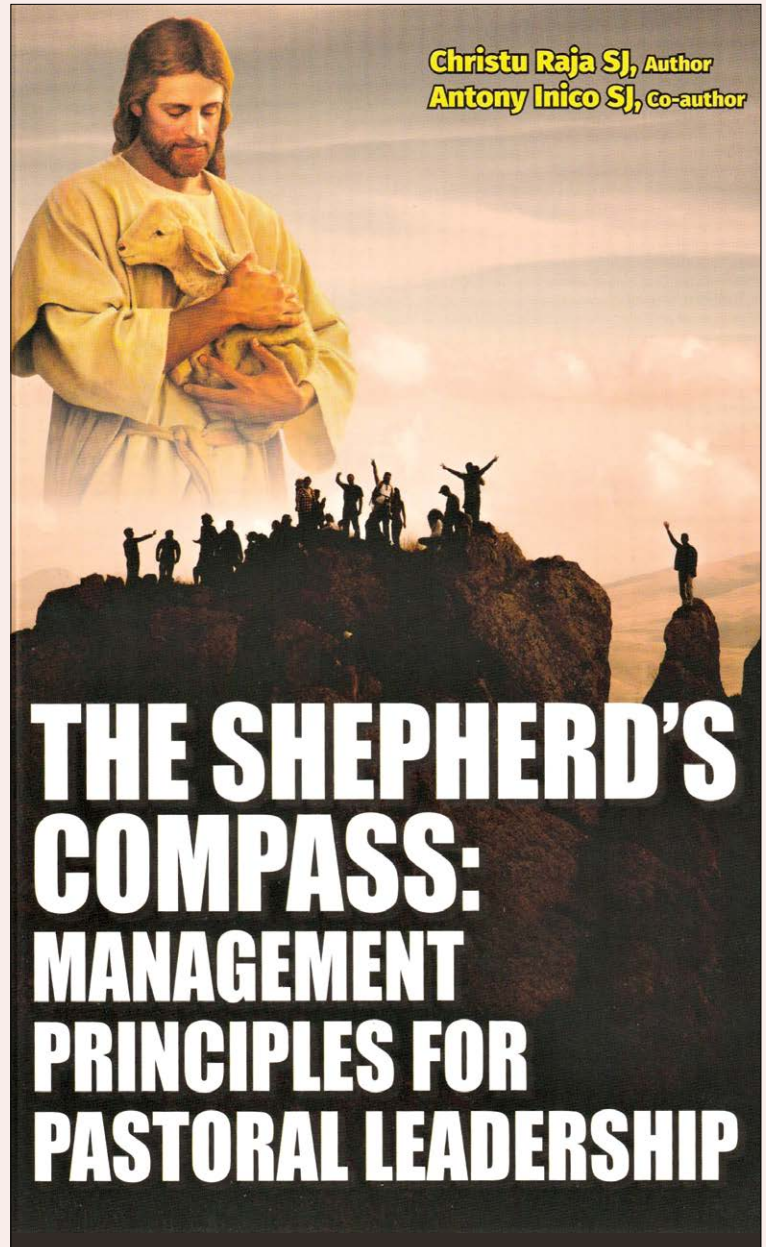
The Shepherd's Compass grew out of my pastoral experiences and my engagement with management education. I realized that many challenges faced by pastors mirror those in organizational life, yet pastoral ministry often lacks simple frameworks to navigate them. This book emerged from the desire to bridge pastoral wisdom with practical leadership tools. At its heart, it encourages pastors to serve with clarity, compassion, and spiritual depth.

What does it offer pastors?

The book offers pastors a set of practical, immediately usable principles drawn from both Scripture and contemporary expertise on leadership. It helps them handle daily pastoral challenges, team coordination, communication, stewardship, conflict, and mission clarity with confidence. Each chapter blends spiritual reflection with real pastoral situations, making the insights accessible and actionable. Ultimately, it strengthens pastoral effectiveness while renewing inner motivation for service.

Are the management principles universally relevant or mostly for the West?

The management principles in this book are universal because they arise from human behaviour, Gospel values, and the lived realities of pastoral leadership across cultures. While shaped by Indian and Asian contexts, themes like servant leadership, accountability, discernment, resilience, speak to pastors everywhere. Church leaders globally face similar pressures, and these tools can support them regardless of geography. So the book has global relevance. ❖



Christu Raja, SJ (CEN) serves as Associate Director at Loyola Institute of Business Administration (LIBA), Chennai.



Agapit Tirkey, SJ (MAP)

Fr. Agapit Tirkey, SJ passed away on 12 December 2025, at the age of 81, leaving behind a profound 60-year legacy. A man of deep discipline and intellectual vigour, he remained active in his spiritual and teaching ministries until the very evening before his death.

Inspired by Belgian missionaries, he entered the Society in 1965 and was ordained in 1977. After a Master's in Anthropology, he earned a Ph.D. in Sociology from Delhi University, with his thesis focusing on the Jharkhand Movement. His academic prowess fuelled a lifelong passion for tribal culture, identity, and spirituality. Fr Agapit was a renowned scholar who directed the Tribal Research and Documentation

Centre at Asha Deep, Pathalgaon, taught specialized courses at JDV, Pune, published several books and founded the magazine *Naam Kurukhat* to preserve the Oraon language. He composed liturgical hymns in Oraon.

Fr. Agapit also served as a Parish Priest, Rector, Superior, and Province Consultor. He was known for his "fully integrated" Jesuit life, characterized by simplicity, poverty, and a pleasant community presence. Whether representing his Province at international conventions or giving spiritual retreats, he remained a "man for all seasons."

|| Alphonse Tirkey, SJ



Amalraj Michael, SJ (MDU)

Br. Amalraj Michael was born on 25 April 1943 at Thirukalli in Tamil Nadu. He took his first vows on 26 February 1964 and his final vows on 15 August 1975. Beschi Illam celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his Final Vows on 29 May 2025.

The Jesuit Madurai Province is grateful to Br. Amalraj for his untiring service at the various farms and estates for 58 years at Dindigul, Rayapuram, Irudayakulam, Madurai and Tiruchi, Manalur, Sirumalai and Palamalai. During most of those years he was all by himself, with God as his only companion and protector.

A humble and simple person, who never aspired for fame, he enjoyed

working with dedication. He was a role model for simplicity and commitment. God had given Br. Amalraj the gift of divining water sources. He used this gift and divined many water sources in various institutions, the last being Loyola Tech School, Dindigul. He adopted an eco-friendly lifestyle.

A deep faith and ardent love for Jesus and our Blessed Mother were the sources of his strength. After enduring intense pain for a few weeks in the hospital, he surrendered his spirit to God at 2.40 a.m. on 11 December '25.

|| L.X. Jerome, SJ & Xavier Raj Antony, SJ

John Lourdu, SJ (MDU)

Fr. John Lourdu entered the Novitiate at Shembaganur on 25 June 1953 and was ordained a priest on 24 March 1968. He made his final commitment on 15 August 1973. From 1973 till 2017, he held various responsibilities in the Madurai Province.

Fr. John was truly an ascetic who was committed to the values of religious life and he expected the same from his fellow Jesuits. The Society recognized this noble quality in him and bestowed on him many responsibilities –the Rector of St. Mary’s Madurai, St. Xavier’s Palayamkottai and Loyola College, Chennai. He served also as the Superior and Headmaster in the various schools of the Province. He had an ardent devotion to Our Lady.

He would be totally involved in the works that were entrusted to him, but would never take any credit. After serving

in various communities, Fr John came to rest at Beschi Illam on 15 May 2017. Austere even in his old age, he would take the trouble of going to the shops to purchase his lungies, footwear or belts on his own and would manage all such expenses with the meager pocket money.

He never troubled anyone and did the chores like sweeping his room and washing his clothes by himself. Although he found it difficult to walk, he insisted on using a walker and going to the chapel every day for Mass.

After being hospitalized in his final days, he insisted on being discharged and taken to Beschi. On 21 December ’25 morning, while being anointed, he went to claim his eternal reward.

|| Patric Ravichandiran, SJ



Joseph Kochupura, SJ (DEL)

Born on 30 September 1940 at Kizhapparayar in the diocese of Palai, Kerala, Joseph Kochupura joined the Society on 1 July 1960 at the age of 20 at XTTI, Patna. He took his first vows on 2 July 1962, and was ordained a priest on 15 March 1972.

He generously served in diverse ministries across the provinces of Patna and Delhi for over fifty years. He was willing to take up difficult and challenging tasks, which included: Parish Priest at Maner and Sasaram in Patna; Administrator at St. Xavier’s School, Shahbad and Rajniwas Marg, Delhi; Construction In-charge at Lucknow, Varanasi in UP and Jhajjar in Haryana; Social Work in charge in Ambala and Ropar.

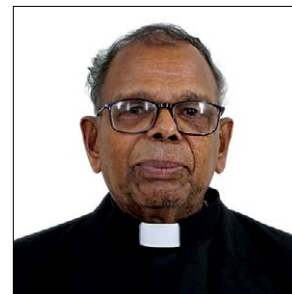
Fr. Joseph Kochupura’s life was like that of his patron, St. Joseph. Ever ready

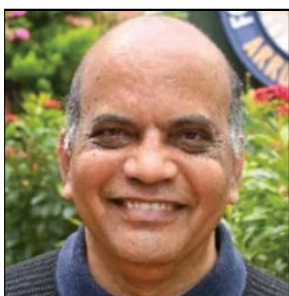
to do anything for Jesus whom he loved wholeheartedly and ever ready to be sent to any place for any apostolate, he put his heart and soul into the apostolate. Wherever he was, he loved all the people and did everything possible for their progress and integral welfare.

Wherever he worked, he liked to plant trees and made the campus green. Always simple and humble, he gave his best to whatever job he was given. Spiritually and mentally, he remained strong until the end.

After having lived 85 fruitful and grace-filled years, Fr. Joseph Kochupura has gone to his eternal abode. He was a MAGIS Jesuit.

|| George Mlakuzhy, SJ





Swebert Sylvan D'Silva, SJ (KAR)

Fr. Swebert D'Silva, a Jesuit of quiet depth, intellectual clarity, and steadfast fidelity, was called to the Lord on 22 November 2025. His sudden passing has left the Province and countless students, collaborators, and friends grieving, yet profoundly grateful for a life generously given in service.

Born on 12 March 1957 in Udyavara, Mangaluru, he entered the Society of Jesus on 2 July 1975 at Mt St Joseph, Bengaluru. Ordained a priest on 22 April 1991, and professed of Final Vows on 15 August 2000, he remained a deeply rooted Jesuit. A gifted teacher of Mathematics, Fr. Swebert served at St Joseph's College, Bengaluru, St Aloysius College, Mangaluru, as Principal of St Aloysius PU College, St Aloysius College (Autonomous) for many years. After retirement, his service continued with distinction as Director of

St. Joseph's College of Law, Rector of Arrupe Nivas, Pro-Chancellor of St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru, and as Coordinator of JESCOL and PCAA.

Fr. Swebert stood for disciplined leadership, integrity, and discernment. Calm and consultative, he combined firmness with compassion. He was a man of prayer, deeply loyal to the Society and the Church, respectful of authority, simple in lifestyle, and free from self-seeking. His capacity for balanced relationships, his love for community, and his commitment to justice and education marked him as a true Jesuit. We thank God for his fifty years of faithful companionship in the Society of Jesus. May he rest in peace!

Denzil Lobo, SJ



Yeruva Inna, SJ (AND)

Fr Yeruva Inna joined the Society on 23 July 1977, was ordained on 28 April 1988 and made his final vows on 04 February 2000. In dealing with the Jesuit companions, students and staff members as superior and principal of the Loyola school, Junior College and as director of the hostel, his approach was thoughtful and sensitive. He worked hard to start the B. Ed. College.

The rural students who came from different corners of Telangana speak of his firm administrative qualities and acknowledge with gratitude his moulding them with an all round growth. He made a unique contribution to the rural school at Vinukonda and the diocesan Junior College

of Nalgonda Diocese at Kalwakurthy. One who was admired as a wise man, he took up challenging tasks in higher and school education and Shantinagar parish in Warangal diocese. He related to people calmly and humanely.

Fr. Yeruva Inna's death was sudden and unexpected but very peaceful. He was laid to rest on 20 September 2025 at Loyola Academy, Alwal, Secunderabad. The number of people who accompanied him in his final journey speaks volumes. May his soul rest in peace!

Kunduru Joji, SJ



Facing questions that have no easy answers

I met him on the banks of the Ganges in Rishikesh at the time of Maha Shivaratri. He was a wealthy Mumbai industrialist, whose tailored suit looked incongruous among the pilgrims in simple cotton. His twelve-year-old son had died three months earlier. “I have everything,” he said, staring across the holy river. “Money, success, respect. But I cannot answer the one question that matters: Why did God take my son?”

A devotee of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, he came, seeking answers in their union — marking the overcoming of darkness and ignorance. Grief had stripped away everything except the essential question.

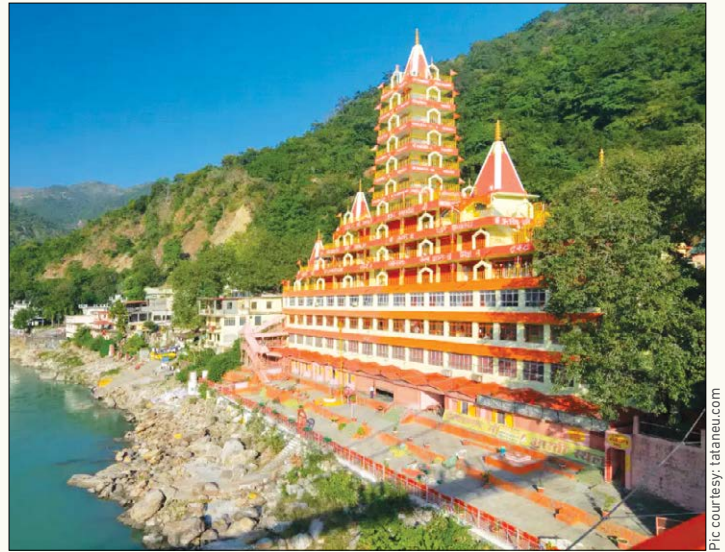
We sat together as the sun set over the sacred waters. I realized he wasn’t really asking ‘why?’ He was asking something deeper: ‘Can I find peace with God’s will when it shatters everything I thought I understood?’ What this father taught me: when life breaks us open with unbearable loss, we discover whether our spirituality has depth, or it was merely surface comfort that evaporates when tested.

For many, the word ‘God’ in the context of relationships means that deep place where we encounter ultimate meaning, beauty that transcends explanation, and goodness that survives even when terrible things happen. He came to celebrate the night of Shivaratri, of spiritual awakening, enlightenment, and the shedding of negativity. But in three months of devastating grief, this father discovered that nothing he had achieved could answer the questions that matter most. ‘Who are we?’ ‘Why do we suffer?’ ‘What holds us when everything we love is taken away?’ These are questions that reveal our spiritual depth when surface explanations fail.

This dimension cannot be overlooked. What gives your life ultimate meaning? What beauty moves you to tears? What truth anchors you when storms come? Where do you encounter transcendence -in nature, art, music, service, prayer, silence?

The industrialist said his wife had stopped speaking. Grief was driving them apart, because they had never explored together what ‘God’ meant beyond conventional religious observance. As a couple, they didn’t know how to approach ultimate questions.

Sitting with him by the Ganges, I couldn’t provide answers about why his son had died. But I could sit with him in the not-knowing, where grief meets mystery. Slowly, as darkness fell and tiny lamps began floating



Pic courtesy: talaneu.com

downstream, something shifted. Not acceptance yet — that would take much longer — but the beginning of peace: the recognition that some questions have no answers. But there is Presence. God is not the explanation for suffering but the ground of being that holds us even when nothing makes sense.

It was late when I left for my room. My friend chose to stay awake through the night -as devotees do on Shivaratri - to reflect, pray, and meditate.

How do you encounter depth, meaning, transcendence? Can you share your personal spiritual journey, even when yours differs so profoundly from others in your community? How do you respect each other in the questions that have no easy answers - questions about inevitable losses - of health, dreams, loved ones. About whether you can find God as Presence. About whether your spirituality has roots deep enough to hold you when surface faith fails.

My industrialist friend returned to Mumbai with something more valuable than answers: companions for the journey - his family, his faith community, and the God who meets us in sacred Presence. That, finally, is what finding ‘God’ means: developing the depth to face mystery, the capacity to encounter beauty amid brokenness, and the grace to say ‘I don’t understand, but I trust’ - not alone, but hand-in-hand with those we love and serve. ❖

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



"Yes, I always carry two mobiles. This one I always take when it rings. The other one I may or may not take the call."

"Whose call do you always take?"

"That number is given only to the provincial and my local superior."



"Why don't you walk or jog, Father?"

"I don't want to add years to my life, and become a burden for the old age home."



"So you are the new cook? Welcome. No cook has survived here for more than three months. Fr. Joe wants everything saltless, Fr. Tom eats only boiled vegetables, Fr. Anup loves spicy food, Fr. Xavier looks for non-veg every time... so you see. Anyway, I wish you good luck!"



"Give me a chance at least for six months, Father. I have been through so many jobs and never survived longer than that."

Source: K.P. Joseph, SJ/ Xavier Antony, SJ

JESUIT HUMOUR

Any day

Fr. Gathier, SJ, the French Jesuit who taught philosophy at the Jesuit philosophate in Shembaganur, Tamil Nadu, had injured one of his toes. A few days later, Sch. Eric Vaz, SJ (KAR), who was doing his philosophy, met him on the corridor and asked him, "How is your toe, Father?" Fr. Gathier replied, "Oh, man, man, on any day it is better than your head."





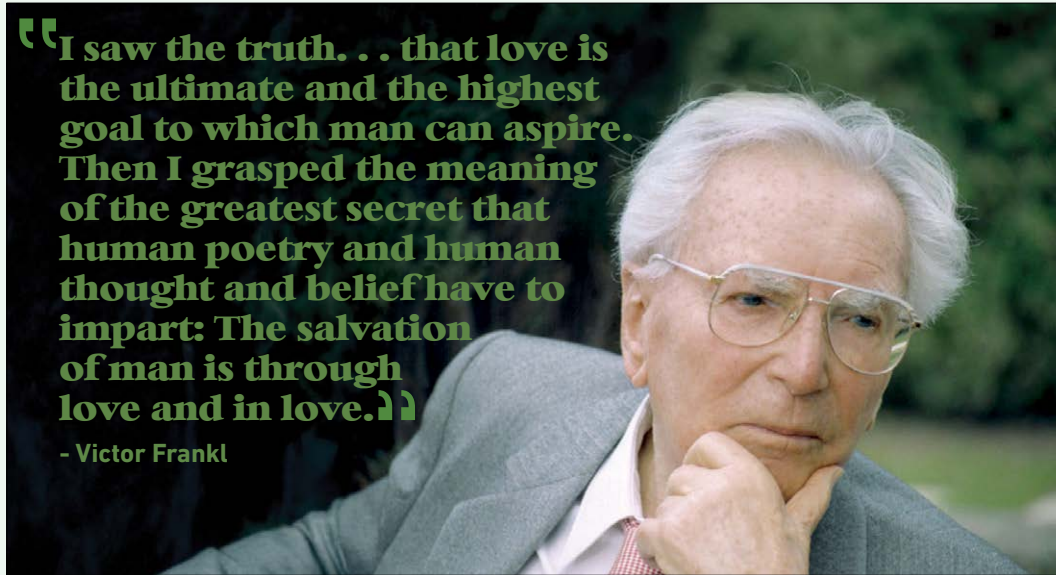
The Secret of the Heart

The identity of St. Valentine is shrouded in the mists of time. This is what we know: According to the Nuremberg Chronicle, St. Valentine was a priest, perhaps a bishop, who was martyred around the year 269. The details of his life are limited, but he was a real person: both a Roman catacomb and an ancient church are dedicated to him. Also, in A.D. 496, Pope Gelasius declared 14 February as a day to remember his martyrdom.

The desire to give and receive love is a fundamental aspect of the human person. As Viktor Frankl, psychologist and concentration camp survivor, observed in his famous book, *Man's Search For Meaning*: "I saw the truth. . . that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love."

"I saw the truth. . . that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love."

- Victor Frankl



There is deep spiritual significance to the meaning of "heart" in Scripture. Depending on the translation, 'heart' appears from 500 to over 800 times. It does not, however, refer to the physical organ. The Denver Biblical School says: "In Scripture, 'heart' refers to the seat and the origin of all human thought, motivation, will and action—in other words,

the core of the whole human person."

Under the reign of Claudius the Cruel, men were failing to join the military in sufficient numbers. The emperor believed that men were too attached to their wives and families, so he banned all marriages. St. Valentine defied this order and continued to perform marriages in secret. Valentine was arrested and condemned to death on 14 February.

The practice of sending Valentine's Day cards is related to a story from his hagiography. One version of the story relates that Valentine healed the blind daughter of his jailer. Before he was martyred, he left her a note and signed it "Your Valentine." According to some historians, the further association of Valentine's Day with romantic love probably originated during the Middle Ages, the age of "courtly love."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2563) describes the heart as "the dwelling-place where I am" and offers an additional reflection: The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. It is the place of truth, the place of encounter. The famous visionary, Julian of Norwich, said, "Know it well. Love was His meaning. Who showed it to you? Love. What did He show you? Love. Why did He show it? For love. Hold on to this and you will know and understand love more and more."



Courtesy: Magis Center

Maggie Ciskanik, MS, MSc, has been a neurological nurse, an educator, and a writer.

WELL SAID

*"You've gotta dance like there's nobody watching,
love like you'll never be hurt,
sing like there's nobody listening,
and live like it's heaven on earth."*

- William W. Purkey