

March, 2026

JIVAN

NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA



What's so great about **ST JOSEPH?** Six 'Josephs' talk of their patron

| Are Jesuits still happy?

| "You cannot fight the world!"

| Jivan Awards

| Short Story: First Prize Winner



Protect our human family!

It is to you, Oh Joseph, God fully entrusted
His Son, who was human and divine
And the woman He chose to be His Mother,
Mary, most beautiful and benign.

Trusting, humble and obedient,
You accepted pure maiden and Child
As devoted husband of His daughter,
And loving father of His child.

During the day and the fright'ning night
Only the Father's will you always sought
Took the Child and his mother to a foreign land
To shield them from Herod's treacherous plot

Mighty men, giddy with power, run amok
And kill your people with devilish glee.
You protected your holy family,
Protect now our human family.



Sch. Veron Marc Jr Huffton, SJ (CEN) is studying B.A. Psychology at St Joseph's University in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

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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.

She did nurture young minds

Kudos to Pushpa Joseph, the former editor of *the Magnet!* During my stint as Novice Master at Mount St Joseph, Bengaluru, I made it abundantly clear to the novices that one of the three non-negotiables during their novitiate formation was writing seven letters to the editor of any magazine with the sole intention of keeping their mind active. Most of the novices adhered to the non-negotiables by fulfilling what was asked of them to the best of their ability. As she mentions in her article in the Jan '26 issue of *Jivan*, Pushpa Joseph nurtured the creative mind of the young novices by providing a platform for the budding Jesuits to blossom in their writing skills, year after year. This opportunity aided the novices to open the door of their imagination to critically read and creatively respond. Due to her persistent support and encouragement, many novices published umpteen numbers of letters to the editor, articles and poems on a regular basis in *the Magnet* and in other reputed magazines, including in *Jivan*. She did it month after month, in an unassuming way like St Joseph, contributing immensely to the growth of *the Magnet* and reaching it to newer heights. Hats-off to you, Pushpa Joseph!

| John Pradeep, SJ | Meghalaya

The movie and the article

I felt truly privileged to watch *Journey to Bethlehem* when it was screened by Fr. Learoy Rodrigues, SJ, then Dean of the Juniorate. Experiencing the movie first hand made reading his article in the January '26 issue of *Jivan* even more meaningful. The way he connects Mary's journey with the challenges and transitions we face in life, especially at the start of a New Year, really resonates with me.

What struck me most was how human Mary is portrayed. Her honesty in admitting confusion and weakness, her dependence on God, and her courage

to embrace the unknown felt very relatable. I was particularly touched by the image of Mary needing to be carried by God. It reminded me that it's okay to lean on God, especially when life feels heavy. Fr. Learoy's reflections encourage us to see our own transitions with hope, to notice how our past experiences shape the present, and to trust that God sees our potential even when we doubt ourselves. The article inspired me to start the year with openness, courage, and faith, just as Mary did.

| Sch. Fean Almeida, SJ | Goa

Deeply moved

I was deeply moved after reading Fr. Hedwig Lewis's article on Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam (AMDG) in the February '26 issue of *Jivan*. Although, as a Jesuit, I have come across this theme countless times, the beauty of Ignatian spirituality lies precisely in its capacity to expand one's understanding in ever-new contexts. Fr. Hedwig's insight that *magis* does not inflate the ego but stretches the heart particularly struck me. It prompted me to reflect that a heart stretched or enlarged becomes capable of greater service, creating space for the other and embracing all people, regardless of culture or creed. In the South Asian context, where the rapid growth of "othering" has become an alarming social reality, this insight feels especially urgent. Indifference toward the other is becoming increasingly common, and this calls for a renewed commitment to the Ignatian spirit, a personal renewal oriented toward the transformation of the world for the greater good. As Fr. Hedwig rightly observes, AMDG is more than a motto; it becomes a lens through which reality is perceived. And reality can be addressed meaningfully only when our perception is properly oriented.

| Oscar Daniel Raj, SJ | Rome, Italy

Prayer
Intention for
March '26

For disarmament and peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.



Pic courtesy: i.insider.com



WHAT DO YOU SAY?

STANY D'SOUZA, SJ
President, JCSA

Artists, arise!

Have you visited the Chiesa del Gesù, Rome, St Aloysius College chapel, Mangaluru, or St Xavier's College, Mumbai? These and many other Jesuit structures are not dull and dreary; rather, they draw droves of visitors to behold their beauty. Love for art and architecture is in the Jesuit DNA. In fact, St Ignatius knew the power of imagination well. His Spiritual Exercises are profoundly artistic. They do not argue; they invite. They do not shout; they reveal. They do not force; they gently allure the retreatant to fall in love with Christ. Inspired by Ignatius, the Society of Jesus has trusted imagination, invested in creativity and offers us a rich legacy.

We live in a competitive and conflictual world. Widespread violence engulfs us. Additionally, unbearable noise deafens us. Our streets, screens and public spaces have become painfully noisy and violent.

In situations like these, when some crib that life is purged of meaning, artists arise and offer meaning in art forms. They perceive reality differently, interpret suffering meaningfully and present hope creatively. They give concrete form not only to joy but also to sorrow. They breathe hope even when optimism seems impossible. Artists entice us to apply brakes in an age of speed, to savour creation, to listen to cosmic voices and to vibrate with the pulse of life.

When it is rooted in prayer and discernment, people and mission, art becomes a form of service, an apostolate. It is not secondary. It is a way of helping others to see the world, people, creation and Creator more truthfully. Picasso once observed, "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." Artists create spaces where faith and doubt can marry and make life meaningful.

Recently, we had a meeting of the Jesuit artists of the conference. A few of them have already made a name and others are slowly but steadily making their presence felt in the broad canvas of our country and our world. And yet, many of them are unsure of their place and role in the Society.

Hence, it is vital that we encourage Jesuits to explore music, writing, theatre, film, digital media, visual arts, architecture, and emerging forms to discover the depth and breadth of life. Let's tell them fondly, 'We love you. We need your imagination. We value your artwork. Do reimagine and reclaim the meaning systems buried in our hearts and communities and contribute 'more' to the Society, the Church and the world, at large...' Well, what do you say?



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

M.A. JOE ANTONY, SJ
Editor

Eye of the Soul

Twice a year – when we announce the Short Story Contest and when we announce the results – *Jivan* happily flies into the realm of imagination. All those who come up with stories, poems, lyrics, paintings and sculptures are blessed with a vibrant, fertile imagination. And imagination is, indeed, a great blessing.

If you are not convinced, listen to some great men who understood its significance. You'd have certainly heard what Einstein said: "Imagination is more important than knowledge." Because, as William Blake, the British poet, said, "What is now proved was once only imagined." Joseph Joubert, the French essayist, called it "the eye of the soul."

This is why it is heartening to see Stany D'Souza, SJ, President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia, emphasizing the importance of artists and acknowledge that what the artists, poets, and writers do is indeed an apostolate (*See his column on the left*). We know the world we live in. But only imagination can remake the world. This is why all those who want to minister effectively to God's people need to imagine, to re-imagine.

So, appreciate and encourage all our young Jesuits who have won prizes, whose stories have been ranked 'meritorious', (*See p. 6*) and, yes, all those who made an effort to write and send their stories.

The alluring cover story in this issue is about the great St. Joseph, my primary patron, who, as Pope Francis loved to repeat, never fails us. Read what six 'Josephs' have to say on what makes him truly great (p. 7-9).

World Happiness Day is celebrated all over the world on 20 March. To mark the occasion, we have a 'World Happiness Day Special' on p. 11,12. Read what our psychologist-writer, Mukti Clarence, SJ, has to say about the secret that St. Ignatius learnt and what we need to remember: "By discerning what expanded his heart and what constricted it, Ignatius discovered a path not only to holiness but also to resilient joy. For him, joy served as a compass, pointing toward life and freedom. Contemporary psychology corroborates this Ignatian wisdom. Happiness cannot be reduced to just pleasure, recognition, or success. It shows up where life is experienced as meaningful, emotionally integrated, relationally connected, and coherent."



The prize goes to...

You must be eager to learn the results of the Jivan Short Story Contest – 2025. Like last year, this time too we invited a different kind of story. Till last year the contestants had no restriction whatever.



They could choose the plot and the characters and begin and end the story the way they wanted. But this time, like last year, the initial part of the story was given, when we announced the contest.

The person who wrote those initial paragraphs is **Dr. Magdalene Abraham**, who retired as an Associate Professor in the Research Centre of English at Fatima College, Madurai. A product of the University of Delhi, she received the Best Teacher Award from the English Education Society, New Delhi in 1989. She was a Fulbright Scholar at the New School University, New York in 2002 and went to Japan as a member of the Rotary International Exchange Programme. Since she happened to be in Houston, Texas, U.S, visiting her daughter, the first part of the story, we can assume, takes place in Houston.

All that the contestants had to do was to take the story forward to its logical conclusion. Obviously, there is no one logical conclusion. Whatever they came up with should be a plausible continuation of the first part that was given. This is why we were happily surprised that we received this time 40 stories – like last year.

Jivan thanks all the Rectors or Superiors or Directors of our Formation Houses, and Institutions who helped by encouraging their wards to participate.

The names of the writers were not given to the Jury to avoid any possible bias. They were given only the number assigned to each story. The Jury this time consisted of two eminently qualified persons. One was, quite naturally, the person who wrote the beginning

of the story – Mrs. Dr. Magdalene Abraham. The other member of the Jury was **Sr. Dr. Judy Gomez, SSC**, the Deputy Principal of the Holy Cross College, Trichy, where she is a professor in the Department of English. She has a Doctorate in British Literature.



The two members of the Jury independently evaluated the stories, and then compared the grades they had given to each story and, finally, chose the three winners and rated seven stories as 'meritorious'.



The first prize of Rs 5,000 goes to **Sch Arundeeep Kujur, SJ (JAM)**, who is a second-year student of Philosophy at Satya Nilayam, Chennai.

The second prize (Rs 2,000) goes to **Sch. Denver A. Pushpam, SJ, (KAR)**, who is currently studying B.A. Journalism at St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru.



The third prize, (Rs.1,000) goes to **Sch. Arun Raj, SJ (KAR)** currently a second-year student of Philosophy at Satya Nilayam, Chennai.

The seven stories the Jury chose as 'meritorious' were written by **Sch. T. Praveen SJ (AND)**, **Sch. Jose Stanly, SJ (PAT)**, **Br. Sumit Lakra, SSP**, **Sch. Raymond Martel, SJ (AND)**, **Yohan Alvares, SJ (BOM)**, **Sch Anish, SJ (KAR)**, and **Sch. Pradeeproy Mahimai Raj, SJ (MDU)**.

While this issue carries Arundeeep Kujur, SJ's story that won the first prize, the other two stories that won the second and third prizes, as well as the seven meritorious stories, will be published in *Jivan*.

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

- Editor

What is so great about St. Joseph?

My Guide, My Refuge

Sch. Jermy Joseph, SJ



What makes St. Joseph truly great is his quiet yet heroic fidelity to God's will. Though Scripture records no spoken words of his, his life proclaims deep faith, trust, and obedience. When God's plans were unexpected and demanding, Joseph did not question or resist; he listened attentively and responded with humility and courage. He accepted the sacred responsibility of caring for Mary and Jesus with tender love and unwavering commitment. As the silent guardian of God's divine plan, St. Joseph teaches us that true greatness lies in faithful surrender, silent service, and steadfast love for God, and generous obedience always.

From my childhood, St. Joseph has been close to my heart, as my parish church is dedicated to him. Celebrating his feast each year on 19 March deepened my bond with this gentle and faithful saint. His total surrender to God's will inspired me to entrust my own life to God and helped shape my journey toward the Jesuit vocation. I turn to him as a loving guide and refuge, especially during moments of doubt and struggle. Through my devotion to 'Sleeping St. Joseph', I place my fears and hopes at his feet, learning to trust in God daily and quietly.

Sch. Jermy Joseph, SJ (DEL) is studying Social Work at Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai.

The two Josephs redefine justice

Joseph Lobo, SJ

Justice is popularly understood as 'giving everyone their due, as per the law'. This is applied in awarding rewards as well as punishment. However, both the Josephs – of the OT and the NT – transcended this definition. In both the cases justice was done on the basis of a very different criterion. Joseph of the OT, at the peak of his popularity in Egypt, showed great generosity towards his brothers who had sold him. Joseph, the husband of Mary too, decided against putting Mary, his betrothed, to public shame, although it would have been perfectly legal if he had done it. In both the cases, justice understood as one's due, would have given rise to great tragedies.

But the Gospel justice is something different. Accordingly, all the workers in the vineyard received equal wages, irrespective of the quantity of their work. It did not deprive anyone of what was due to him, but saw to it that all of them had sufficient for their sustenance. I admire a similar spirit in both the Josephs. The Gospel justice is God's justice that can never be bereft of mercy and compassion. My devotion to St Joseph is actually an attempt to practice such a justice.



Joseph Lobo, SJ (KAR), a former director of Karnataka Regional Theological Extension Center, Bengaluru, is a professor of systematic theology at De Nobili College, Pune.

From my childhood

Joseph Sebastian, SJ



When Joseph came to know God's plan for the world, and his role in it, he yielded to God. Mary knew that Joseph was a "just" man and hence she must have been fully confident that Joseph would surely accept God's call to him and so would receive her with open arms. Given the lofty and sublime vocation of Mary to help her Son in the salvation of the world, Joseph served her and him to the best of his ability. The Child they had to take care of was God's own Son, the Emmanuel - the Messiah. Joseph could not think of a more blessed and privileged life than to be a caring father of Jesus and a devoted husband of Mary.

What makes me admire him is that he accomplished his mission not for any recognition, or reward. That God knew he did exactly what He asked of him was enough for him. He never talked of the hardships and sufferings he had to endure in fulfilling God's will. From my early childhood, I have nurtured and nourished a tender devotion towards St. Joseph. His silence and simplicity, his stability and serenity keep inspiring me every day.

*A former Provincial of Andhra and Rector of Vidya Jyoti, Delhi, **Joe Sebastian Sandanam, SJ (AND)** is now at Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada.*

Whenever I have turned to him in prayer

Joseph Victor Edwin, SJ

My father, Joseph, had a profound devotion to St. Joseph. Each evening, after leading the family rosary at home, he would offer a special prayer to St. Joseph, imploring his blessings upon all Christian families. His supplications to St. Joseph frequently conveyed a heartfelt desire for families to imitate the Saint's devotion to Mother Mary and Jesus within their own family lives. He sought the grace to yield to God's will, much like his heavenly patron. All through my life, I have felt a personal connection to his devotion to St. Joseph. I sensed my calling to become a Jesuit while I was a student at St. Joseph's College, Trichy, and standing near the statue of St. Joseph I spoke to my father of my desire to join the Jesuits.

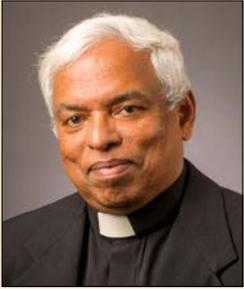


Like my father, I regard him as my heavenly patron. I find it easy to reach out to him and pray with a sense of filial devotion, seeking to lead my Jesuit life with deep commitment to my mission. During difficult moments, I have felt a sense of peace and comfort whenever I turned to him in prayer. I have witnessed how he guides those who implore his blessings to lead a life that honours God, and to embrace God's will with greater trust and tranquility.

***Joseph Victor Edwin, SJ (DEL)** is the Director of Vidyajyoti Center for Christian-Muslim Relations at Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi.*

His greatness is quietly luminous

Kuruville Joseph Pandikattu, SJ



I have always had a fond devotion to St. Joseph, the often overlooked saint whose greatness is quietly luminous. He stands for commitment without display, fidelity without fuss, and love expressed through responsibility. In the Gospels, he speaks no recorded words, yet his life becomes a language of commitment and care. Joseph protects Mary and Jesus with steady presence, dignified work, and moral strength. He is compassionate in action, not in rhetoric: attentive to the vulnerable, obedient to conscience, and ready to do what is needed when it is needed, in spite of the challenging situations.

I relate to St. Joseph precisely because he is not in the limelight. He teaches me that authenticity is often hidden, and that integrity is proved in the ordinary. Joseph models a life where real leadership does not demand applause: it listens, discerns, and serves, silently and humbly. His example invites me to choose quiet faithfulness over quick recognition, and to keep my work grounded in what is genuine rather than what is glamorous. In a world that rewards boastfulness and theatrics, Joseph reminds me to remain humane, steady, and truthful: to let responsibility and compassion speak louder than self-promotion and visibility.

*A writer, **Kuruville Pandikattu, SJ (DUM)** is currently a professor at XLRI, Jamshedpur. Earlier he taught at Gnana Deepa, Pune.*

The quiet power of his witness

Soosai Mani, SJ

St. Joseph's unique strength lies in humility, simplicity, a deep commitment to protect, generous love, and a constant readiness to discern and surrender. That numerous institutions and countless believers bear his name reveals the quiet power of his witness.

Why did God choose him? Perhaps because of the purity of his heart and his capacity to uphold human dignity. God saw in him an unflinching ability to nurture life and to rise above patriarchal rigidity in order to care tenderly for Mary and Jesus. His uncompromising value was this: never to humiliate another human being.

In a world where governments weaponize justice systems to oppress, we as clergy can also weaponize sacraments—denying Eucharist or other graces—to shame our own sisters and brothers. St. Joseph challenges this attitude. In surrendering his own plans, he became the trusted guardian of the Redeemer. As a priest who bears his name, I find in him both a model and a challenge: to choose service over power, equality over ethnic bias, and to nurture life in every ministry entrusted to me.



***Soosai Mani, SJ (DEL)** is the Provincial of Delhi Province.*

Jesuit science: an apostolic response for planetary healing



“The cry of the people and the cry of the earth” served as the prophetic vision for the two-day International Conference organized by the Jesuits in Science and Technology Forum (JISTF) at St. Xavier’s College (Autonomous), Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu, from 31 January to 1 February 2026. It brought together 23 Jesuit scientists, educators, and researchers from several Provinces, to explore how faith-inspired inquiry can advance planetary healing and integral human development.

At the Inaugural Session on 31 January, the keynote by Prof. Dr. T. Arumugam, former Vice-Chancellor of Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, titled “Agri-Tech for Integral Ecology and Social Innovation: Moringa Value Chain to Empower Poor and Marginal Farmers,” highlighted science’s transformative potential. Dr. Arumugam described moringa as “herbal gold” and a “super food” providing 94 essential micronutrients. He detailed processes for creating safe, value-added products to combat micronutrient malnutrition and hidden hunger in India, while promoting sustainable livelihoods for marginalized farmers.

Following Q& A, a group photo, and tea, the session “Scientific Achievements – Sharing the Scientific Journey” allowed participants to discuss their research, projects, and challenges. A Eucharistic celebration integrated faith, science, and mission. Afternoon activities included a visit to St. Xavier Solai, a 25-acre agro-ecological biodiversity park initiated by Fr. Dr. Ignacimuthu, offering hands-on insights into organic farming and environmental stewardship.

The evening Plenary Session-II featured an online address by Rev. Dr. Richard A. D’Souza, SJ, Director of the Vatican Observatory, on “From Goa to the Galaxies: Expectations of the Vatican from the Jesuit Scientists.” After outlining the Observatory’s mission—frontier research, he advocated robust training and institutional support amid global competitiveness.

On 1 February, Plenary Session-III by Dr. R. Azhagu Raj, IQAC Director at St. Xavier’s College, addressed “From Publications to Progress: Mapping Outputs for Societal Impact and Institutional Accreditations.” He urged moving beyond metrics to demonstrate societal impact via NAAC, NIRF, PESTLE analysis, Clarivate SIR, and SDG mapping, translating research into social, economic, environmental, and governance outcomes.

The conference concluded with spiritual conversations on scientific journeys, a JISTF future-planning meeting, Sunday Eucharist, and fellowship lunch. Proposals approved included a June online meeting, a biannual newsletter on Jesuit contributions, and a comprehensive research record. Coordinated by Fr. Xavier Savarimuthu (JISTF) and Fr. Alex Yahoo (MDU), with gracious hospitality from St. Xavier’s College, the event reaffirmed Jesuit science as an apostolic response for planetary healing. ❖

**Thomas Madanu, SJ (AND) &
Xavier Savarimuthu, SJ (CCU)**



Are Jesuits still happy?

Are Jesuits today still happy? Happy enough to inspire vocations? Do others, particularly the young, look at Jesuit life and feel drawn to it because they perceive joy, freedom, and fullness? Or has this appeal gradually diminished? These questions are uncomfortable, yet unavoidable, if we are to reflect honestly on the future of Jesuit life and the credibility of our witness.

Research consistently demonstrates that happy individuals tend to be more creative, resilient, productive, and humane. Across cultures, studies show that they experience fewer illnesses, recover more quickly, solve problems more effectively, and sustain long-term commitment. Happiness is strongly associated with better physical well-being, emotional balance, creativity, and perseverance. If happiness predicts such desirable outcomes at personal, communal, and institutional levels, a disturbing question arises: Why is happiness not more intentionally cultivated within Jesuit life?

Observed globally on 20 March, World Happiness Day reflects a growing recognition that economic growth alone does not ensure human flourishing. Countries such as Bhutan and several Scandinavian nations now evaluate well-being alongside GDP. Contemporary psychology affirms that happiness is neither sentimental nor optional; it is a serious indicator of human and institutional health. Happier individuals contribute more creatively, ethically, and sustainably to the communities they serve.

The Gospel articulated this insight long ago: “I have come that they may have life and have it

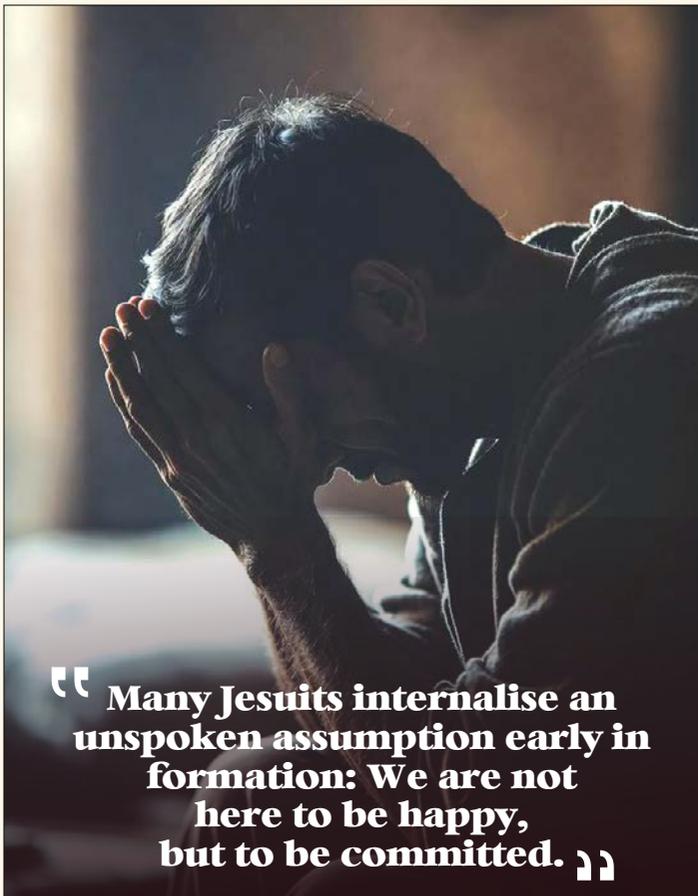
abundantly” (Jn 10:10). The promise here is not mere survival, endurance, or functional usefulness, but abundance of life. This confronts Jesuits with a demanding question: Are we living with vitality, or merely functioning within our roles? Many Jesuits internalise an unspoken assumption early in formation: We are not here to be happy, but to be committed. Happiness can come to appear suspect, too closely associated with comfort, while commitment is linked to sacrifice and endurance.

Gradually, a quiet equation emerges in which greater difficulty is interpreted as greater authenticity. Yet when happiness steadily diminishes, something vital diminishes with it - energy, creativity, tenderness, humour, and compassion. This is not a moral failure but a human signal. Persistent unhappiness is not a sign of holiness.

Ignatius of Loyola understood this through experience. He did not begin as a serene mystic; he was restless, wounded, ambitious, and dissatisfied. His conversion did not centre on heroic suffering, but on careful attention to inner movements. By discerning what expanded his heart and what constricted it, Ignatius discovered a path not only to holiness but also to resilient joy. For him, joy served as a compass, pointing toward life and freedom.

Contemporary psychology corroborates this Ignatian wisdom. Happiness cannot be reduced to just pleasure, recognition, or success. It shows up where life is experienced as meaningful, emotionally integrated, relationally connected, and coherent. One common obstacle to happiness is ‘arrival fallacy’ - the belief that happiness will

“People and companionship constitute the relational core of happiness. Research is unequivocal: meaningful relationships are the strongest predictor of happiness and well-being.”



“ Many Jesuits internalise an unspoken assumption early in formation: We are not here to be happy, but to be committed. ”

pic courtesy: pinterest.com

come after studies, after a transfer, or after a new responsibility. Happiness keeps getting postponed to the next phase.

Life then becomes a perpetual corridor rather than a place to inhabit. Ignatius reminds us that God meets us in the present moment: “This is the day the Lord has made” (Ps 118:24).

The antecedents of happiness in Jesuit life may be summarized through the simple Ignatian acronym: **H.A.P.P.Y.**

Health is foundational. Health is not merely the absence of illness; it includes waking up with vitality, purpose, energy, and intent. Jesuits often neglect bodily and emotional needs in the name of mission. Yet chronic fatigue, suppressed emotions, loss of passion, and diminished meaning predict unhappiness and declining health. Prayer that bypasses exhaustion, anxiety, or loneliness cannot heal. Joy is sustained through an integration of rest, exercise, medical care, emotional honesty, and truthful prayer.

Awareness follows closely. Jesuit life often rewards intensity, but over time, this can devolve

into reactive living, driven by stress and expectation. Ignatius called not for frenzy, but for attentiveness. Happiness grows when one responds thoughtfully rather than reacts compulsively. The Examen, in this sense, is not merely a devotional practice but a practical means of reclaiming agency and inner freedom.

Personal freedom provides the interior space where happiness can flourish. This freedom is not rebellion, but spaciousness of the heart. A free Jesuit can innovate, try something new, take risks, and creatively shape his apostolate. When dissatisfaction arises, freedom enables honest reflection and re-engagement rather than chronic resentment. It also entails the ability to let go of grudges, unresolved hurt, and emotional debts. In the digital age, such freedom includes detachment from constant validation and performance pressure.

People and companionship constitute the relational core of happiness. Research is unequivocal: meaningful relationships are the strongest predictor of happiness and well-being. Jesuit life was never intended as solitary heroism. Who knows me beyond my work, who checks in on my health, remembers significant moments, or visits me when I am sick? Loneliness is not being alone but not being known. Companionship expands joy, while exclusivity and cliques diminish it. Attention to relationships within the community and family remains essential.

Yielding comparison protects happiness. Comparison erodes joy - whether of apostolates, visibility, roles, or recognition. Ignatian indifference offers freedom from this corrosive habit. Each vocation unfolds differently, and none requires justification by comparison. Learning to name ‘enough’ restores inner peace. Self-compassion is a sign of maturity, not self-indulgence.

Jesuit happiness is not synonymous with constant cheerfulness; it is a steadiness that emerges from integration. To normalise chronic unhappiness as intrinsic to vocation is not the Ignatian way. If we honestly attend to these antecedents, happiness emerges not as comfort, but as depth. Perhaps happiness has not abandoned Jesuit life. Maybe it has been waiting for it to be recognised, chosen, and lived—in the here and now. ❖

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PHOTO COURTESY: IMAGES.SBS.COM.AU

“You cannot fight the world!” - Impact of transnational resistance

All those who know what really happened in Gaza saw that genocide could be orchestrated even in this day and age. Angered by the murders and kidnapping perpetrated by the terrorist organization, Hamas, Israel attacked Gaza for about 22 months, killing allegedly 61,722 people. It also showed how indifference of powerful nations can validate and indirectly support mass murder.

Pressure brought on by protests: On the other hand, this crisis also demonstrated the huge impact that ordinary people can make in reducing the violence even in another country. Therefore, the peace deal and ceasefire, for which Trump claims credit, is not the result of his efforts, but the outcome of transnational humanity, manifested in local mass protests, boycott movements and the sending of the flotillas. There cannot be any better way to measure the impact of these transnational protests than Trump’s own declaration: “Israel cannot fight the world, Bibi...” This statement of Trump, addressed to Benjamin Netanyahu on a phone call before the announcement of the ceasefire, reflected the pressure that was exerted on Israel and its allies by the people of good will across the world using various methods.

Maritime mission to supply aid: Gaza crisis led to the largest civilian-led maritime mission ever undertaken by humanity. More than 500 participants from 44 countries embarked on the humanitarian mission of supplying essential aid to Gaza. Most of the people who volunteered to be in the flotilla were ordinary citizens hailing from diverse ethnic, religious, geographical and social backgrounds with their conscience shaken by the atrocities committed in Gaza by Israel, fully supported by the U.S.

Media coverage: The participation of Greta Thunberg, and Zwelivelile Mandela, the grandson of Nelson Mandela and some other celebrities influenced the media coverage of the mission. Though the flotillas were easily intercepted by the Israeli forces, their impact lay in their symbolism. It symbolized the transnational human unity against powers that have no qualms about senseless violence. While the powerful politicians kept on debating the Gaza conflict at the UN tables, the ordinary people prioritized humanity over national borders and personal interests.

Protests in many countries: Another significant move that made Israel accept the ceasefire

was the protests at local levels in different countries. Massive protests were held in Italy, Greece, UK, USA and in many other countries. As was the case with the flotillas, these protesters were ordinary citizens with the strong urge to do something for the helpless Palestinian people. The success of these protests lay in forcing their governments to take a firm stand against Israel. Consequently, the governments of the UK, France, Canada, Luxembourg, Australia and of many other countries were forced to recognize Palestinian Statehood. Countries like the UK halted arms shipments to Israel.

Most people in Israel initially supported the retaliatory strikes in Gaza, but as the conflict escalated and lasted for nearly two years, many people and groups in Israel opposed what their military was doing in Gaza.

Boycott movements: The boycott movements like the ‘Boycott, Disinvestment, Sanctions’ (BDS) movement, led by civilians, identified companies that were complicit in the Gaza genocide. This eventually led to the downfall of corporations once seen as untouchable giants. Companies such as Coca Cola, Starbucks, Nike and others, which are allegedly tied to Israel, saw their sales crumbling in countries where boycott movements were strong. For instance, Domino’s Pizza Enterprises faced a sharp loss of 3.7 million Australian dollars in 2025 as compared to its profit of 96 million dollars the year before. Microsoft workers protested supplying of AI technology and cloud services to Israeli military. This demonstrates that even the unscrupulous giants can be humbled, simply by abstaining from buying their products.

Hidden motives: Most of the violence happening across the world is based on the base structure of economy or material needs. For Trump, the destroyed Palestinian land was an “Ocean View property”. Geopolitical analysts argue that the reason why Israel desperately wants to annex Palestine is because of its plan to build an alternative to Egypt-controlled Suez Canal and for other economic interests. Once we are able to recognize the subtle complicity of these structures in promoting violence and injustice, they can be fought through the same structures.

Involvement of workers: Marx’s idea of universal solidarity of workers and his call, “Workers of the world, unite”, were highly visible in the protests where workers transcended their national and geographical boundaries to fight the

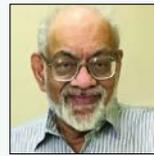


Pic courtesy: morocoworldnews.com

forces that fuelled the genocide. The pressure on the governments was heightened by the involvement of workers in the protests. In Italy, the transport workers blocked buses and trains; schools and universities were closed as students and teachers went on strikes. Similar protests were held in Spain by workers’ unions and students’ organizations. In Greece, 5 major unions of dock workers protested and refused to participate in the transportation of military equipment to Israel. The workers demanded their governments to take a firm stand for the Palestinians at the international level. Initiatives were taken to boycott Israel from sports and cultural events. These protests played a big role in forcing their governments to change their policies.

Transcending boundaries to fight injustice: This event must serve as an inspiration to all of humanity to understand that injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. We must continue to use this approach to fight the injustices happening across the globe such as religious or ethnic violence, caste oppression, gender-based discrimination, neo-colonialism, and the oppression of minorities. This approach is practical, effective and provides scope even for individuals to participate in fighting for local and global causes without resorting to violence. We need to transcend our national, ethnic or religious boundaries in fighting injustice. “United we stand, divided we fall”. ❖

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Agere Contra: A Pedagogy for Freedom

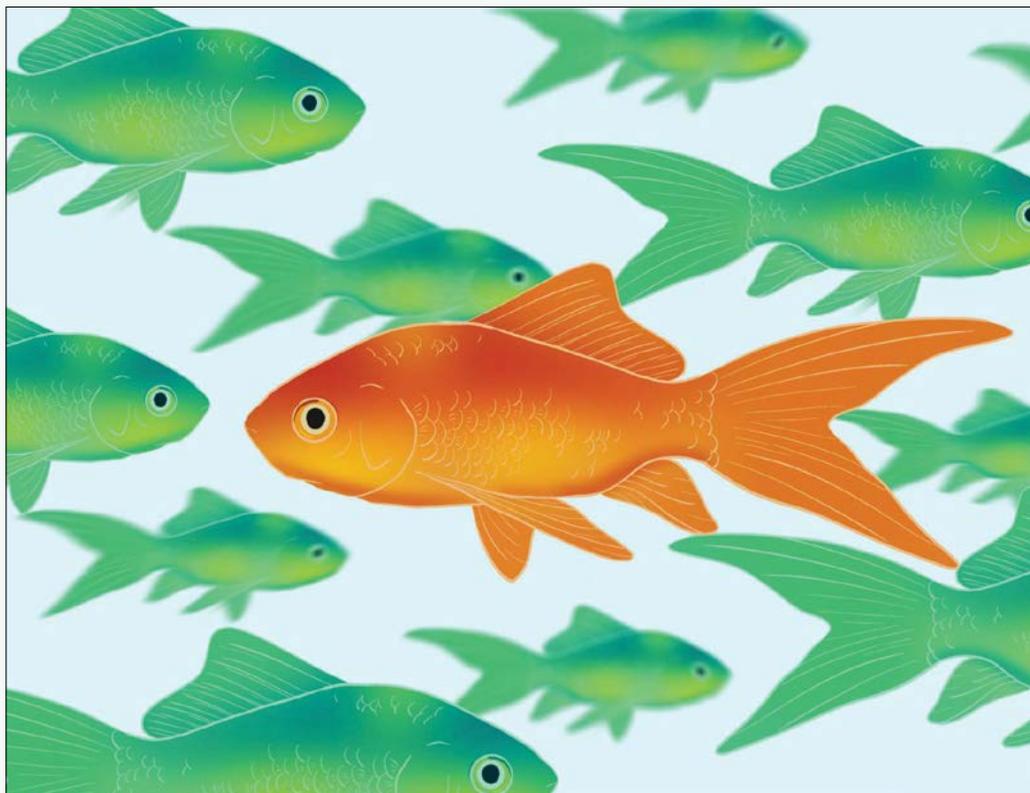
In Ignatian spirituality, the concept of *agere contra* – Latin for ‘to act against’—is frequently misunderstood as a mere exercise in stoic willpower or a crude psychological reversal. At a superficial level, it appears to be a simple instruction to do the opposite of what one feels: if one is lazy, one should work; if one is stingy, one should give. However, within the context of the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius of Loyola intended *agere contra* to be a sophisticated tool for achieving ‘holy indifference’ and radical spiritual freedom. It is not merely a method of self-correction, but a dynamic, offensive strategy designed to liberate the human person from ‘disordered attachments’ that hinder a full response to the divine.

Agere Contra is less about ‘acting against’ and more about ‘acting beyond’ – beyond fear-driven patterns, beyond narrow self-protection, and beyond the illusion that freedom lies in getting what we most immediately want, so as to become fully available for God’s invitations.

Agere contra is primarily rooted in the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, specifically within the rules for the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises. Ignatius recognized that human desires are often fragmented. We are frequently ‘owned’ by habits, fears, and ego-driven compulsions that we mistake for our true identity. When we follow a natural inclination that leads us away from God – a state Ignatius calls ‘desolation’ we are not exercising freedom, but succumbing to a form of spiritual inertia. *Agere contra* is the intentional application of force to break that pull. It is the ‘counter-attack’ of the soul.

For example, if a one finds oneself shortening one’s prayer time because it feels dry or boring, Ignatius suggests not just finishing the allotted time, but extending it. These extra minutes are not a punishment; it is a declaration of independence from one’s own changing moods, proving that the commitment to God is more foundational than the fleeting desire for comfort.

Beyond its tactical use in prayer, *agere contra* serves as a profound instrument of self-knowledge. Ignatius was a precursor to modern psychology in his



Pic courtesy: thedartmouth.com

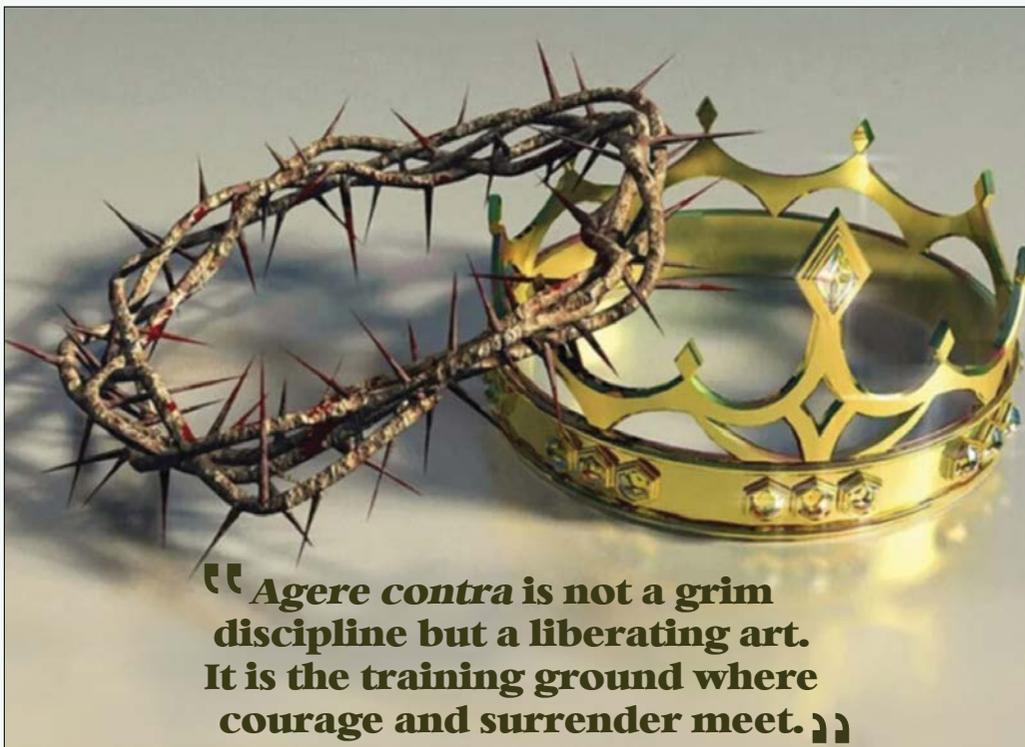
understanding that our resistances often point to our most significant areas of unfreedom. By acting against a specific resistance, we flush the hidden motivation out into the open. In this sense, *agere contra* is a diagnostic tool. It strips away the rationalizations we use to protect our comfort zones, revealing the ‘disordered attachments’ that tether us.

Agere Contra extends into relationships and social ethics. It challenges reflexive patterns of prejudice, resentment, or indifference by inviting intentional acts of empathy. When one feels instinctive coldness toward another, the habitual response may be avoidance. To practice *Agere Contra* in such moments is to initiate genuine conversation or to perform a hidden act of service. Such actions open possibilities for reconciliation that passive tolerance cannot achieve.

This practice is also inextricably linked to the Ignatian concept of the Magis – the ‘more’. The goal of

Inspiration

After his injury at the Siege of Pamplona, Ignatius’ leg had healed poorly. To correct it, he voluntarily had his bones rebroken and a bone spur removed, even though the procedure was painful and dangerous. Acting against bodily comfort, vanity, fear of suffering – choosing pain so that he might be freed from what limited him physically and spiritually.



“*Agere contra* is not a grim discipline but a liberating art. It is the training ground where courage and surrender meet.”

the spiritual life is not merely the avoidance of sin, but the pursuit of the greater service of God. *Agere contra* provides the propulsion needed to move beyond the status quo. It is the refusal to settle for a ‘good’ life when a ‘better’ life is possible. This shift transforms the practice from a negative ‘no’ to the self into a resounding ‘yes’ to a larger calling.

Importantly, *agere contra* is deeply Christocentric. It is modeled on the Kenosis, or self-emptying, of Christ. In the ‘Meditation on the Two Standards’ in the Exercises, Ignatius contrasts the strategy of the enemy—which leads from a desire for riches to honours and finally to pride – with the strategy of Christ. Christ moves in the opposite direction: from

poverty to insults and finally to humility. *Agere contra* is the practical way a follower of Christ chooses the ‘Standard of the King.’ It is an imitation of Christ’s own ‘acting against’ the temptations of the desert and the agony of Gethsemane. By choosing the path that is less comfortable but more virtuous, one participates in the Paschal Mystery, allowing a smaller, ego-centric self to die so that a larger, Spirit-led self can be resurrected.

In sum, *agere contra* is not a grim discipline but a liberating art. It is the training ground where courage and surrender

meet, where the soul learns to resist not for resistance’s sake but for the sake of freedom. Each act against disordered desire becomes a rehearsal for deeper trust, a small kenosis that prepares the heart for greater love. Far from being a rigid contrariness, *agere contra* is a paradoxical affirmation: by saying ‘no’ to the lesser, we say ‘yes’ to the greater. It is the rhythm of resurrection embedded in daily choices, a spiritual muscle that strengthens with practice, enabling us to live not as captives of impulse but as companions of Christ in the adventure of the Magis. ❖

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.



Back home

Abhinav Desai looked at the tent that happened to be his home. The irony was his tent happened to be under a flyover in Houston! He couldn't but think of the palatial mansion his father had built in Baroda back in India.

The amazing network of flyovers and interchanges in Houston in the State of Texas in the U.S. is a sight to behold. Anyone who navigates the multiple lanes of the city will be impressed by the skyline of some of the tallest buildings in Texas. But under one of the flyovers lies a different world. The infamous 'tent city' housed the houseless. The homeless 'lived' in the tent city. What- what but

cruel fate can explain his living in a tent in a city like Houston!

He had left India against his father's advice in order to chase 'the American dream'. Always a clever student, he had imbibed a lot of life skills from the Jesuits. An MBA from St Francis Institute of Management, he was not in a mood to accept even highly attractive job offers from companies in India. Because of the Hollywood movies he had watched when he was a student, he was convinced that he would not be happy in any other country.



Picture courtesy: cisbooks.org

The startup company in Houston that offered him a job folded after seven months. He had never imagined that he would have to apply for jobs once again, just eight months after he landed in his dreamland. And in those eight months so much had changed. A lot of Americans had suddenly begun to look at immigrants as criminals. During the job interviews, looking at his brown skin and the status of his visa, they shook their heads and said, "Sorry."

As he sat in the tent, reminiscing over his life, it dawned on him.

He dwelt deeper into his memories and felt a strong sadness he had never allowed himself to feel before. For the first time, he saw how stubborn he had been. His mind went back to Baroda; the wide, sunlit corridors of the mansion his father had built after years of hard work. Abhinav remembered running up and down the marble stairs as a child, dreaming of a successful future. He had been given everything: good education, comfort, love, and freedom. Yet he believed he deserved more. He believed the world owed him greatness, and America was the place to start his life.

He knew he couldn't easily forgive himself for the pain he had caused his family. He had left India against his father's direct plea, throwing away security for a dream that had become a nightmare.

He picked up his phone, looked at his father's number on the screen. His finger went toward the call button, but a strong feeling of shame stopped him. What could he tell his father? How could he admit he had lost everything? He switched off his phone and went to sleep.

The next morning was Sunday. He walked to the church nearby, hoping to find some peace, and sat quietly on the last bench. When the Priest began reading the Gospel, it was the story of the Prodigal Son. As the priest read the story, Abhinav felt as if every word was meant for him.

Tears ran down his cheeks like a stream he couldn't stop. He could not control himself and felt something break inside him. Maybe it was his pride.

After Mass, he returned to his tent. He held his phone tightly and finally pressed the call button. "Hello..." His voice trembled. He couldn't say anything else. Silence followed. Then a soft, emotional voice said, "Abhi? Is it you?" Abhinav broke down. "Papa... I lost everything. I'm homeless. I didn't listen to you. I hurt you. I thought I knew everything...I am so sorry."

Abhinav expected his father would angrily scold him. But all that his father said was, "Don't worry, son. Come back home. You can start again." For the first time in years, Abhinav felt a warmth that no job or country had ever given him - the warmth of being accepted. From that day, he changed.

He took any small job he could find - cleaning, helping in a store, anything that paid. He saved every dollar, lived simply, and worked with a new purpose. Months later, he had enough money for his ticket. Reaching Baroda, he saw his father waiting at the airport. The moment their eyes met, Abhinav felt time melt away. His father ran forward and hugged him tightly. "I'm here, son." his father whispered. "You're not alone." Those words became the foundation of Abhinav's new life.

He decided to build something from the scratch - not out of pride, but out of gratitude. With his experience, he started a small startup in India. It focused on affordable digital solutions for local businesses. Slowly, it grew. People trusted his sincerity and hard work. Profits increased. Branches opened in other cities.

One morning, he received an email from an American company proposing a partnership, inviting him to open a branch in Houston, the very city where he once lived in a tent. Abhinav smiled. He didn't move back. He didn't need to. Life had taught him where home truly was. But through his company, he fulfilled the dream he once chased blindly. He opened a U.S. branch - not as a desperate immigrant, but as a successful Indian businessman.

Standing beside his father at the inauguration of his newest office, Abhinav realized something: 'the American Dream' did not save him. His father's love did. ❖

Sch Arundeeep Kujur, SJ (JAM) is a second-year student of Philosophy at Satya Nilayam, Chennai.



Challenging the Lakshman-rekhas

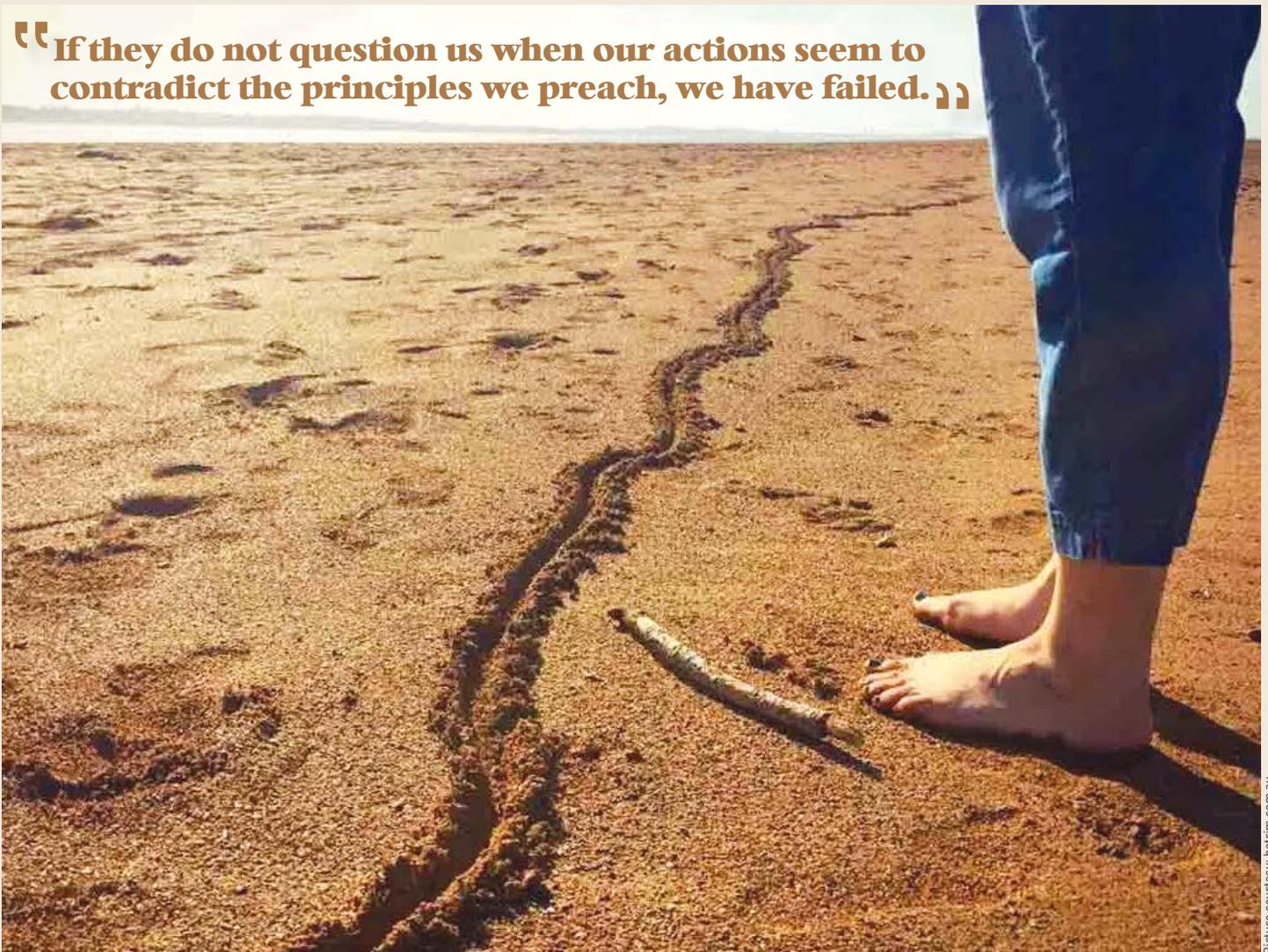
The story of Sita and the Lakshman-rekha in the Ramayana is familiar to most of us in India. The kernel of the tale is that Sita transgresses the line traced in the earth by her brother-in-law, and catastrophe follows – abduction, war, disgrace....

The Lakshman-rekha has come to be synonymous with a strict convention or a rule, never to be broken. The consequences of breaching this boundary, of transgressing beyond its limits, are always serious. Never mind that Sita was using her own initiative, her own judgement. Never mind that she was making a choice based on compassion, as well as on the age-

old injunction of hospitality. She had transgressed. Sub-text: women must stay within the charmed circle – the space that has been assigned to them by patriarchal forces.

This story holds particular relevance for us as religious, for us as educators and formators. For many religious congregations in India, our way of incarnating our charism, of being true to the founding vision, has been through education – both formal and non-formal. For decades, in some cases for centuries, our educational institutions have been centres of excellence, much sought-after by every

“If they do not question us when our actions seem to contradict the principles we preach, we have failed.”



Picture courtesy: betrim.com.au

level of society. Today, of course, that excellence is challenged at multiple levels: the market forces that have made education a 'big business', the social pressures that demand conformity with consumerist and elitist values, the control imposed by government and political parties, to name just a few.

Survival itself is often at risk. And I am sure that many among us struggle to continue to offer students the elements of high-quality education against all these odds. For our education to continue to be perceived as offering something of value, we need to continue to educate to excellence in terms of knowledge and skills. BUT, and it is a big but, that cannot be all. In today's context, the challenge is to equip both students and those in formation with the ability to think clearly and rationally, to analyse, to probe the root causes, to strive to understand persons, systems, their own context, and to take nothing for granted.

Nothing. Not 'received wisdom', not 'official' standpoints, not the rhetoric of 'hallowed tradition', not behavioural patterns so deep-rooted that they have become instinctive. And nowhere is the network of unwritten rules, codes of conduct and acceptable behaviour more insidious, more deeply rooted in our collective psyche than in relation to our beliefs and assumptions around women.

Of course, there have been huge strides in this area. Women's movements have brought issues to the forefront, highlighted injustice, fought for dignity, respect, equality at every level. But the struggle still continues and will continue until there is a fundamental shift in the way we, men and women alike, look at women.

For empowerment does not flow only from skills and knowledge – there has to be an attitudinal shift as well, impelling us to look at the world around with analytical and critical gaze. That can recognize the gap between the world as it is and the world as it could/

should be. That can seek out the root causes of the injustices that cry out for redressal. That asks why and why not and will not be silenced. As the world has moved through the 70s, the 80s, the 90s and into the 21st century, this aspect of education has become ever more important: the challenge of inviting and encouraging young minds to dare to think differently and choose according to their own convictions, while, at the same time, helping them find their own

foundational beliefs which will form the bedrock from which they will function. This is vital, in every sphere of life, especially in our attitudes to women.

This attitude is one that must be nurtured not just among our students, but among those in formation with us as well. If they do not question us when our actions seem to contradict the principles we preach, we have failed. If they do not challenge our lack of authenticity in the choices we make, the decisions we act upon, what is the use of all that we profess?

And if we do not challenge ourselves, at such moments, if we retreat into outraged reaction, how do we dare to profess the values of the Kingdom?

The students in our schools and colleges, and the young men and women in formation, come to us in trust. Only by encouraging them to think, to analyse, to subject their assumptions to rigorous questioning, can we hope to move a little closer to the very real transformation we seek. And only by modelling these skills and attitudes for them ourselves, can we hope to move a little closer to the justice, love and peace that we – Church, country, world – so desperately need. The Lakshman-rekhas that trammel us in our quest for true liberation still surround us. Can we step over them? ❖

Sr Ananda Amritmahal, RSCJ, was formerly principal of Sophia College for Women, Mumbai. She is currently in Rome, serving as a member of the General Council of her congregation, the Society of the Sacred Heart.

“ The challenge is to equip both students and those in formation with the ability to think clearly and rationally, to analyse, to probe the root causes, to strive to understand persons, systems, their own context, and to take nothing for granted. ”



Can the religious be prophets?

Title: *Consecrated Life Ablaze after the Prophets*

Author: A. Paul Dominic, SJ

Publisher: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand

Pages: 235

Price: ₹ 300.00

What inspired you to write this book?

Apart from the ego, the inspiration to write the book was simply being a Jesuit with a desire to understand the depths of consecrated life, and to share it with like-minded souls. The book follows two of my previous books on consecrated life.

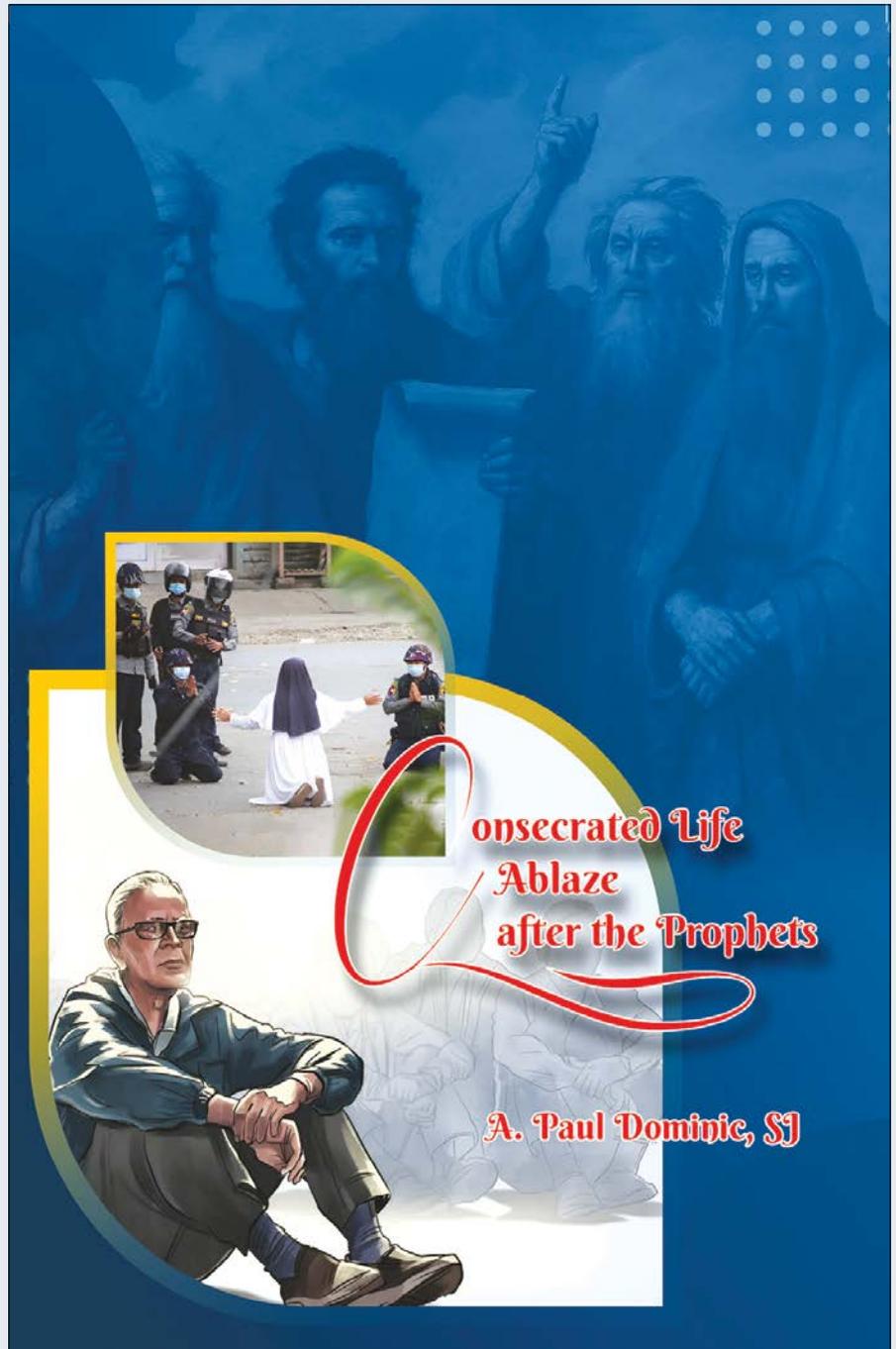
What does the book offer to the readers?

Aloysius Michael, Ph.D. says in the blurb that the book offers a narrative of consecrated life in the light of the Hebrew prophets that is comforting; but “when you get lulled into complacency, it throws a curveball that wakes you up.” It also “presents the virtues of institutions and the skeletons within.”

Who are likely to benefit from the book?

Anyone seeking a well-informed and inspiring source for nourishment based on the prophetic literature of the Bible. Anyone admiring the courage of the woman and man on the cover of the book may well discover its source and its historical precedents. ❖

After a stint of lectureship till 1980, Paul Dominic, SJ, (AND) has been engaged in writing and retreat work, mostly based in Satyodayam Retreat House, Secunderabad. He has written about nighttime dreams and conducts retreats based on them.



JesuiTech dreams of a ‘Skill University’

The JesuiTech South Asia Conference 2026, held at St Aloysius ITI, Mangaluru, on 4-5 January 2026, brought together Jesuit educators and leaders to chart a new course for technical education in India. Inaugurated by Fr Stanislaus D’Souza, POSA, the gathering highlighted the urgent need to reimagine skilling as a ministry of reconciliation and justice, especially for marginalized communities such as Dalits, Adivasis, and migrants. This vision aims to create opportunities that empower these communities through accessible, transformative education.

Key priorities: The conference, hosted by St Aloysius ITI, Mangaluru, identified several key priorities to guide the future of technical education. Digital literacy and local problem-solving skills are essential to equip rural youth with the foundational tools needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Entrepreneurship and the dignity of labour were emphasised as crucial elements to foster self-reliance and respect for all forms of work. Integrating Industry 4.0 technologies such as AI, IoT, drones, and VR/AR into training programs was recognised as vital for preparing our students for the future job market.



The move towards flexible skill academies, offering modular and short-term programs, reflects a shift away from rigid course structures to more adaptable learning pathways. Additionally, promoting gender equity and inclusion remains a central focus to ensure that women and disadvantaged groups have expanded access to technical education.

Challenges & Opportunities: Participants acknowledged the significant challenges facing technical education, including declining enrolment, limited infrastructure, and scarce resources. Despite these obstacles, the conference celebrated notable



successes such as effective entrepreneurship training, strong placement records, and the dedication of committed staff. Emphasis was placed on leveraging CSR funding, alumni partnerships, and collaborations with NGOs as sustainable pathways to support and grow technical education initiatives.

New Directions: Looking forward, the conference outlined new directions to strengthen and expand JesuiTech’s impact. The establishment of a skill university and second-chance programs aims to provide flexible learning opportunities for diverse learners. The ‘earn while you learn’ model was highlighted as a promising approach to combine education with income support, making learning more accessible. Partnerships with community colleges, exemplified by successful models like ICRDCE, are seen as key to scaling impact nationally. The vision of building JesuiTech into a national network or “One Umbrella” body is intended to unify resources, enhance placements, and foster collaboration across provinces.

Looking Ahead: The most significant outcome of the conference was the formation of a Core Committee tasked with establishing JesuiTech as an apex coordinating body. This committee will oversee efforts to expand course offerings, including new Electric Vehicle programs, increase placement opportunities, and organize quarterly zonal online conferences to maintain momentum and engagement. With this renewed vision and strategic planning, JesuiTech is poised to empower India’s youth with skills that are relevant, inclusive, and future-ready, ensuring that technical education serves as a powerful tool for social justice and economic development. ❖

I Joe Victor, SJ (DAN)



The Redemptive Power of Art

Film: *Caesar Must Die* (*Cesare deve morire*) (2012)

Director: Vittorio and Paolo Taviani

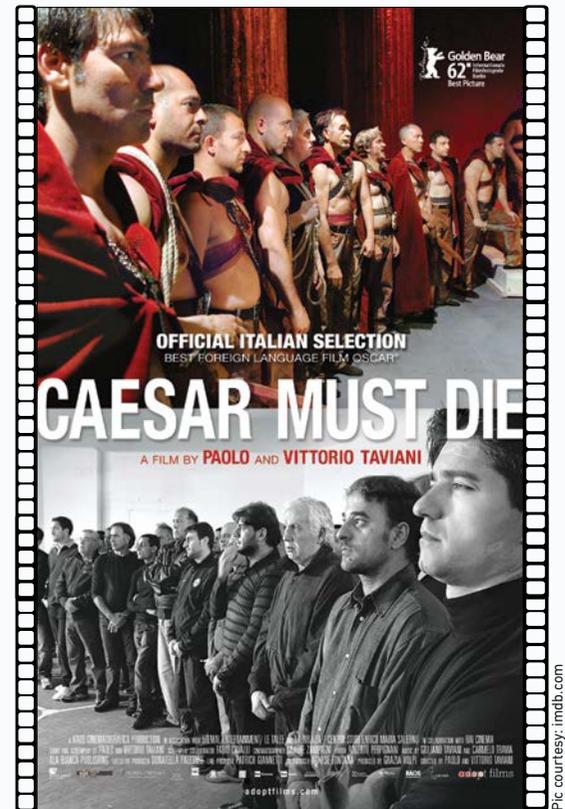
Run time: 76 minutes

This Italian docudrama blends cinema and theatre with captivating cinematography. It contrasts with the harsh settings of Rome's Rebibbia maximum-security prison, highlighting the power of art to transform lives, using real prisoners who play themselves, rehearsing to stage William Shakespeare's celebrated tragedy, *Julius Caesar*. It provides an insightful exploration of the transformative power of theatre as art.

The narration is non-linear, shifting between colour and black and white sequences that serve to highlight the themes. The film closes in on a group of convicts as they prepare to stage the celebrated Shakespearean tragedy, set in ancient Rome, a drama of politics, power, ambition, betrayal and loyalty, moral choices, and the contrast between public and private lives. As the rehearsal progresses we get to know the prisoners' inner lives. We see how the boundary between reality and fiction are blurred as it highlights the prisoners' struggles with their own identities and the consequences of their actions. The redemptive power of art is brought out through the convict-actors who find solace and meaning in their performances.

The themes of power, betrayal, and freedom in the Shakespearean tragedy draw parallels with the prisoners' lives. By using real inmates, the film adds a layer of authenticity, making the emotions and struggles of the characters feel raw and genuine. It thus provides insight into the manner in which art connects with real life not only those of the spectators but in a deeper way with the performer. Cinema-theatre distinction is also important. We are watching a cinema but we are looking at actors preparing for a dramatic performance of a world classic by William Shakespeare. As the names of the actors are displayed on screen we are also informed of the crimes for which they have been convicted. There are murderers, thieves and mafia gangsters among them.

The opening sequence focuses on the climactic of the tragedy in Act V where the hero Brutus, defeated by Augustus at the battle of Philippi, pleads with his companions to kill him. These scenes bring to focus the freedom of the confined space of a stage and the claustrophobic confinement of a real prison where the actors have to spend the rest of their lives. It brings to focus the role of theatrical performance – the role of art. The final performance of Julius Caesar is shown in full before a live audience of other



inmates, their families, and various dignitaries. The audience is captivated by the performance – a moving testament to the power of art to transform lives and to bring people together.

Salvatore Striano, who plays the hero Brutus, displays his self awareness saying, “Since I discovered art, this cell has become a prison,” implying that creativity has become a double-edged sword that offers escape, but underscores their confinement. ❖

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

Youth coordinators meet in Mumbai



The annual Meeting of the Jesuit Youth Ministry South Asia (JYMSA) was held over three days at Vinayalaya, Mumbai. The meeting brought together JYMSA coordinators and representatives from various provinces of South Asia. The gathering aimed to review ongoing youth ministry initiatives, reflect on emerging challenges, and chart a clear roadmap for the future with a special focus on unreached youth.

After words of welcome from Fr. Leroy, Superior of Vinayalaya, Fr. Vernard, JYMSA Secretary, introduced the purpose and dynamics of the meeting. He also announced major upcoming events: MAGIS 2026 in Jaipur and World MAGIS 2027 in South Korea. Each JYMSA Secretary presented their annual report, outlining activities, achievements, challenges, and concerns.

After discussion, the members unanimously agreed to replace the term “unorganized youth” with “unreached youth,” as it better reflects the present pastoral reality. Members strongly emphasized collaboration with NGOs, parish groups, social welfare organizations, and social service centers to effectively reach unreached youth. The growing influence of Jesus Youth groups was discussed, with members recognizing their vibrancy and suggesting that collective and creative approaches are needed to engage the youth more meaningfully. Ms. Jincy from Bombay Youth, encouraged the promotion of MDH (Magis Digital Home) at the provincial level to enhance

youth participation and connectivity.

The second day began with the Eucharist presided over by Fr. Franklin (CEN). Mr. Raimond Pinto, spoke on youth ministry pathways. He emphasized transforming events into meaningful journeys, encouraging a shift from participation to apostleship, and moving from evaluation to concrete action. His input was followed

by group discussions on future directions in youth ministry.

The third day began with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Vernard Antony, and offered for the repose of the soul of Fr. Lima Kustas, former JYMSA Coordinator of Goa Province. The participants expressed hope, joy, inspiration, and a renewed commitment to move from event management toward forming youth leaders and apostles. The idea of uniting youth under the common identity of “Magis Youth” emerged strongly. This was followed by Zonal Level sharings.

Key directives from Fr. Vernard included: Annual planning specifically focused on unreached youth - Training programs for coordinators, animators, scholastics, and youth leaders - Clear expectations that the next annual meeting will include presentations on concrete plans for unreached youth.

The three-day JYMSA annual meeting was marked by prayerful reflection, honest sharing, and collective discernment. A strong paradigm shift emerged—from organizing events to accompanying youth, from managing programs to forming apostles, and from focusing on the organized to intentionally reaching the unreached. The participants left with renewed hope, clarity, and commitment to serve the youth of South Asia more meaningfully. ❖

† Vernard Antony, SJ (DUM)



Bridging the wisdom of Jesus and psychological principles

Title: *Jeswisdom*

Author: Sanil Mayilkunnel, SJ

Publisher: Gujrat Sahitya Prakash, Anand

Pages: 128

Price: ₹ 225.00

What inspired you to write this book?

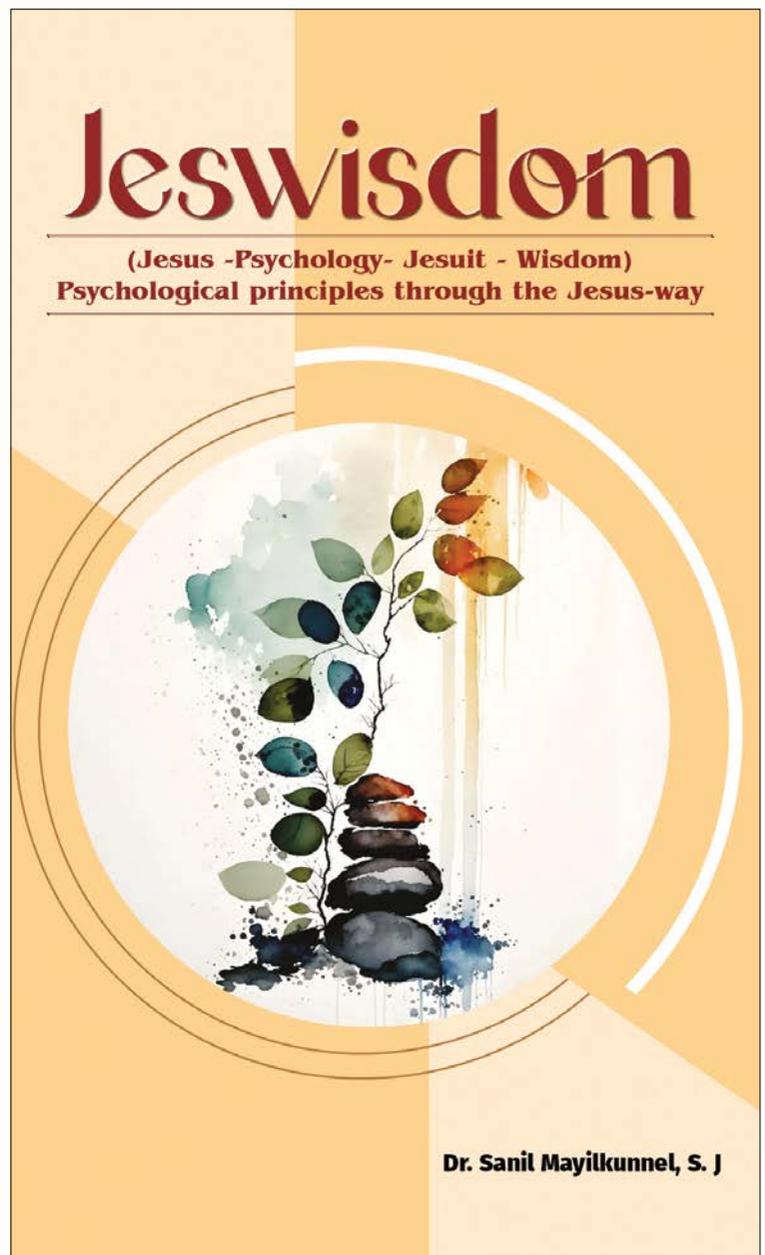
A few years into learning Psychology, I started noticing parallels from the bible and certain principles and theories or concepts in psychology. They seemed to complement very well and in many cases they seemed to convey the very same things about life and living. During my tertianship, I got a structured window and disposition to take these reflections further and with the help and guidance of mentors like Frs. M. I. Raj and Shaji Joseph OSFS, I was able to work on it.

What does the book offer to the readers?

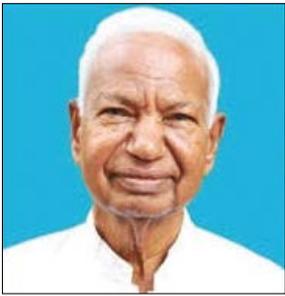
Many people tend to think that Spirituality and Psychology are like oil and water, and that they cannot be integrated. For me they can be very complementary and enriching each other. I would like to offer the readers an opportunity to wear this lens of psycho-spiritual integration. It is a perspective that I invite the readers to consider.

Who are likely to benefit from the book?

I think the book can be a great support to anyone who has an open mind of inquiry and curiosity. It can be particularly helpful for those in religious life, religious formation and secular readers who would be interested in exploring how what Jesus says in the Gospels and Psychology can reinforce each other. ❖



Sanil Mayilkunnel, SJ, (KER) is a trained clinical psychologist and is currently serving at Loyola College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Thiruvananthapuram.



Arockiam Peter, SJ (MDU)

Br. Arockiam Peter, fondly called 'Peter Ayya' by all, was born on 22 August 1932 in Sirunayakanpatty, near Dindigul. He received the spark of vocation from the Jesuits working at St. Mary's, Dindigul and entered the Novitiate at the mature age of 24. After a brief period of formation, Br. Peter's apostolic life began at St. Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirappalli (1960–1964), where he was in charge of the farm and the dairy. He had the rare privilege of serving at Loyola College, Chennai for nearly 45 years, taking up many responsibilities. Br. Peter served also as Deputy Director of Xavier Hostel, Palayamkottai (2014–2019). He assisted in food management at Thozhamai Illam for one year, before spending his final years in prayerful rest at Beschi Illam, Dindigul. He entered the eternal abode on 5 January 2026 at the ripe age of 93.

In his homily at the funeral Mass, held on 6 January 2026, Fr. Leolin Arockiadass dwelt on three signature qualities of Br. Peter - a man filled with deep piety, a man burning with zeal for service and a man doing his daily chores without looking for applause or fame. Fr. Patric Ravichandiran, Superior, Beschi Illam said that true to the Jesuit spirit of learning until death, Br. Peter, continued to deepen his knowledge of English until his last hospitalization on 23 December '25. Br. Peter, a man of deep silence and grace, will remain a living testimony to the Jesuit ideal of finding God in all things.

A. Leolin Arockiadass, SJ



Ignatius Sebastian, SJ (MDU)

Fr. Ignatius was born on the feast of St. Ignatius, 31 July 1935, in Mattiyarendal, in Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu. His two younger sisters, like him, embraced religious life. He entered the Society on 31 May 1957, was ordained a priest on 15 March 1970 and he pronounced his Final Vows on 15 August 1979. He went for his reward on 17 January 2026.

He served the Society and the youth with distinction as Headmaster at St. Joseph's, Tiruchi, Carmel, Nagercoil, St. Xavier's, Tuticorin, and St. Mary's, Dindigul. He was a capable Superior, and Formator, at LTI, Madurai, Veeramamunivar Illam, Vilangudi, Xaveriana, Tuticorin, and Beschi Illam, Dindigul. He resolved complex issues with calm discernment, patient listening, and steady courage. Blessed with the rare grace of combining firmness with kindness, and clarity with compassion, he was an able administrator and a natural

peacemaker. A significant portion of his life was devoted to early formation, where his contribution was both profound and enduring. He guided and shaped numerous aspirants to the Society of Jesus with fatherly care, wise firmness, and patient accompaniment. He possessed the extraordinary gift of understanding a person deeply within a few encounters and offering timely guidance. His

Life-long dedication to nurturing vocations remains one of his greatest gifts to the Society. Fr. Ignatius remained a man of remarkable discipline, simplicity, and sincerity.

May the Lord, whom he served with such fidelity, grant him the reward promised to His faithful servants!

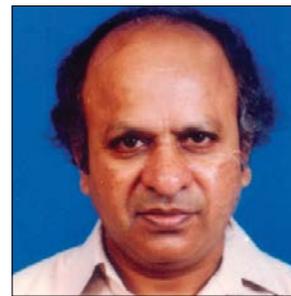
S. P. Savarimuthu, SJ & Anbarasu Maria Raj, SJ

M. Joseph Ignatius, SJ (MDU)

Fr. M. Joseph Ignatius, SJ (MDU), fondly known as 'I.M.', passed away peacefully on 31 December 2025, the final day of the year. Born on 27 October 1941, he entered the Novitiate on 29 May 1961 and was ordained a priest on 20 April 1975. He made his final vows on 02 February 1981.

After a year as the Parish Priest of Mamallapuram, he served as the Socius to the Novice Master for two years, Spiritual Director to Theologians at Arul Kadal, Chennai for about 18 years, Superior and Treasurer of Dhyana Ashram, Chennai for 7 years and Assistant Director of CIS, Dindigul for 13 years and Treasurer of Beschi Illam, Dindigul for 2 years. His focus was on directing retreats, spiritual direction, counseling and guidance, not only to Jesuits but also many nuns and priests.

Fr. I. M. was shifted from CIS to Arrupe Bhavan in 2023 after he suffered a fall that confined him to a wheelchair. Taken to St. Joseph's hospital on 23 December '25, he suffered a massive cardiac arrest and breathed his last at 12.20 p.m. on 31 December. On 1 January '26, a large number of priests, nuns and relatives from various places poured in to pay homage. The funeral Mass on 2 January was presided over by the Provincials of Madurai and Chennai Provinces. All those who spoke at the funeral Mass praised his soft spoken and unassuming nature, his utter selflessness, his counselling and guidance skills, and his selfless service rendered to the Society and the Church.



| F.X. Dominic Royce, SJ

Joseph Njarakulam, SJ (PAT)

Born on 14 January 1940 in Kerala, Fr. Joseph Njarakulam entered the Society on 01 July 1960. Fr. Joe spent many years as spiritual director at XTTI, Patna, De Nobili College, Pune and St. Joseph's Seminary, Allahabad. He was an excellent formator. He was able to combine compassion with fraternal discipline which brought a qualitative difference in the formees.

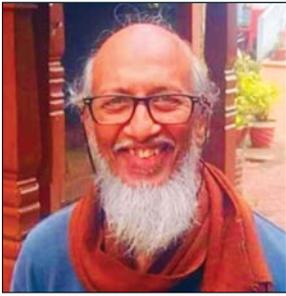
As a formator and spiritual guide, he has touched and directed the lives of many. A very cheerful and humorous person, he was very kind, loving, compassionate, integrated, joyful and generous. The Sisters who made retreats under his direction or those who chose him as their spiritual director share how he believed in them and enhanced their faith and trust in the Lord.

In 2015, he was admitted in Nazareth Hospital in Allahabad after a heart attack. The angiogram revealed 22 blocks in his arteries, but Fr. Joe was not very much worried about them. He said, "Well, I have lived with them so far. As long as the Lord wants, I will live. Let them be there." Such faith in the Lord and his positive attitude kept him going.

Today he is not with us in person. But he will live on in our memories. I pray that the good Lord, whom he faithfully served, may give him eternal reward and take him into the company of his elect.



| Jose Thayil, SJ



Ovid Pereira, SJ (PUN)

Ovid Pereira was born on 28 January 1960, in Chembur, where he attended the Redemptorist school. His elder brother, Joseph, recounts: “We played together, laughed together – memories that remain very close to my heart. Ovid showed a gentle and thoughtful nature that stayed with him throughout his life. Ovid’s vocation revealed itself early and he felt called when he was just seventeen. With faith and courage beyond his years, he joined the Jesuits and devoted his life to service with love.”

Shevgaon, and Georai. He carried out every assignment with meticulous attention to minute details, and came across as a simple, jovial, caring person. He was also a deeply attentive listener – calm, patient and compassionate. As principal, he worked tirelessly to uplift disadvantaged communities and believed strongly in the power of education to transform lives. As a pastor, he looked after his parish community with great care. He was a good preacher both in English and Marathi.

St. Paul’s words: “I have fought the good fight....” (2 Tim. 4:7) capture beautifully Ovid’s life of faith, service and love. May God grant Fr. Ovid Pereira his heavenly reward for his life of humility and dedicated service!

| Joseph Gaikwad, SJ



Ovid entered Sadhanalaya Nashik Novitiate on 20 June 1981. He was ordained a priest on 9 May 1993, and pronounced his Final Vows on 15 August 2005. Ovid served as a teacher, principal, pastor, counsellor, in several of our Jesuit communities in Pune, Kolhapur, Panchgani, Sangamner,



Thomas Kunnunkal, SJ (DEL)

Fr. Thomas Kunnunkal, S.J., priest, educator, and national figure in Indian education, passed away on 28 January 2026 at Jivodaya Hospital, Delhi, at the age of ninety-nine. His life was marked by long years of service to the Church, the Society of Jesus, and the nation, particularly in the field of education.

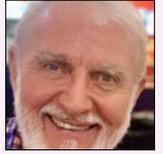
founding Chairperson. The institution, now known as the National Institute of Open Schooling, has grown into the world’s largest open schooling system, reflecting his commitment to inclusive education. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1974 and later recognized as an Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning.

He served as Region Superior of Delhi, Animator of Education in several dioceses, and Superior of the Indian Social Institute, Delhi. From 2010 to 2024, he lived at St. Xavier’s, Delhi, engaged in writing articles and a book, *The Role of Teachers in National Regeneration*. From 2025 until his death, his ministry was prayer. Fr. Thomas Kunnunkal will be remembered for his lifelong dedication to education, service, and faith. May he rest in peace!

| Soosai Mani, SJ



Born on 3 July 1926 in Alappuzha, Kerala, he entered the Society on 20 June 1945, made his first vows on 20 June 1947, and was ordained a priest in 1958. As Principal of St. Xavier’s School, Delhi, he influenced generations of students by emphasizing academic formation, discipline, integrity, and social responsibility. In 1980, he was appointed Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), where he contributed to strengthening the Board as a national institution. In 1989, under the National Policy on Education, 1986, he played a key role in establishing the National Open School and served as its



When ‘my way’ destroys ‘our way’

Once knew a young priest-program-director whose enthusiasm was legendary. He was dynamic, brilliant, and overflowing with ideas. He could envision solutions before others even understood the problems. His parish programs were innovative, his leadership charismatic. People were drawn to his energy, his certainty, his ability to make things happen. But beneath this impressive exterior lay a fatal flaw: he was convinced that his way - his ideas, his methods, his solutions – was superior to everyone else’s. His style of leadership was destroying every relationship he touched.

It was March, and the Festival of Colours – Holi – was approaching. This is when Indians celebrate the triumph of good over evil and the arrival of spring. It is a festive time when people sing, dance and play with colours. He would delegate responsibilities to capable community members, appointing them to committees, assigning them projects, publicly praising their involvement. They would accept with genuine enthusiasm, grateful to contribute their gifts. But within days, he would begin micro-managing. ‘Have you considered doing it this way?’ ‘I think my approach might work better.’ ‘Let me just show you how I would handle this.’ And finally, he would usurp the task for himself, while his volunteers stood by, diminished and dismissed.

The tragedy was that he destroyed trust, crushed initiative, and communicated a devastating message: ‘You’re not good enough. Your gifts don’t matter. Only my way works.’ What this priest didn’t understand was that this aspect of his personality was driving people away.

When conflicts arise among community members, I ask: ‘How do you handle disagreements about something important?’ The responses reveal everything. Some say, ‘We rarely disagree – we are so alike!’ Others say, ‘We discuss it until we find the right solution.’ But whose definition of ‘right’ prevails? People who enjoy healthy relationships say, ‘We are learning of multiple good ways to do most things. Our relationship matters more than being right.’

The priest-program-director’s attachment to possessing correctness created an impossible burden. Volunteers stopped volunteering. Committee members resigned. Creative ideas dried up because people learned that suggesting alternatives to his plans meant criticism, rejection, being overruled. His parish became efficient but soulless - a one-man operation dressed up as community.



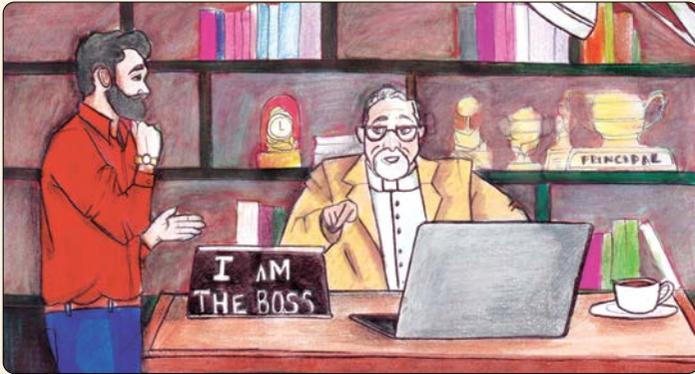
Pic courtesy: holidfestival.org

Years later, I tried speaking with younger priests who reminded me of him - of myself at that age. ‘You have extraordinary gifts,’ I’d say carefully, remembering my own journey. ‘But are you letting others discover theirs?’ Their puzzled faces mirrored what I once felt. They couldn’t yet see what took me years to learn: attachment to my excellence prevents others from finding theirs.

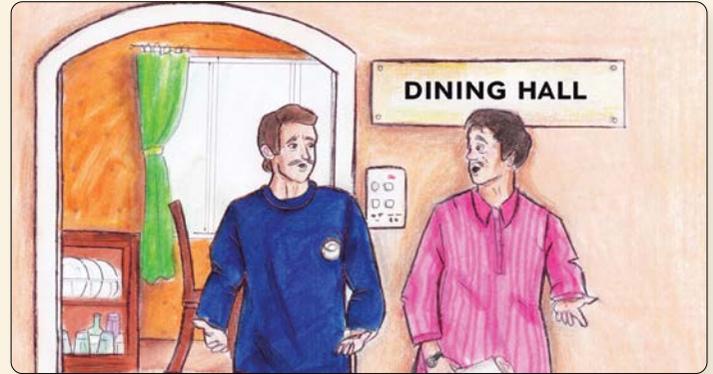
If there are individuals in a community who claim to possess correctness, they will claim their way is superior, their needs always take precedence, their time and space are always more important. If the superior or animator of the community is such an individual, it will be a benevolent dictatorship rather than a genuine partnership. The question isn’t whether you have strong opinions and methods. The question is: Can you hold your preferences lightly enough that there is room for the other’s different approach? Can you trust that their way might work even if it is not your way? Can you bear the vulnerability of not always being right, not always being in control?

The priest-program-director retired eventually, puzzled that his programs hadn’t created vibrant communities. He couldn’t see community is built by many people’s imperfect contributions - that it is a place where all feel honoured and welcomed. Yes, we can be talented and enthusiastic, but we need to remember to release controlling, insisting on “my way.” It is “our way,” which may be messy, negotiated, imperfect, colourful – that often creates something richer than solo performance does. ❖

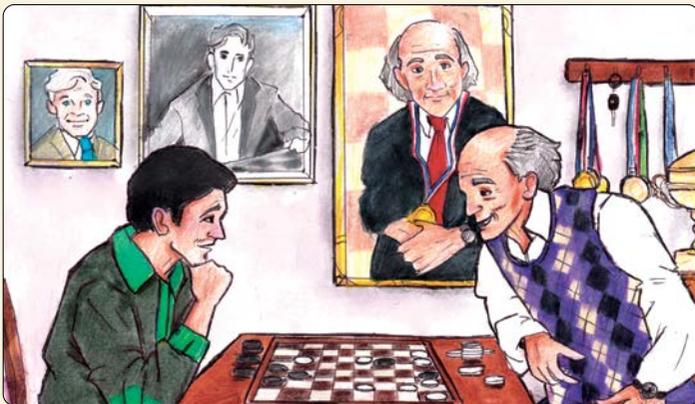
Rev. Dr. Meath Conlan is a Counsellor and Adult Educator. An Australian, he travels frequently to India. He can be contacted at meathconlan@icloud.com.



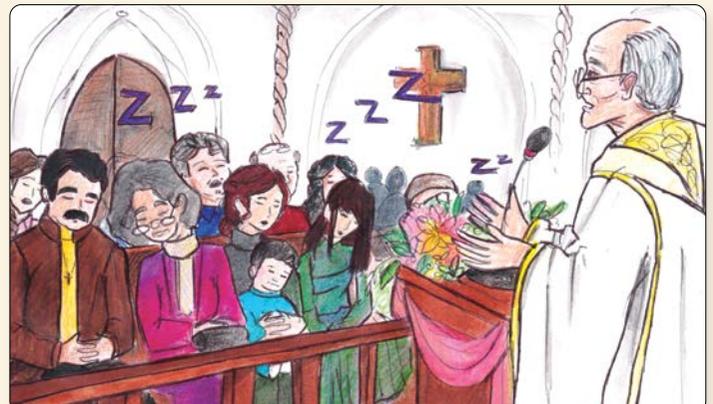
Jesuit Headmaster: "These days I noticed that there is a lack of respect for me among the staff. So, I made this sign, 'I am the boss'".



"You were so quiet. Have you taken a vow of silence?"
 "No. Our new community member is a compulsive talker, and he can talk on any topic under the sun and above. So, I prefer to be silent in the dining hall."



"Father, I knew that I would lose to you. But tell me, what are the mistakes that I made?"
 "Your only mistake is that you played against ME."



"I can see that you parishioners want to be creative. A study has found that good sleep is essential to creativity."

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

JESUIT HUMOUR

Why would they?

When I (K.P. Joseph, SJ) was a Scholastic, an eminent Jesuit told me that even while bathing all alone in our rooms we can't be naked. "You should wear a towel or underwear while bathing," he said. I asked him why. He replied, "We are a spectacle to the angels!"

I tried to joke, "Why would angels look at us while we bathe? Why can't they observe modesty of eyes?"

My joke was not appreciated!





Happiness is good for your health



A critical mass of research has provided what might be the most basic and irrefutable argument in favor of happiness: Happiness and good health go hand-in-hand. Happiness and health may indeed be a virtuous circle.

Happiness protects your heart: Love and happiness may not actually originate in the heart, but they are good for it. A 2005 paper found that happiness predicts lower heart rate and blood pressure. Research has also uncovered a link between happiness and another measure of heart health: heart rate variability.

Happiness strengthens your immune system: Do you know a grumpy person who always seems to be getting sick? That may be no coincidence: Research is now finding a link between happiness and a stronger immune system. A study that aimed to investigate why happier people might be less susceptible to sickness, found that those who were high in positive emotions were nearly twice as likely to have a high antibody response to a vaccine - a sign of a robust immune system.

Happiness combats stress: Stress is not only upsetting on a psychological level but also triggers

biological changes in our hormones and blood pressure. Happiness seems to temper these effects, or at least help us recover more quickly. In a study the happiest participants had 23 percent lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol than the least happy.

Happy people have fewer aches and pains: Unhappiness can be painful—literally. A 2005 study suggests that positive emotion also mitigates pain in the context of disease. Women with arthritis and chronic pain rated themselves weekly on positive emotions like interest, enthusiasm, and inspiration for about three months. Over the course of the study, those with higher ratings overall were less likely to experience increases in pain.

Happiness combats disease and disability: In a 2008 study of nearly 10,000 Australians, participants who reported being happy and satisfied with life most or all of the time were about 1.5 times less likely to have long-term health conditions like chronic pain and serious vision problems two years later. Another study suggested that happiness and optimism may protect people from serious diseases.

Happiness lengthens our lives: In the end, the ultimate health indicator might be longevity - and here, especially, happiness comes into play. In perhaps the most famous study of happiness and longevity, the life expectancy of Catholic nuns was linked to the amount of positive emotion they expressed in an autobiographical essay they wrote upon entering their convent decades earlier, typically in their 20s. Researchers combed through these writing samples for expressions of feelings like amusement, contentment, gratitude, and love. In the end, the happiest-seeming nuns lived a whopping 7-10 years longer than the least happy.

Overall satisfaction with one's life - another major indicator of happiness - is also linked to longevity. So it seems safe to conclude that a happier you will be healthier, too. ❖

Courtesy: (excerpts from an article in) Greater Good Magazine

WELL SAID

"Your body hears everything your mind says."

- Naomi Judd



Pic courtesy: iPhimg.com