

May-June, 2026

# JIVAN

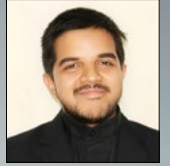
NEWS AND VIEWS OF JESUITS IN INDIA



## How can we cope with transfers?

| Making His Heart Our Home  
| Five lessons in one year

| New: Listen to Young Religious!  
| New: Cartoon Reflections



# I stayed... and saw

I did not choose social work because I was brave,  
I came with fear in my heart and questions in my mind.  
Poverty, pain, and broken stories scared me,  
Stories no words could ever repair.  
But the field work did not ask me to fix lives,  
It only asked me to stay.  
So, I stayed.  
I stayed and saw silence speaking louder than cries,  
Hunger hiding behind faint smiles,  
Houses standing on tin and tired hope.  
I saw a mother eating last so her child could eat,  
A worker going to work with a smile  
Despite the weight of each day.  
And slowly I understood:  
My call is not to lead, not to order or instruct.  
It is just to walk beside them.

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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.

## South Zone educators strengthen their capacities

The Enhancement Programme for School Jesuits (EPSJ) for South Zone educators was held from April 25–29, 2026, at Prerana, Bangalore, with the aim of strengthening the personal, professional, and spiritual capacities of Jesuit educators in alignment with the core values of Jesuit education. The programme brought together 30 Jesuit educators from the five Provinces of Southern India, creating a rich platform for fraternity, collaboration, and shared learning.

The workshop was carefully designed under the supervision of the PCSEs of the Southern Zones and was locally organized by Fr. Rohan D’Almeida. The presence of Fr. John Kennedy (MDU), Conference Secretary for School Education, greatly enriched the programme. He emphasized the importance of integrating the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in Jesuit institutions.

Fr. Rohan facilitated a reflective colloquium session, inviting participants to engage with thought-provoking questions. This fostered a sense of shared hope as educators from diverse backgrounds expressed similar concerns and aspirations.

The second day focused on safeguarding policies, including POCSO and POSH, and the creation of safe institutional environments. Fr. John Kennedy presented practical case studies to illustrate their relevance and application. The third day centered on leadership, when Mr. Anand Nayak, a Jesuit alumnus and noted corporate leader, stressed the importance of building a high-trust culture. Ms. Sreeja M.S., a noted journalist, gave a practical and engaging

session on crisis communication. She shared real-life school crisis scenarios and emphasized the need for Jesuits to be proactive and vigilant.

The fourth day of the workshop included visits to St Joseph’s Boys High School and St Joseph University. An interactive session by Mrs. Geetha Prabhu from St Joseph’s Indian High School on bookkeeping, along



with an insightful talk on the expectations from a lay collaborator by Mr. Clement D’Souza from St Joseph University, made the day enriching and meaningful.

The final day of the workshop featured sessions on care of the mission and discernment and decision-making by Fr. Jossie D’Mello. The workshop concluded with an inspiring address on six challenges and opportunities by Fr. Dionysius Vaz, Provincial of the Karnataka Jesuit Province. An evaluation of the workshop, followed by a way-forward session led by Fr. Rohan D’Almeida, provided a fitting conclusion to the programme. ❖

**IS.M. John Kennedy, SJ (MDU)**



## WHAT DO YOU SAY?

STANY D'SOUZA, SJ  
President, JCSA

### Regular examen of our life-mission

Summers have invariably been hot. And, this year, the mercury is skyrocketing to unbearable levels as a consequence of dreadful climate changes. Yet, amidst these torrid times, the Conference Houses of Formation, Conference Apostolic Works and Secretariats busied themselves transacting their 'Father's Business' at the annual review meeting at DNC, Pune.

Usually, annual reviews evaluate activities undertaken, challenges faced, opportunities explored, successes enjoyed and failures suffered. However, the Jesuit review does not only aim at evaluating activities. Rather, it is an examen of our life-mission from God's perspective. Moreover, it is also an evaluation of men and ministries from the prism of mission, reconciliation and justice.

This time, the RR process and the negative ethnicity operational in the Conference directed the review process. If the former injected energy into us to forge ahead, the latter made us aware of the lethal virus ailing us.

The RR process is introduced in the Conference to rediscover and redefine the Society of Jesus in South Asia. Indeed, the RR process is not new to the Society; but it is its corporate core. The transformed Ignatius and the nascent Society re-imagined every step, every moment, and left us a lasting legacy. The RR process is primarily a spiritual enterprise, a journey replete with faith. It is a mission-centric enterprise, which helps us to dovetail our life and works with the mission of the Universal Society. It is a launching-pad to build a sturdier Society by making it apostolically, culturally and structurally effective.

The RR process also opened our eyes to a lurking virus: negative ethnicity. This not only blurred our vision and hampered our mission, but also bred prejudice, suspicion, division and disputes by fostering narrow loyalties. Therefore, the review meeting was not merely administrative in nature; rather, it was spiritual, reflective and visionary. It revealed to us the core of our identity and mission in all our undertakings. Hence, as curtains fell, everyone felt a union of minds-and-hearts — all refreshingly different, with diverse ministries, inflamed by enthusiasm to return to the metaphorical 'Jerusalem' as was the case of the two disciples, Emmaus-bound.

We live amidst mindboggling changes. Social, cultural, economic and InfoTech shifts not only reshape our lives but also create storms within and around us. Hence, we must undertake regular examen of our life-mission so that we become more resilient, relevant and resourceful in our life-mission. What do you say?



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

M.A. JOE ANTONY, SJ  
Editor

### Can we make them more humane?

I remember a Jesuit who, till the end, refused to forgive people who he thought were responsible for transferring him. The transfer was from the place where he served creditably for many years to a place where old and sick Jesuits are usually sent.

Some time or other in their lives, all priests and religious would have had to contend with transfers they internally rebelled against. The cover story in this issue (*See p. 7-9*) sheds light on how we can cope with them. Says Mukti Clarence, SJ in the cover story: "Sometimes, we land in places where the work no longer inspires us, the environment doesn't energize us, and we find ourselves emotionally fatigued, because we feel disconnected, unneeded, or misplaced...The work may seem mechanical, the people distant, and the apostolate feels like something we are enduring rather than engaging."

While Mukti Clarence tries to help individual Jesuits who have to deal with transfers, are there things which people who give the transfer orders can do to make them more humane and doable? If people in 'the world' become senior citizens when they reach the age of 60, for priests and religious this can be 70. You don't have to be a doctor in order to understand how age affects us physically and mentally. It makes it difficult to move. Therefore, should we forcibly move people who find it difficult to move and make life harder for them? Is it fair to give them sleepless nights at an age when they already find it difficult to sleep? Isn't it better to let them spend their sunset years where they want to?

As for those who are not yet 70, a dialogue always helps. The dialogue may end amicably, with the religious agreeing to move. This, I presume, is routinely done among Jesuits everywhere. But there are Congregations that do not do this even today. They relish giving a nasty surprise to the religious. Superiors, instead of resorting to pious phrases, should be open to discuss this with genuine empathy and *cura personalis*, don't you think?

There is another interesting idea we could all discuss in our communities. Jeevan Gomes, SJ, based on what he saw in many communities in provinces in Central India, proposes that our refectories should have round tables — instead of the usual rectangular or square tables. Read his 'Forum' article (*See p. 23,24*) to see why he says this "can become a powerful symbol of equality, fraternity, and communion."

## First National Conference of JSSSA

The first-ever National Conference of the Jesuit Social Scientists of South Asia (JSSSA) was held at Satyodayam, Secunderabad, from 31 Jan to 1 Feb '26. The theme of the National Conference was “Democracy and Governance in India: A Vision for Inclusive Development”, which was derived from the Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA) annual report 2025, titled “Promises and Realities: Citizen Review of Year 1 of NDA III Government 2024-25”.

The JSSSA National Conference began on 31 Jan with a Mass celebrated by Fr. P.R. John, the new Provincial of Andhra Province. The inaugural session of the JSSSA National Conference began with a welcome address by the JSSSA Forum coordinator, Lancy Lobo, who emphasised that Jesuit social scientists ought to hold a mirror to society and attempt to be organic and public intellectuals, critiquing the state, market and civil society. In his keynote address, Prof. Afroz Alam, Head of Department of Political Science at Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, spoke about three layers of democracy: viz., right to choose, right to question, and the right to receive.



An important milestone in the journey of JSSSA was the release of the book, *Luminous Footprints: The Impact of Christians on India*, by Lancy Lobo and Denzil Fernandes. Introducing the book, Denzil Fernandes pointed out that it was the outcome of deliberations at earlier zonal meetings, where it was decided to publish a book on the contributions of Christians to nation-building in India by a secular publisher, such as Routledge. The book was released by the Chief Guest of the inaugural session, Dr Afroz Alam, and Fr. P.R. John. ❖

| Lancy Lobo, SJ (GUJ)

## Jesuit artists meet in Kolkata

The annual meeting of the South Asian Jesuit Artists' Forum (SAJAF) was held at Kalahrdaya – the Universal Home of Art and Culture - Kolkata, on 30 Jan – 02 Feb '26. The participants were eleven Jesuits and one Claretian priest engaged in various artistic ministries across South Asia. The meeting offered a shared space for prayer and reflection, artistic exchange and serious discernment on the vocation and mission of Jesuit artists.

Fr. Stany D'Souza, SJ (POSA), affirmed the importance of Jesuit artists in the mission of the Society



of Jesus. Sessions on the Ignatian Vision of Art, Scripture and Art, Art and Culture today, Modern Trends in Literature and Film and the Role of the Jesuit Artist in the Church helped us reflect critically on the purpose of our creative artistic engagement and its apostolic relevance.

The Jesuit artists experienced a strong spirit of belonging and mutual encouragement, strengthened by meaningful personal sharing and rich, artistic, theological and cultural inputs. The Forum reaffirmed art as an integral part of Jesuit mission and invited the Jesuit artists to shape meaningful and context-rooted creative artistic expressions. The artists spoke of their commitment to strengthen SAJAF through collaboration, documentation, public engagement and future gatherings. Kalahrdaya provided an inspiring environment and warm hospitality. The SAJAF is looking for more Jesuit Artists to join and enrich the Forum. ❖

| R.S. Pradeep, SJ (KAR)



# How can we cope with transfers?

April, May, and June are the months of transfers, which are part of Jesuit (religious) life. We are often asked to move to a new ministry, a different community, or an unfamiliar region. These moves, while rooted in our vow of obedience, can carry with them silent burdens.

**Disconnected, misplaced:** Sometimes, we land in places where the work no longer inspires us, the environment doesn't energize us, and we find ourselves emotionally fatigued not because we are unwilling, but because we feel disconnected, unneeded, or misplaced. At times, it even feels as though we are there not because we are missioned, but because there were no other options. The work may seem mechanical, the people distant, and the apostolate feels like something we are enduring rather than engaging. We wake up feeling tired before the day has begun. Deep down, some may even feel as if this appointment is a form of punishment, a quiet exile from roles where we once felt alive and purposeful.

**Not joyful, but resigned:** In such moments, our psychological and spiritual health quietly begins to suffer. We may still show up externally, but

internally we feel flat, uninspired, or invisible. We don't feel fit for the place and sometimes wonder if the place was ever meant for us. Slowly, we withdraw. Our enthusiasm fades, our affectivity shrinks, and we begin to avoid people, responsibilities, or even prayer. We scroll through our phones more than we engage with our surroundings. The silence inside us looks hollow. Without any joy or enthusiasm, we may remain resigned.

**How do we cope?:** And this raises a crucial spiritual and human question: 'How do I live meaningfully in a place I did not choose and do not enjoy?' We do not want to live bitter or withdrawn lives in the Society. We are called to be contemplatives in action, to seek God even in disorientation and dryness. One helpful and hope-filled response is what psychologists call 'crafting' - a way of proactively reshaping how we relate to our work, our relationships, our thinking, and our prayer.

In Ignatian terms, it is an expression of interior freedom: a way of cooperating with grace to find life in what feels lifeless. Crafting does not deny pain or disappointment, but it offers a way forward, one small choice at a time.



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**Crafting our Prayer:** Perhaps the deepest form of crafting is prayer. In those nights of self-doubt and weariness, when words fail and the soul feels dry, prayer is what we need. We may not have answers. But in silence, we often find presence and that is enough. Saint Oscar Romero said, “We are prophets of a future not our own... We are not the master builder, but the worker.” In prayer, I am reminded: I am not the messiah. I am not the solution. I am simply loved. And that allows me to surrender.

When I feel like cracked earth, prayer becomes the quiet rain. It does not flood me with answers, but it slowly softens the hardness of my heart. Like the monsoon brings grass to the barren land, prayer brings unexpected hope to our soul. Spirituality becomes our refuge not by solving every problem, but by grounding us in the One who walks with us. And in that grounding, we become, in the words of Pope Francis, “pilgrims of hope in dry lands.”

**Crafting Our Ministry:** In new or unfamiliar missions, Jesuits often feel underprepared or disconnected. Crafting our ministry begins by taking intentional steps to learn and upskill whether it is acquiring local language, understanding new subject matter, learning liturgical customs, or adapting to digital platforms in education. From St. Ignatius learning Latin with schoolboys to missionaries from abroad learning local languages well into midlife, we follow a long Jesuit tradition of humble, practical learning in service of mission.

Ministry crafting also means reimagining our approach bringing creativity, depth, and personal charism into existing structures. A teacher might design value-based retreats; a parish priest might integrate ecological themes into liturgy. Like the teacher in the Hindi film, *Taare Zameen Par* who adapts methods to bring out a child’s unique gift, we too are invited to be imaginative and compassionate in our apostolates.

As Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, SJ said, “Depth of thought and imagination is a precious gift for mission.” Ministry becomes more meaningful when we commit to growing, learning, and serving with greater interior freedom.

**Crafting Our Relationships:** Relationships are at the heart of Jesuit life. As companions of Jesus and one another, we draw much of our joy and resilience from the quality of the relationships we nurture with community members, collaborators, and those we serve. When we feel seen, heard, and

connected, our affectivity finds balance and mission becomes more life-giving. Crafting relationships means choosing to be present - joining meals, prayers, recreation, and making time for informal encounters. It also involves reaching beyond our roles: visiting homes, spending time with staff and students, and engaging with people instead of withdrawing into emails or mobile phones. Moments of candid sharing, appreciative dialogue, or simply being available often become powerful sources of healing and trust.

Both superiors and individual Jesuits must take initiative. While leadership can foster openness and accompaniment, we too are called to step out of our comfort zones, express care, and build bridges. As GC 36 reminds us, our communities must be “places of consolation and joy.” That happens not by accident but by the deliberate choice to relate, listen, and invest emotionally in the people God places around us.

**Crafting Our Perspective:** Sometimes the external reality cannot be changed. But the way we think about it can. This is cognitive crafting reframing the significance of our work. We may think: This role is minor...No one notices what I do. But is that true? I am reminded of a scene in the Hindi movie *Munna Bhai M.B.B.S.*, where the hospital janitor is told, “You keep this place clean. Without you, the hospital cannot function.” That one sentence changes how he sees his job. He was no longer a cleaner he was a contributor to healing.



Pic courtesy: in.pinterest.com

We need this same insight: No work in the Society is small. Whether I am preaching retreats or managing finances, working with street children or teaching grammar, my contribution matters. If I can see how my task builds the Kingdom even invisibly it gains depth. As St. Paul says, “Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as if for the Lord and not for others.”

**A Grace Greater than the Struggle:**

To craft our ministry, relationships, thinking, and prayer is not a coping strategy; it is a spiritual exercise, a form of discernment-in-action. It is how we remain men of hope even when we are in ‘dry lands’, where joy is not spontaneous and success not guaranteed. As GC 36 reminds us, Jesuits are called to ‘discern in difficult contexts, find God in all things, and accompany the vulnerable.’ At times, the vulnerable one we are asked to accompany... is ourselves.

We don’t need to be flawless. We don’t need to always feel on fire. But we can remain faithful. And in doing so, we bear witness not only to the Gospel but to the quiet resilience of the Jesuit vocation. So, if you find yourself now in a place that challenges or drains you, don’t run from it. Craft your life within it. Relearn, reconnect, reframe, and surrender. For the God who called us still walks with us. And in time, even dry lands will bloom. ❖

*Mukti Clarence, SJ (JAM) has a Ph.D in Psychology and currently serves at XLRI, Jamshedpur.*



## When I woke up, she was already gone

Having been ill, the boy had come quietly to receive medicines from the Sisters who travel through the forest villages with their mobile medical team. I accompanied them that day. I noticed the boy sitting silently, waiting. He spoke no word. Neither did I. I sat beside him, weighed down by my own shyness, my inner resistance, my fear of crossing an invisible boundary. Later I learnt that he spoke only Hindi. Gathering courage, I tried to speak just a couple of broken sentences. That was enough. His face lit up. The silence dissolved. Slowly, a simple dialogue began, and before I knew it, we had become friends.



That same evening, my companions and I were asked to teach English to the children in the hostel. The classroom was modest, but the joy inside it was overflowing. The children spoke to me as if they had known me for years. Their laughter, their eagerness, their shining eyes filled the room with life. In those little smiling faces, I encountered God again - not hidden this time, but radiant with joy.

The following day, I was sent to live with a tribal family for two days. There was no electricity. The cold wind was sharp. The facilities were minimal. Yet, I felt completely at home. Their warmth, their simple hospitality, and their joyful conversations made up for everything that was lacking. Love filled the gaps that infrastructure could not.

The next morning, the head of the family took me along when he went for his daily work. Later, as we sat together, he began to share the reality of their

lives. With a smile that tried to appear casual, he said, "Brother, people say all Indians are brothers and sisters. But in practice, we are not even recognized. We do not have proper identity certificates. We lack basic facilities like electricity and water. I don't know what the future holds for us." Behind those words, I saw unwept tears, hidden sorrow, and a hope that is tired but refuses to die. I was shaken. I had nothing to say. I did not know what to say. Silence felt more honest than words.

That evening, after supper, a young woman returned home. She happened to be my host's cousin, who had travelled day and night after paying her examination fees. I assumed she would rest the next day. But when I woke up in the morning, she was already gone. My host told me, "She woke up at 3:30 a.m. and went for work. She needs to earn money for her return journey and other expenses." She was my age. Yet, in that moment, I felt her greatness. Her sense of responsibility, her generosity, and her strength moved me deeply. I felt inspired and at the same time, overwhelmed with compassion for the relentless struggle that shaped their lives.

All this happened during a week-long tribal immersion programme at Katukapalli in Andhra Pradesh under the Jesuit Tribal Mission. As the days passed, my way of seeing the world began to change. In spite of poverty, lack of opportunities and harsh living conditions, these people live with joy. They celebrate life as it comes, moment by moment. Their joy is not naïve; it is courageous.

Now, back in the novitiate, as I look back in prayer, I recognize God everywhere in silence and speech, in joy and sorrow, in resistance and surrender. God is hidden, yet unmistakably alive. He challenges me through those haunting questions that come from the hearts of the poor. He stirs my heart toward conversion and courage. And now and then, God asks me a piercing question: "Can you allow your life and mission to be shaped by this reality?" The answer, I know, cannot be given in words. It must be given in the way I choose to live. ❖

*B. Sanjay, NSJ is a first year novice for AND province.*



## Making His Heart Our Home



*Dilexit nos!* He loved us! The story of love, the glory of love - all began with this mystery of our faith! Love was born from all eternity in the Heart of our God, made manifest to the world through the pierced Heart of Christ on the Cross: “They shall look on Him whom they have pierced.” (Jn. 19:37) The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus thus had a long, glorious history. It was recognized as a mystical experience of the love of Christ and later developed with prayers and exercises.

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) did much to popularize this devotion. Pope Pius XII in his encyclical, *Haurietis Aquas* (1956) declared this devotion to be “the foundation on which to build the kingdom of God in the hearts of individuals, families and nations...” Can we look on this as a clarion call to us today, setting before us a global vision even in 2026 to keep building that kingdom towards the goal that our dear Pope Francis reiterated: that all people live as *Fratelli tutti* - sisters and brothers of the one loving Family of God?

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Yet, one glance at our present war-ravaged world scenario can throw us into a dungeon of despair as we cry out: Where is love? No hope at all! Who can truly help us? Is peace ever attainable now? Pope Leo XIV, in his recent *Urbi et Orbi* message on Easter Sunday ruefully described the present situation as a growing “indifference”- we are growing accustomed to violence, resigning ourselves to it ...indifferent to the deaths of thousands of people, indifferent to the repercussions of hatred and division that conflicts sow, indifferent to the economic and social consequences they produce, which we all feel...an ever- increasing “globalization of indifference”- an expression used by Pope Francis just a year ago. Little wonder that Pope Francis in his last precious encyclical, *Dilexit nos*, in art. 23, hit the nail on the head with his stark, startling question to us that we cannot ignore: Do I have a heart?

The answer to this challenging question seems to lie in an honest attempt to return to one’s heart through a process of conversion to true love, that at times may seem long, arduous, hopeless, and unnecessary, but at other times can be deeply rewarding. This inner journey to the central core of our being entails a gradual process of self-integration. It begins with exploring one’s unique treasure –house within, gifted to each person by our loving Creator.

The pastoral Constitution of Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, underlines the reality that “everyone needs a change of heart” for “the imbalances affecting the world today are in fact a symptom of a deeper imbalance rooted in the human heart.” (10) The Council urges us to return to the heart, for in doing so we can experience a deep interiority “where God, who probes the heart awaits us” (14). Our “frail and wounded hearts” need the help of God’s Love.

Pope Francis invites us to “turn to the Heart of Christ, that core of His being, which is a blazing furnace of divine and human love and the most sublime fulfilment to which humanity can aspire. There in that heart, we truly come at last to know ourselves and we learn how to love.” (art.30) This entails a regular and if

possible, daily ‘entry’ into the Heart of Jesus, that invites *all* people, irrespective of age, caste, creed, colour, gender, ethnicity, to make it their home: “Come to Me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...and you will find rest for your souls.” (Mt. 11: 28, 29) In Jesus’ pierced Heart our own wounded hearts can find healing.

A genuine union with the Heart of Christ is not simply a friendship between “Jesus and me”. It must renew our commitment to family and community. As Pope Francis reminds us “Love for the brothers and sisters of our communities is a kind of fuel that feeds our friendship with Jesus... Jesus himself said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.” (Jn.13:35) In the pierced Heart of Jesus we are urged to “make a pilgrimage” to one another’s pierced heart where we can sense a solidarity of suffering humanity that is seeking salvation.

Recently, when randomly interviewing some adults as well as youth regarding their understanding and living of the devotion to the Sacred Heart which they cherish, I was pleasantly surprised and heartened to hear their experiences of the Love of Jesus as the Source and Model of their own loving, forgiving and reaching out in acts of care and compassion to others.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart, celebrated as a solemnity annually, announces a festival of intimacy with the Divine- the Good News that our loving God is still alive in our broken world and reachable in our hearts. The Word of God has text messages of love for every person, for every season. By listening to these in deep contemplation, one can change the disturbing cacophony in one’s heart to divine symphony in one’s life. To cite a few: “I have called you my friends.” (Jn. 15:15) “I will never forget you; see I have carved you on the palm of my hand.” (Isaiah 49: 15-16) “I love you just as the Father loves me; Remain in my love.” (Jn.15:9) ❖

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*Sr. Manisha Gonsalves, rscj, belongs to the Society of the Sacred Heart. She is at St. Anthony’s parish Malwani, Malad, Mumbai, engaged in counselling and the pastoral ministry of building Small Christian Communities.*



## Five lessons in one year at Jnana Deepa

**Freedom, Finally!** : When I heard that I was being sent to Jnana Deepa (JD), Pune, for Philosophy, I was overjoyed. The seniors - my 'forefathers' - have always painted a delightful picture of Pune. They praised the intellectual atmosphere, the exposure, the independence, and the space to grow. "You will enjoy a lot of freedom," they said. "No formators coming behind you. You will grow on your own." Freedom, trust, responsibility—these words sounded almost sacred to me.

### When the Dream Met the Timetable:

But the academic programme was intense, the readings were heavy, and the assignments seemed to multiply mysteriously at night. It was true: no formator followed me. But assignments and deadlines did. Slowly, I began to understand what my "forefathers" meant. No one chased me. No one micromanaged me. Instead, I was expected to manage my time, my growth, my formation. Without discipline, freedom becomes a distraction. With discipline, it becomes growth. The dream did not collapse; it was purified.

**The Silent Spectator:** Along with academics came ministry. I had quiet expectations about where I might be sent. Yet, I wasn't given what I asked for. I was assigned to Snehasadan, and through it, we were introduced to a grassroots collective called Lokayat. Because of our academic schedule, we could not attend their weekday activities. So we joined only their weekend meetings. For three to four hours, discussions

flowed passionately in Marathi and Hindi. I understood very little. I smiled respectfully and I nodded thoughtfully. I perfected what I now call "the theological nod"—a slow, reflective movement of the head that suggests deep engagement even when comprehension is limited.

During the second week, I genuinely thought perhaps the Holy Spirit might bless me with the gift of tongues. By the third week, I entered a mild internal crisis: What am I doing here? What is God trying to show me? What unsettled me was not just the language barrier. It was the experience of not contributing. I wanted to speak in order to feel useful. Instead, I felt invisible. When we shared our frustration with our Rector, he said calmly, "You don't need to do anything grand. Just inspire them by your mere Christian Jesuit presence." I was not sure how inspiring a linguistically confused Jesuit could be.

As usual, after the Rector... to God I turned. It was only when I took these frustrating Saturdays to prayer that the scales fell from my eyes. I understood that perhaps I was sent not to speak but to see.

**A Prophetic Classroom:** So I began to observe more deeply. Lokayat was composed of journalists, professors, IT professionals, and students, ranging from fifteen-year-olds to seventy-year-old veterans. They were dedicated to "conscientizing" the public on constitutional values - justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. They resisted the creeping tide of fascism through





street plays, pamphlets, public discussions, and inter-religious celebrations.

Many of them lived together in rented apartments -three or four families sharing one flat, with another similar apartment nearby. Resources were pooled. Expenses were shared. Responsibilities were distributed. They consciously broke stereotypes. Men cooked. Men cleaned. Decisions were taken collectively. Equality was not merely proclaimed; it was practiced. Their lives challenged me more than any classroom lecture.

**Five Lessons I Learnt:** And as I look back now, this is what was revealed to me.

1. *Poverty – Freedom from Possession:* I asked them why they chose to own so little. They answered me simply: “If we accumulate too much, we become possessive, and egoistic, and slowly we forget the cause.” Their poverty was intentional. From their answer, I drew an insight: poverty is not merely about not having; it is about not being owned.

2. *Obedience: Authority as Service:* I asked them how decisions were made. They answered: “No one dominates. We listen. The cause decides.” From this, I understood: obedience is not suppression; it is alignment with something greater than oneself. As a Jesuit, I must ask: Do I obey only when obedience agrees with me - or am I ready to be shaped by the mission?

3. *Chastity – Love without Possession:* I asked some couples how they balanced family and mission. They answered that some had consciously limited their personal expansion so that their energy could serve a larger social vision. From them I drew this insight: love grows when it is not confined to possession.

4. *Collaboration and Cooperation:* I asked how they sustained their energy. They answered: “No one works alone.

We survive because we share.” From this, I realised: mission collapses when ego rises. As a Jesuit formed for companionship in mission, I must ask: Do I truly collaborate or do I subtly seek personal glory?

5. *The Desire to Learn – A Jesuit Hallmark:* I asked how they connected across so many states and cultures. They answered: “We learn each other’s languages. Respect begins there.” From this, I understood: humility is the doorway to mission. I must ask: Am I willing to learn patiently?

**A Prayerful Desire:** Having been challenged, I now pray for the grace to practice these lessons. May poverty free me! May obedience shape me! May chastity expand my love! May collaboration humble me! May the desire to learn keep me restless for growth! ❖

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**Seven ways  
by which  
you can make  
the HOLY SPIRIT  
a part  
of your  
daily life**

1. The first thing we must do is correctly understanding who this 'Holy Spirit' is. Before 'Holy Spirit' became an article of the Creed, he was a living reality in the experience of the early Church. Over the last twenty centuries too, this Divine Person has mightily influenced the key decisions that have determined the course of the Church's mission.

Pope John Paul II therefore asked the whole Church to again obtain a clearer understanding of the Person of the Holy Spirit, a "renewed appreciation of the presence and activity of the Spirit" in the whole world and especially in the Body of Christ, and a more vivid devotion to the Holy Spirit in our personal lives. In *The Lord and Giver of Life*, John Paul II taught that from

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the day of Pentecost onwards began “the new salvific self-giving of God, in the Holy Spirit ...The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father... At the same time he is the Spirit of the Son, of Jesus Christ... (nn.11, 14).

Yet, in our daily devotions, most Catholics/Jesuits hardly relate with the Holy Spirit in a personal way, as God. Maybe this is because the main symbol of the Spirit has been a “dove,” a bird. The Spirit is not a ‘holy ghost’ or ‘pretty dove! He is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. Even the translation of the name “Paraclete” as “Advocate” misses the point! Gerard Manley Hopkins explained this well in a homily: “We usually translate Paraclete as Comforter, but a Paraclete does more than comfort. The word is Greek; there is no one English word for it, Comforter, Counsellor or Advocate is not enough. A Paraclete is one who comforts, who cheers, who encourages, who persuades, who exhorts, who stirs up, who urges forward, who calls on. What the spur and word of command is to a horse, what clapping of hands is to a speaker, what a trumpet is to the soldier, that a Paraclete is to the soul: one who calls us on, one who calls us on to good...

St. Paul also explicitly taught that the Holy Spirit is God himself: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Co.3:17f). Pope Francis too tried many times to re-focus the attention of God’s people on this “neglected” Person of the Trinity, and asked every Christian to practise “a vivid devotion” to the Holy Spirit, since what the Holy Spirit did in Jesus is the model for what the Spirit wants to do in the life of every Christian.

2. Asking persistently in our personal prayers that the Spirit will fashion our own consciousness as “sons and daughters of God, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ” (Rom.8:15-17), and

make us confident of who we are as “a new creation in Christ” (2Cor.5:17). We must correct our wrong (Pentecostal) interpretation of Acts 1:8 that “power” means mainly charismatic gifts (healing, tongues, etc). The first meaning of “power” is the power to witness to a transformed life; as the fourth Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass puts it: “That we might live no longer for ourselves but for him, he sent the Spirit as his first gift, to complete his work on earth and bring us the fullness of grace” (see also 2 Cor 5:15).

3. Making determined and daily efforts to become more familiar with the texts of the whole New Testament (“My words are spirit and life” – Jn 6:63), so that the Spirit can empower us with a clear sense of our personal mission in the Church and in the world, thereby energizing us for our UAPs.
4. Becoming childlike in order to open ourselves to the Spirit’s way of equipping us with inner power to fulfill our Christian/Jesuit vocation, so that we become “conquerors” (Rom.8:37) in all difficulties and sufferings, and find ongoing true fulfillment, inner peace and joy. Such a “life in the Spirit” is possible even in today’s world.
5. Asking the Spirit to energize us to make efforts daily to fulfill Jesus’ main commandments, “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 13:13) and “Forgive one another seventy times seven.” Thus we will share in, and witness to, Jesus’ self-giving love.
6. Praying often - like John XXIII - with expectant faith, “Come Holy Spirit, renew your wonders in our day as by a new Pentecost!”
7. If we do these, we will be making sincere and happy efforts to “practise a vivid devotion” to that Holy Spirit, who comforts, who cheers, who encourages... ❖

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*Fio Mascarenhas, SJ (BOM) celebrated 50 years as a priest on 5 April 2025. A former global leader of Charismatic Renewal, he directs retreats and seminars on biblical spirituality. He can be contacted at frfiomas@gmail.com.*



# Tantum Quantum: The Gravity Field of Ignatian Spirituality

*Tantum Quantum*, a concept derived from the 'Principle and Foundation' of St. Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises, functions as the central gravitational pull of Ignatian spirituality. It anchors the soul between the lofty heights of divine purpose and the practical realities of a material world. To understand this principle is to grasp a specific 'spiritual physics': every created thing becomes a body of influence, capable of drawing us toward our ultimate end or pulling us into disordered circuit.

Literally translating to 'as much as' or 'insofar as', *Tantum Quantum* is a principle of balance, orientation, and alignment. Like gravity, it is an invisible yet subtle force guiding choices and shaping desires, allowing us to enjoy gifts without enslavement, endure trials without collapse, and remain aligned with our true centre.

Ignatius considered human desire as a powerful force, not something to be suppressed but directed. *Tantum Quantum* is the law of gravity for desire: our loves, possessions, ambitions, and even sufferings must be weighed against their capacity to draw us closer to God. If they serve that purpose, they are embraced; if they obstruct it, they are to be released. Just as gravity keeps planets in orbit, *Tantum Quantum* keeps the soul in its proper trajectory, preventing it from spinning aimlessly or collapsing inward.

The genius of this principle lies in its refusal to absolutize anything except God. Wealth, health, reputation, success, even relationships are all relativized by a singular question: do they help or hinder my deeper calling? Instead of stripping things of their worth, this perspective repositions them within a broader horizon of meaning.



Picture courtesy: gaia-insights.com

**“*Tantum Quantum* is the art of spiritual navigation, teaching us how to move through the density of the material world with a heart that remains fixed on the stars, ensuring that our earthly journey remains a steady, purposeful transit toward the Divine. ”**

A career becomes more than achievement: it becomes service. A friendship becomes more than comfort; it becomes a school of love. Even suffering, when viewed through this gravitational field, can become a teacher that removes illusions and deepens compassion.

In the Ignatian worldview, each person, event, and gift is radiating influence, tugging the soul either toward its true centre or away into distortion. The Ignatian cosmos is alive with this tension, where every encounter becomes part of the cycle of discernment. When we align ourselves with our primary purpose, we enter into a state of 'ordered' living. However, the gravity of the ego often disrupts this alignment. We tend to attach ourselves to created things, as if they were ends in themselves, creating 'disordered attachments' that exert a powerful, distorting pull on our decision-making. These attachments swallow our freedom and obscure our vision of the Creator. The *Tantum Quantum* principle serves as the corrective force, a sophisticated instrument of discernment that allows us to navigate these

gravitational forces without being crushed by them. It demands a posture of ‘indifference’ – a profound inner freedom that declares one does not prefer health over sickness, or wealth over poverty, provided the choice leads more directly to the service of God.

This gravity field is not static: it is a live, rhythmic tension between the ‘Magis’ – the ‘more’, and the *Tantum Quantum* – ‘as much as.’ While the Magis pushes us toward the greater glory of God, the *Tantum Quantum* provides the boundaries and the criteria for that pursuit. It prevents the spiritual life from becoming a frantic accumulation of ‘good works’ and instead focuses it on ‘right works’. Without this principle, one might become addicted to the tools of spirituality rather than the goal of the Spirit. The tool can become a hindrance. This is the ‘gravity’ of the theme: it exerts a constant, quiet pressure on every choice, requiring an ongoing ‘Examen’ of one’s interior state to see which way the scales are tipping.

By practicing this discernment, one develops an extraordinary spiritual agility. One who is truly indifferent in the Ignatian sense is light – not weighed down by the heavy baggage of expectations, status, or the need for specific outcomes. This lightness allows the soul to move where the Spirit blows, because its anchor is not in the shifting sands of the world, but in the stable gravity of a primary purpose.

This is the central paradox of the Ignatian theme: by submitting to the rigorous constraints of ‘as much as’ one finds the greatest possible freedom. The gravity of God’s love becomes the only force that truly matters, turning every worldly

## Inspiration

**When Ignatius returned from Jerusalem, he realized that to “help souls” effectively, he needed education. This was a humbling realization for a man already in his thirties who had lived as a soldier and pilgrim. He began studying Latin with schoolboys in Barcelona, then philosophy and theology in Alcalá, Salamanca, and Paris. He endured ridicule, poverty, and misunderstanding. Yet he persevered, not because he loved study for its own sake, but insofar as it served his mission. In the spirit of *tantum quantum*: Ignatius did not cling to status or reject learning as worldly vanity. He used it proportionately, guided by love for the greater good.**



interaction into an opportunity for ascent. This internal recalibration ensures that we do not merely react to the world, but respond to it with a liberated heart. It transforms our daily environment from a series of distractions into a sacred laboratory of the Spirit.

In sum, *Tantum Quantum* is the art of spiritual navigation, teaching us how to move through the density of the material world with a heart that remains fixed on the stars, ensuring that our earthly journey remains a steady, purposeful transit toward the Divine. ❖

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# Are We Fully Prepared to Live and Love?

## - The Emotional “Shadow” in Indian Formation

*With this article we begin a series, called ‘Listen to Young Religious!’ These are extremely relevant and revealing findings of studies done by Jesuit Scholastics or young Religious of other Congregations, who were guided and monitored by **Dinesh Braganza, SJ**, who teaches various subjects, including Human Sciences and Research at Jnana Deepa, Pune.*

As I moved through my years in the seminary, a persistent question began to haunt me. Hearing about the rising crisis of burnout, depression, and even suicide among young priests and religious in India, I started to wonder: Is our formation truly equipping us for the life we have chosen?

While our houses of formation impart excellent academic and spiritual training, my research suggests a significant “shadow” is remaining: the emotional well-being of the candidates.

To explore this, I conducted a study among 86 fellow seminarians and religious across India. The goal was to see if there was a gap between the beautiful ideals of Church documents like *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, which calls the human personality a “bridge” for Christ and our daily reality.

**The Data: A Wake-Up Call:** The results of the survey were a striking wake-up call. While 73% of respondents claim they are taught coping strategies, the qualitative data suggests these are often purely conceptual or “spiritualised” rather than psychologically integrated. We may know the theory of celibacy, but we lack the emotional vocabulary to articulate our inner experience.



Picture courtesy: in.pinterest.com

Consider these three critical findings from the data: 1. *The Preparation Gap:* Nearly 70% of those surveyed reported they have never had a formal workshop on emotional well-being, such as stress management or resilience. Consequently, 50% felt not at all prepared for the actual emotional challenges of a lifelong commitment to celibacy. 2. *The Safety*

*Gap:* Transparency is essential for growth, yet 30% of candidates reported feeling only slightly or not at all comfortable with their formators. This suggests many do not feel safe enough for honest disclosure, leading to a comfort gap where struggles are hidden rather than healed. 3. *The Support Gap:* While 57% feel they have some support, 43% reported that resources for emotional help are minimal or non-existent. This lack of professional infrastructure is particularly concerning given that 75% of respondents have

observed persistent sadness or depression among themselves or their peers.

**The Red Flag: Suicidal Ideation:** Perhaps the most urgent finding is that 32% of respondents have experienced some level of ‘suicidal ideation’ – which means they have had thoughts of suicide.



Picture courtesy: in.pinterest.com

This red flag indicates that emotional distress is not being adequately processed within our communities. When candidates struggle with anger, interpersonal conflict, and problems with forgiveness, issues that often cluster together, the current formation system often fails to help them process these emotions deeply. Instead of mature relational training, there is a silence that leaves candidates suffering in isolation.

**The Trap of Spiritual Bypassing:** Why is this happening? My research points to a psychological phenomenon called spiritual bypassing. This occurs when we use prayer, or religious zeal as a defense mechanism to avoid dealing with painful feelings or inner conflicts.

While spiritual practices are vital, they are not a substitute for emotional literacy. When a seminarian struggling with loneliness is simply told to pray harder, his human needs are bypassed. Over time, these unprocessed feelings accumulate, leading to burnout and depression we see in the Indian Church today. As the *Ratio Fundamentalis* reminds us, human formation is the foundation upon which the holiness of a priest is built; if the foundation is cracked, the entire structure is at risk.

**A Way Forward: Practical Steps for Reform:** To move from lonely survival to integrated joy, we must implement three practical changes: - *Assess Suicide Risk and Establish Safety Protocols:* Given the high incidence of suicidal ideation, houses of formation must prioritize the assessment of suicide

risk. It is essential to put clear safety protocols in place to ensure that any candidate in distress receives immediate, professional, and life-saving intervention.

- *Make Counselling Integral:* Professional support must be destigmatised and made available to all, not just for problem cases. Every formation house should have qualified counsellors who are not part of the evaluation process, ensuring a safe space for vulnerability. *Prioritise Emotional Literacy:* We must move beyond abstract ideals and teach practical skills: how to name emotions, how to manage anger, and how to set healthy relational boundaries. This requires regular workshops led by specialists, not just occasional lectures.

*Train Formators in Emotional Safety:* Our guides need the tools to recognise signs of distress, depression which later lead to thoughts of suicide and create an environment where a candidate can answer the question, ‘How are you really doing?’ with total honesty. Formation is not about surviving until ordination; it is about becoming integrated human beings. By bringing our emotions out of the shadows and into the light of both faith and psychology, we can form ministers who are not just “spiritual experts,” but resilient, joyful “bridges” who can truly lead the people of God. ❖

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# His Green Dream

The startup company in Houston that offered Abhinav Desai 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. ‘It’s high time I return to India.’ For the first time in his life, he felt a feeling of failure and a sense of remorse for not having considered his father’s advice. A strange feeling of shattered dreams engulfed him. His American dream was nothing but a foolish fantasy.

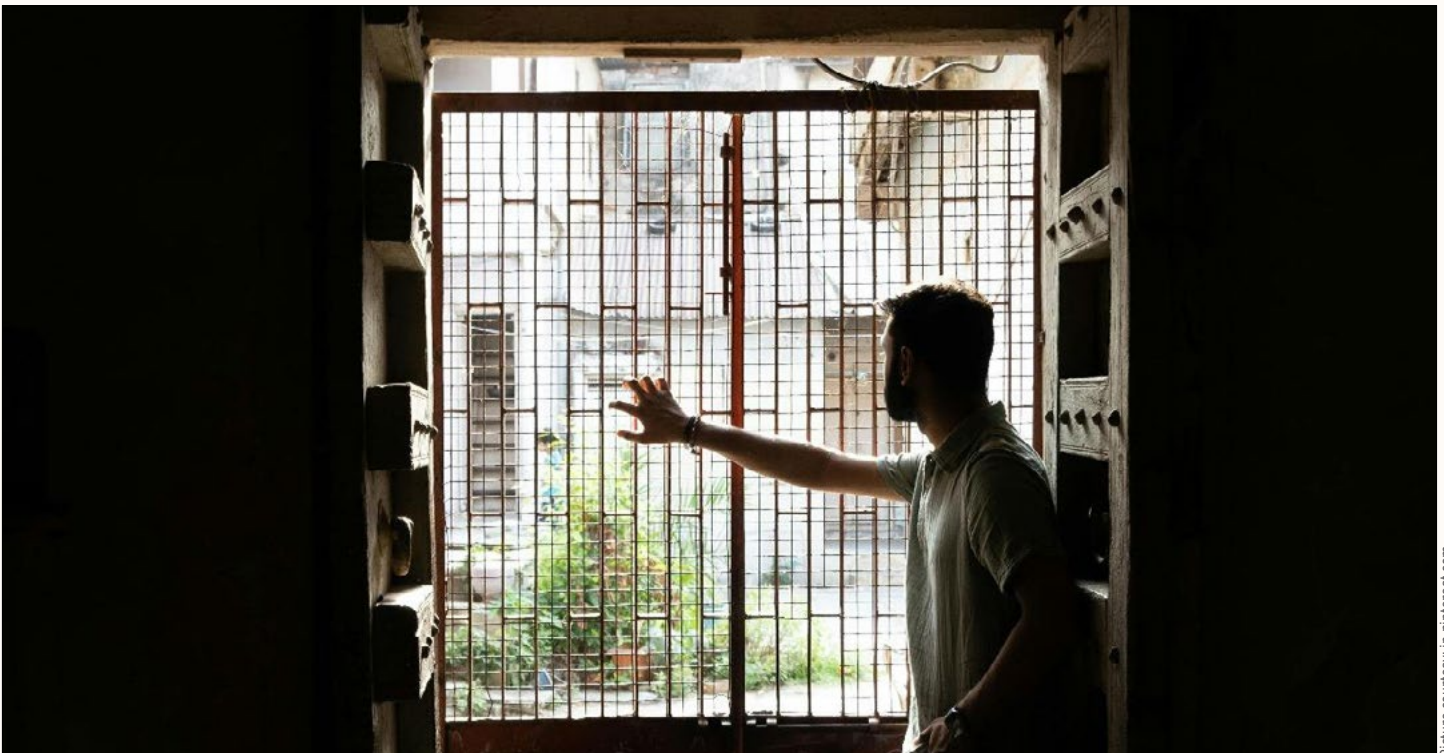
In India, Abhinav was an intelligent and sought-after student for his intelligence and creativity. During his college days, the creative ideas he came up with were appreciated and admired. He was always an outgoing person and enjoyed his life to the full. He knew every nook and corner of Baroda city and was always excited

to go out with friends to have his favourite *pav bhaji* and *vada pav* on the famous streets of Baroda.

During rainy seasons, he would love a cup of hot *chai* with *kachori* and *samosa*. He would meet his friends, and share his joys with them. He was brimming with life. But as the days elapsed, his priorities changed. A bizarre Hollywood craze began to haunt him. He thought life was more exciting on the other side of the globe. Against his father’s advice, he resolved to pursue his American dream. This is what landed him in the tent city.

With whatever means possible he decided to leave the U.S. and return to India. His father was waiting at the airport. No sooner did he see his son than he ran towards him and hugged him with great joy. He had greatly missed his son for quite some time now. Abhinav’s eyes turned moist. He was heartbroken and was speechless. His father understood him and took him back home as if nothing had happened.

Later in the evening, as they sat together, his father said, “You may have failed in the eyes of the world but you have never failed me as a son. Every failure is a



Picture courtesy: in.pinterest.com



Picture courtesy: media.icdn.com

stepping stone for success. Embrace your failure and you will see the difference”. Days passed and Abhinav slowly recovered from his distress. He was now focused on achieving something in India.

Abhinav had a great love for nature. This was visible in the way he took care of plants at home, usage of resources and his eco sensitivity. He was deeply aware of the ecological crisis that our world was facing and had read a lot about it. As a student, he had acquired a lot of skills such as creative thinking towards sustainability and advocating for a peaceful and just society from one of the Jesuits.

One fine evening, as he was walking, it occurred to him: “Why can’t I do something for ecology and its sustainability?” Looking for the needed funds, he wrote projects to venture capitalists. Very soon, one of his projects got approved. It was green consultancy services that worked on waste recycling, harnessing wind and solar energy and consumer tech and behavioural change. He named his startup company ‘Abhinav Green Dream’ and started working towards

sustainable development. Very soon, his company gained popularity and recognition.

The turning point was when the Baroda airport declared to go green and signed a contract with Abhinav Green Dream Company. The company, under the leadership of Abhinav, transformed the entire airport into an eco-friendly zone by installing solar panels, promoting waste recycling and upcycling, and implementing eco-friendly measures. Very soon, they earned national acclaim. The company was invited by NGO’s, institutions, schools, colleges, and other companies seeking their consultancy services. Abhinav went on to become one of the top Indian entrepreneurs. ‘Abhinav Green Dream’ received global recognition and fame. They networked with more than 25 countries. An article appeared in *the New York Times* hailing it as a leading eco-company in the world.

When his friends in the U.S. called him, he would ask, “Why don’t you come back to India and work for the environment?” ❖

**Sch. Arun Raj, SJ (KAR)** is a second year student of philosophy at Satya Nilayam, Chennai.



for our Jesuit community living. First, the round table symbolises the absence of hierarchy. It has no beginning and no end. The superior sits among his companions, sharing the same space and table. This is why our beloved Pope Francis ensured that Synod sessions on Synodality featured round or circular tables.

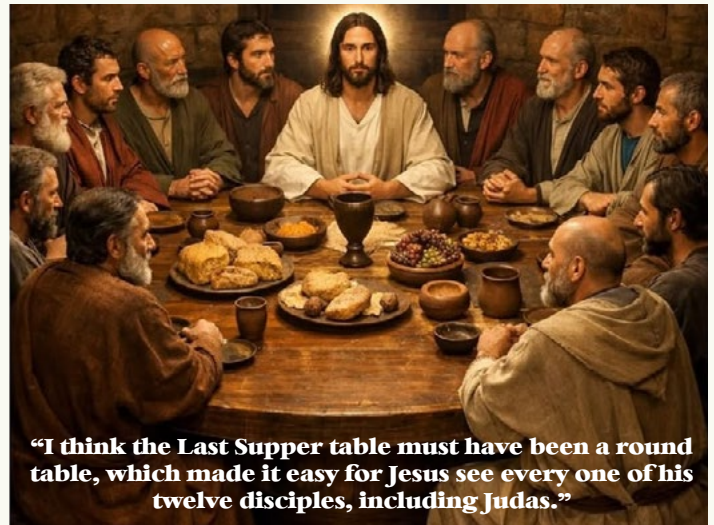
Second, it promotes equality. Since everyone faces each other, each voice can be heard. There is no one who is the head of the table - no 'higher' person dominating the table. Instead, every member is equally enabled to participate in the conversation.

Third, the round table is inclusive. It readily accommodates all. Even an unexpected guest can easily find a place, as one simply has to draw a chair and become part of the circle.

Fourth, it brings convenience. No one needs to rise repeatedly to reach the dishes. With a gentle turn of the upper circle, the food comes within reach of everyone.

For all these reasons, I find that the round table offers a quiet but profound reminder of what authentic community life should be. This reflection is not meant to criticize the rectangular tables found in many of our refectories, but rather to draw inspiration from a symbol that naturally evokes fraternity.

We all agree that it would be beautiful if our communities nurtured such cordial relationships? We need to foster a genuine sense of equality among the community members, free from distinctions of caste, language, or academic degrees. A community accommodates everyone. It is a place where every person feels accepted without conditions. The round table has no sharp edges. This may remind the members of a community that our dining tables



should be free from harsh criticism, backbiting, and gossip. This way it may promote openness, comfort, and fraternal joy. A round table makes it easy to recognize the discomfort in the faces of our brethren and address it before it becomes too late.

We don't know how the Last Supper table was designed. Leonardo da Vinci, who painted the famous 'Last Supper,' made it a rectangular table. I would imagine a round table, which made it easy for Jesus to see every one of his twelve disciples, including Judas.

A wall poster in the dining hall of the Gaya Jesuit community captures this spirit beautifully. It says, "Kindly be courageous and noble enough to correct me when I am present with you. Speaking ill about me in my absence does not help me grow. But you may praise me even if I am not present." These words echo the very spirit of the round table - an invitation to honesty, fraternity, and authentic community living. ❖

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I, Parmar Francis, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and behalf.

(signed)  
PARMAR FRANCIS



# A theologian who stressed Asia's double baptism

There are people who do not merely think theology – they live it, breathe it, carry it in the way they walk into a room and the way they sit in silence. Fr. Aloysius Pieris, SJ was such a man.

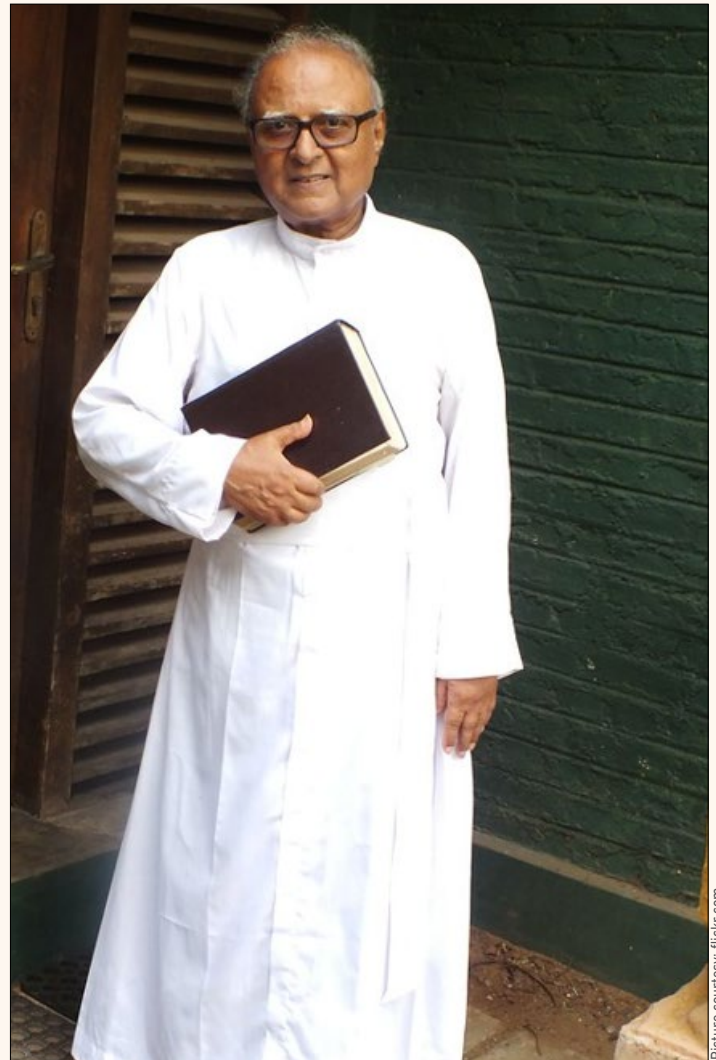
He was a Sri Lankan Jesuit priest, a theologian of rare courage, a Buddhist scholar of extraordinary depth, and the founding director of the Tulana Research Centre. But to reduce him to titles is to miss him entirely. He was, above all, a man who refused to look away – from suffering, from mystery, from the uncomfortable truth that faith demands more of us than comfort.

He was born 09 April 1934 and died on 22 March 2026 at the age of 92 just before Holy Week - as if even his final departure carried meaning, as if even in leaving he was still teaching. He was Jesuit to the marrow, not merely in institutional allegiance, but in the truest Ignatian sense: a man who found God in all things and who was willing to seek Him in the most unexpected, most uncomfortable places.

He spoke of Asia's "double baptism" - the immersion in poverty and the immersion in ancient religiosity - and when he spoke of it, you felt the weight of both. These were not academic categories to him. They were the faces of people he had sat with, prayed with, learned from. He did not want a Christianity shipped in from elsewhere, arriving in European crates with European certainties. He wanted a Christianity born in Asian soil - shaped by the long silence of a Buddhist monk at dawn, sharpened by the hunger of a child in a village no one thinks to visit.

This was not romanticism. It was a demand. He insisted gently, and persistently - with the kind of insistence that costs something - that authentic Christian witness in Asia cannot ignore either the cry of the poor or the depth of its ancient spiritual traditions without losing its very soul.

The humility he called for was not a performed humility - not the kind that announces itself. It was the quiet kind: a Church that learns before it teaches, that listens before it speaks, that kneels before it stands up.



Picture courtesy: flickr.com

He believed, with everything in him, that the poor are not the objects of mission. They are its teachers.

For those who have read him slowly - and he rewards slow reading – his pages carry a quality that is rare in theological writing. You feel he is addressing you. He wrote as though he knew you might be tired - as though he understood that you might be tempted to settle, to make peace with less, to wonder quietly whether the mission is worth its cost. And then, in his unhurried way, he reminded you: fidelity to the poor is not a footnote to the Gospel. It is the Gospel.

*Milroy Fernando, SJ (SRI) is a writer and activist.*

## How do we form ‘Mission Partners’?

The very first meet of the Jesuit South Asian Conference Coordinators for the ‘Mission Partner Formation’ (MPF) assembled at Ashirvad, Bangalore on 14-15 March ‘26. With ‘shaping the future’ as the goal of the meet, Fr Brian Pereira (KAR), the Convenor of Mission Partner Formation for South Asia, meticulously organized the entire program. The inaugural session of the meet was held at the University of St. Joseph, Bangalore, where Fr Victor Lobo, the Vice-Chancellor, extended a warm welcome. The sessions for the second day were held at Ashirvad, Bangalore. Twenty delegates from different provinces attended this meet.

Mission Partner Formation being a new program, Fr. Brian first introduced the delegates to its origin and vision, drawing from the letter of Fr. Arturo Sosa, the Superior General, documents of Vatican II, General Congregations and the De Statu report, highlighting the importance of partnering in God’ mission and formation of Jesuits and lay partners. He also shared best practices from different Jesuit conferences worldwide. Six coordinators from the provinces of Madurai, Darjeeling-Nepal, Kohima, Mumbai, Gujarat and Karnataka shared inputs on similar programs in their respective provinces, particularly in the education sector.

Fr. John Dardis, General Counsellor for Discernment and Apostolic Planning addressed the participants through an online session. Recalling the Synodality dimension of the Church, he encouraged gratitude for the graces received through partnership with the laity and called for continued sharing of vision and mission for mutual enrichment. Fr. Stanislaus D’Souza, the President of the South Asian Conference, emphasized that collaboration, partnership and networking are the buzz words in the Church-laity relationship and called upon the delegates to take greater responsibility in training the laity to fully participate in the mission of the Society of Jesus.



In the multi-religious context of India, delegates felt that the term ‘mission’ could be challenging, particularly in North and Central India. Alternative terms such as ‘partners in service,’ ‘shared vision’ and ‘ministry associates’ were discussed, though after deliberation it was felt the term was not controversial, given its use even in Hindu and government contexts. Another challenge was defining who qualifies as a ‘Mission Partner.’ The delegates concluded that only those who have undergone formation programmes and been well-formed in the Ignatian ethos could be called such, leading to an agreement to create a graded and structured formation module.

Describing the role of the province coordinator was a key focus of the two days. Tasks assigned include: overseeing, organising and implementing formation programs; establishing and maintaining databases; coordinating with various commissions; aligning collaborators with Jesuit vision and mission; facilitating brainstorming; and representing the province at zonal/conference levels. Delegates also crafted a comprehensive 5-year plan to strengthen MPF across the Conference, which includes a formation module in three stages: Initiation, Immersion and Incorporation; launching a local MPF website with resources; promoting intersectoral and inter-provincial collaboration; developing a manual/guidebook for Mission Partners; conducting Training of Trainers (TOT) programs; and holding zonal-level MPF meetings.

The next meeting is planned at the Baga Retreat House, Goa, on 12-14 February 2027. ❖

| Kelwin Monteiro, SJ (GOA)



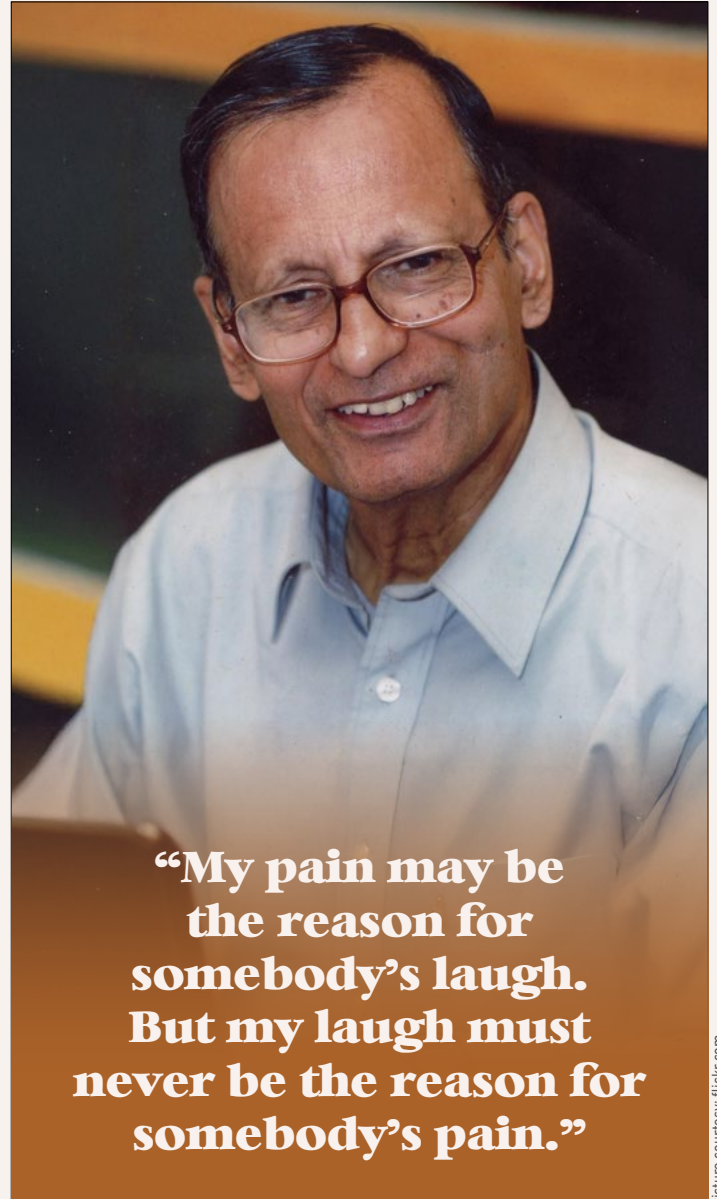
## His humour respected people

Recently, the Karnataka Jesuits Province lost one of its remarkable gems - Fr. Leo D'Souza, SJ. Known widely as a gifted botanist, he was equally admired for his compassion that supported hundreds of underprivileged students with the help of foreign contacts and well-wishers. Yet beyond his academic contributions and his help to the poor, Fr. Leo will be remembered for something profoundly simple and deeply human: his sense of humour.

For several years, in the province WhatsApp group, he was posting a joke or a light reflection under the title "Smile a While." Like many Jesuits, I used to start my day by reading his message, which always brightened my day. Sometimes I felt these were not merely casual attempts at humour, but a deliberate attempt to keep others in good humour. Some of these were taken from his own life experiences, while others were collected from various sources, which he would acknowledge with all humility. Often, Fr Leo's messages were a gentle reminder that we should keep smiling even in the midst of life's challenges and difficulties.

What made his humour distinctive was its sensitivity—it never hurt anyone and never came at the expense of others. It was not about one's culture, class, ethnicity or a group; it was purely humour, nothing more. In a world where humour often depends on subtle humiliation and sarcasm, he showed that we can make others smile without causing any harm.

He has left behind a meaningful legacy: humour should heal, not wound. In this context, the words of Charlie Chaplin come to mind: "My pain may be the reason for somebody's laugh. But my laugh must never be the reason for somebody's pain." This insight captures the essence of responsible humour and urges us to introspect on whether our laughter uplifts people or brings them down. Even within educated or religious circles, we find humour that subtly degrades one's personality. What is still worse is that at times our own so-called friends subtly humiliate us in the guise of teasing. I vaguely remember a theology professor once telling a nun, "Change your name or your face." Though he said it as a joke, many resented his statement and demanded an apology for the insensitive remark.



Picture courtesy: flickr.com

Fr. Leo's life reminds us that the most meaningful laughter leaves no scars behind. His humour respected people. It never degraded anyone. His life asks us: Can you create moments of joy without inflicting subtle harm? Can your words reflect both wit and kindness? ❖

*Anthony Dass, SJ (KAR), is the superior of ISI, Bengaluru. He has just completed a Ph.D in Educational Technology from Christ University, Bengaluru.*



## A Perilous Voyage

**Film:** *Apollo 13* (1995)

**Director:** Ron Howard

**Run time:** 140 minutes

This highly popular academy-award-winning movie recreates a memorable episode in the history of space exploration. The NASA's manned flights into space were fraught with perils from the beginning. Apollo 11 was a moment of triumph when Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin became the first humans to walk on the moon in 1969, creating history. Other missions followed.

The Apollo 13 lunar mission, which sent the third space craft to the moon, had to be aborted when the oxygen tank exploded. After 87 hours of suspense, when everyone feared for the lives of the astronauts, they safely landed in the Pacific.

This movie, an edge-of-the seat experience, draws from Jeffrey Kluger and Jim Lovell's book, *Lost Moon: The Perilous Voyage of Apollo 13*. The story opens with astronaut Jim Lovell hosting a party on 20 July 1969. They watch the telecast of the climactic moment of the Apollo 11 journey which put Neil Armstrong on the moon. Lovell who has already orbited the moon on Apollo 8, dreams of a return journey to walk on the moon, as he tells his wife Marilyn. Lovell, Swigert and Haise are scheduled for the Apollo 13 mission. But the new voyage is beset with problems from the beginning. Swigert has to substitute Mattingly, who is affected by measles. Marilyn has misgivings about the voyage. On 11 April 1970, 51 minutes after the vehicle was launched, minor problems were noticed. However, 65 hours and 200,000 miles into the journey, an Oxygen tank blows up, starts leaking and the vital equipments show signs of dysfunction. Water, electricity and light are short of supply. NASA's flight controllers are forced to abandon the moon-landing.

Tension builds as those on ground and the three in the command module navigate critical systems failures, improvise scientific and mechanical solutions. The astronauts' safe return is all that matters. The crew power down systems, use duct tape and cardboard to fix the carbon dioxide emission inside the craft, and executed a manual re-entry. Suspenseful hours pass while all NASA is united in their single minded mission of rescue. The news spreads and the world is alarmed. Pope Paul VI prays for them. The crew has to jettison the service module as it approaches the earth and face intense heat and communication blackout. At the climactic moment the space craft makes a fiery entry into earth's orbit and then successfully



splashes in the Pacific Ocean on 17 April, 7 kilometers from the recovery ship.

The triumph is celebrated in a few intensely emotional moments by the families and those at the Mission control center in Houston. The mission's original goal is given up and is switched to that of saving lives, overcoming impossible odds. The film pays tribute to teamwork, problem-solving, and the astronauts' bravery in the face of the worst. The movie got 7 Oscar nominations and 2 awards. ❖

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



## Turning suffering into a gift

The phone rang at 2 am. It never brings good news at that hour. A distraught mother's voice pleads, "Father, please come. Harry has had an accident. He could have died, but he has a second chance. Can you talk to our boy?"

I drove through the night from my parish to Perth, praying for words I didn't yet possess. Harry was seventeen, returning from a cricket competition - his team had won. A few celebratory drinks with mates, then the long drive home. A kangaroo bounded onto the road. The car flipped. Harry's neck broke.

The ward smelled of antiseptic and recycled air. Machines beeped their patient, indifferent rhythms around him. I entered his cubicle where he lay immobilised by equipment. Six months, the doctors said. Six months of absolute stillness for a seventeen-year-old athlete whose life was movement, competition, freedom. He stared at the ceiling — the only view available to him now.

It was late May, when Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha, commemorating Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God. Here before me lay another son in danger. "Harry," I said carefully, "you must be willing to stay exactly like this for six months. Your spine needs time to heal." I watched his eyes fill with panic, then anger. "The only way you'll endure this is if you do it willingly — for others. Who are the people in your life who most need your sacrifice now?"

I left him to think, and went to find breakfast. The hospital corridor stretched pale and fluorescent in the early morning light. I returned hours later. Harry was crying. "I was so angry when you left, Father. But, mid-morning, my parents came to see me. They were arm in arm. They told me they had made a vow, Father. They are going to work harder than ever to stay together. For my sake. They were on the verge of divorce." His voice broke. "So you see, Father, I have my motivation now. I'll happily do this for them."

That day Harry taught me we can bear almost anything if we can transform suffering into a gift, if we



Picture courtesy: .downtoearth.org

can find meaning in sacrifice by willingly making it an act of love for someone else. This is what death means in its deepest sense—not only the physical end that awaits us all, but the daily practice of dying to our own wants, our own convenience, our own plans, so that others might flourish. Harry couldn't move, couldn't play cricket, couldn't live the life he had planned. But he could choose to make his immobility help his family, to transform six months of forced stillness into an offering that might save his parents' marriage.

Harry's witness offers crucial wisdom: there will be times when love requires dying to what you want. Small daily deaths that are the practice ground for ultimate death.

Harry spent six months flat on his back. His parents' marriage survived. Years later, he told me those months taught him more about love than anything before or since. "I learned that dying to myself actually made me more alive. Because suddenly my suffering had purpose - it was keeping my family together." This is the paradox at the heart of lasting love: we find our lives by losing them, we discover freedom through sacrifice, and we become most fully ourselves by dying daily to our smaller selves. ❖

**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](mailto:meathconlan@icloud.com).

# 6 TYPES OF JESUITS... TRYING TO BE IMPRESSIVE 😊

**1 THE OVERTHINKING JESUIT**

Let me discern this... deeply... again...

PROS CONS MAYBE LATER

STILL DECIDING

IGNATIUS DISCERNMENT  
SPIRITUAL EXERCISES  
MOLTSMANN  
RAHNER  
KIERKEGAARD  
BALTHASAR  
VON BALTHASAR

MORE CLARITY PLEASE

**THINKS DEEPLY... ACTS SLOWLY.**

**2 THE BUSY JESUIT**

Back-to-back... all for God!

SCHEDULE

MEETING CLASS RETREAT VISIT TALK PANEL NO TIME TO BREATHE

CALL CONF. EVENT LUNCH? ZOOM PLANNING

NEW MESSAGES

MEETING NOW

5TH COFFEE

REPORTS VISITS RETREATS ADMINIS ETC.

**FULL SCHEDULE... EMPTY SOUL.**

**3 THE STAR JESUIT**

Great talk, Father!

JESUIT TALK

**LOUD IMPACT... QUIET PRAYER.**

**4 THE INTELLECTUAL JESUIT**

According to Rahner...

FOOTNOTES = LIFE

RAHNER  
AQUINAS  
HEGEL  
BALTHASAR  
G. VATTIMO  
NOVATI

THEOLOGY AS SCIENCES

IDEAS NOT FEELINGS

THINK DEEPER

**SHARP MIND... TIRED HEART.**

**5 THE SOCIAL MEDIA JESUIT**

Posting for the greater glory...

10K  
2,345  
512

NEW REEL!  
MOTIVATION + QUOTES + JESUIT VIBES

CONTENT FOR THE GLORY

**SEEN EVERYWHERE... FOUND NOWHERE.**

**6 THE REAL JESUIT**

Speak, Lord.

THANK YOU

**HIDDEN... BUT FULL.**

♥ IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING IMPRESSIVE. IT'S ABOUT BEING REAL. ♥

**BE REAL.**

♥ LESS NOISE. MORE GOD. ♥

# JESUS IS NOT ASKING FOR DEVOTION ALONE... BUT IMITATION.

**DEVOTION (PRAYS TO MY HEART)**

I LOVE YOU JESUS! AMAZING! BEAUTIFUL!

SACRED HEART FAN CLUB

NOVENA CHAMPION

**LOVES THE SACRED HEART... BUT KEEPS DISTANCE.**

VS.

**IMITATION (HAS MY HEART)**

LET MY HEART BE YOUR HEART.

	PATIENT LIKE ME?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	MERCIFUL LIKE ME?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	HUMBLE LIKE ME?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	READY TO FORGIVE?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	READY TO SERVE?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**LIVES THE SACRED HEART... SO OTHERS MEET JESUS THROUGH HIM.**

**NOT JUST:**

- ✗ PRAY
- ✗ ATTEND MASS
- ✗ SAY DEVOTIONS
- ✗ WEAR GOOD HABIT
- ✗ JOIN GROUPS

**BECOME HEART!**

**TO DO LIST:**

- ✓ LOVE LIKE HIM
- ✓ SERVE LIKE HIM
- ✓ FORGIVE LIKE HIM
- ✓ BE HUMBLE LIKE HIM
- ✓ BE PRESENT LIKE HIM



# When joy becomes simple, life becomes extraordinary

One morning, as I paddled from 66 into 67, a warm up of tea brought surprising clarity. I realized that this phase of life is not about counting years but about finally understanding them. After decades of being a daughter, sister, wife, mother and mentor, I found myself meeting my own self again. And what emerged were not heavy truths, but gentle ones – like early sunlight slipping into a silent room.

The first truth was simple: life moves forward, whether or not we hold on to its passing moments. Children grow into their destinies, friends walk their chosen paths, and even the body changes its rhythm. Holding life too tightly is like trying to contain water in a closed fist – the more you grip, the more you lose.

The second understanding came from 46 years of marriage. Long relationships, I realised, do not survive because they are perfect; they survive because hearts learn to soften. Companionship grows when forgiveness outweighs ego, when pride quietly steps aside to make space for kindness. A long marriage is not a trophy on a shelf, but a discipline practised quietly every day.

Age also taught me that health is not something we merely manage; it is something we must respect. The body whispers, and finally demands. Wisdom lies in listening to the whisper – a brisk walk, a lighter plate, more sunlight, less sugar, deeper sleep. These are not routines of ageing, but blessings that steady the journey.

Somewhere along the way, I discovered that peace became the most incredible luxury of the later years. In youth, I chased recognition, validation, and identity. Today, silence feels like companionship. Not every comment deserves energy; not every argument needs a response. Guarding peace has become my most treasured discipline.

And then, joy revealed its simplest form. It hides not in outstanding achievements but in the smallest spaces - a warm shawl, a gentle sunrise, a melody that softens the soul, a quiet meal with someone who understands your pauses. When joy becomes simple, life becomes extraordinary. Growing older is compulsory, but growing deeper is a choice.



Pic courtesy: AI-generated using ChatGPT

Perhaps the most tender truth of all is this: you are your longest and most faithful relationship. People come and go, but you remain with yourself from the first breath to the last. Be gentle with your memories. Respect your journey.

To the younger generation, I offer only one reminder: your parents, too, were young once. We loved, made mistakes, worried and learned – without any degree in parenting. You grew up watching us grow. Let there be mutual forgiveness, understanding, and respect.

To those who are my age, I say this: today's youth are doing their best in a world far more complex than ours. Let us not weigh them down with our nostalgia. Remember philosopher Khalil Gibran's wisdom: "Your children are not your children... they come through you, but not from you."

Finally, one lesson stands strong: if no one comes to lift you, stand up anyway – because you still can. That unshaken truth holds the power to transform everything ahead. ❖

*Courtesy: Hindustan Times*

WELL SAID

*"Once you begin to take note of the things you are grateful for, you begin to lose sight of the things that you lack."*

*- Germany Kent*

