

JIVAN

News and Views of Jesuits in India

March 2017



The A-B-C-D of GC 36

Universal mission
or universal availability?

"I am citizen
of the world!"

"No way I could be silent"
says James Martin, SJ

By the narrow gate

BY KATHLEEN NORRIS

Look at the birds
Consider the lilies
Drink ye all of it
Ask
Seek
Knock
Enter by the narrow gate
Do not be anxious
Judge not
do not give dogs what is holy
Go: be it done for you
Do not be afraid
Maiden, arise
Young man, I say, arise
Stretch out your hand
Stand up
be still
Rise, let us be going ...
Love
Forgive
Remember me.

(Originally titled: *Imperatives, Part 2 of Mysteries of the Incarnation*)

MARCH 2017

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As a service of information for the South Asian Jesuit Assistency, *Jivan* is sent to Jesuits and their colleagues, collaborators and friends. Articles appearing in *Jivan* express the views of the authors and not of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. The Editor regrets he is unable to return articles and photographs. So please keep a copy of whatever you send for publication. All material sent for publication may be edited for reasons of space, clarity or policy. Readers are requested to donate generously towards Jesuit ministries.

I am a Jesuit. But so is he. I believe I have been moulded by the Ignatian spirituality. So does he. We both have had the same Jesuit formation. But... but... what gladdens my heart saddens him. What I welcome as wonderful news he resents as a retrograde move. How do you explain this phenomenon?

The most recent example is the news that made me exclaim, "Ah, at last! Thank God. Thank you, Pope Francis!" I can imagine how he would have reacted to the news. With a face turned sour, he would have muttered something like, "The Church is going to the dogs!"

What is the news about? Pope Francis has initiated something that can finally help us abandon the bulky Missal with Mass prayers that mystify everything and confuse everyone. It is the Missal imposed in 2010 by the Vatican.

Says Gerry O'Collins, the Australian Jesuit writer and professor, "It is good news that Pope Francis has appointed a commission to revisit *Liturgiam Authenticam (LA)*. This Vatican document, issued on 28 March 2001, provided the unfortunate guidelines that 'justified' the ugly, Latinised translation foisted on English-speaking Catholics by the 2010 Missal... I sincerely hope that Francis' commission will not merely revisit *LA* but strongly press for its repeal. The road will then be open to revisit the clumsy, difficult 2010 Missal and replace it.

"As it happens, last year I have joined forces with John Wilkins, a former editor of the London *Tablet*, in preparing for Liturgical Press a book, *Lost in Translation*. We vigorously reject *LA* and its monstrous child, the 2010 Missal. John and I would be delighted to see the 2010 Missal replaced by an incomparably better translation, the 1998 Missal, the missal that never reached the churches.

"This 1998 Missal, a painstaking revision of the 1973 translation, was approved by all the conferences of English-speaking bishops. It was then summarily dismissed by the Vatican. So much for the collegial authority of the bishops taught by Vatican II!

"The 1998 Missal is waiting in the wings to take its rightful place at worship. It needs a few additions, such as texts for the Masses honouring recently canonised saints. Its genuine and prayerful English can be proclaimed very easily. Its opening

prayers or collects rank among the finest ever produced." (www.eurekastreet.com, 08 Feb '17)

It is clear that Gerry O'Collins thinks like me and so feels happy - like me - about the committee Pope Francis has appointed to revisit the document that fathered this 2010 Missal. But the conservative fellow Jesuit I referred to welcomed the 2010 Missal and would never like to see it withdrawn.

But what makes him - in spite of the Ignatian legacy and similar formation - a conservative whose theology is very different? There are conservatives and liberals not merely in politics but also in religion, in the Church. You would have surely heard of the trouble the conservatives are creating for Pope Francis, whom we love and admire.

Why are we liberal and others conservative? The answers range from biology, the way our brain is structured, and what we inherited from our parents to our present socio-economic status. "Conservatives tend to want to protect the status quo, or return it to what it used to be, "in the good old days." They tend to be motivated by fear of change which they think will impact their lives negatively. Liberals, on the other hand, challenge the status quo and want to change things so that, in their eyes, things become better and more inclusive," says a writer.

But both are needed for peace and growth in the society, in the Church. What is important is for both to be open and receptive, to respect and listen to the other.

This is why I was happy to hear Gerry O'Collins talk of Peter Jeffery, a Benedictine Oblate, who is a professor at Princeton University. Jeffery describes himself 'as conservative as one can get without rejecting Vatican II' but he had the openness to acknowledge in his book, *Translating the Tradition: A Chant Historian Reads Liturgiam Authenticam*, that those who wrote *LA* were seriously misinformed and so made many misstatements about the Roman liturgical tradition.

So while my conservative fellow Jesuit may wish that nothing happens to the 2010 Missal, let me pray that the day we get to use the 1998 Missal may come soon. What about you?

- M.A.J.A.

The A-B-C-D of GC 36



BY FRANCIS GONSALVES, SJ

Deep calls to deep: Onward, Jesuits!

'Servants of Christ's mission' was the oft-repeated phrase in Jesuit circles post-GC 34; and, 'a fire that kindles other fires' threw light upon Jesuit identity, community and mission after GC 35. Now that newly elected Superior General Arturo Sosa has promulgated the decrees of GC 36, how shall we proceed? What does GC 36 gift to the universal Society? What does it demand from you and me, Jesuits? I present here what strikes me as most important.

A 'Rowing into the Deep' logo was in Jesuit cyberspace sometime mid-2016 as GC delegates geared up to congregate in Rome. This motto had the stamp of two extraordinary Jesuits who would influence GC 36's deliberations, discernment and decrees in no meagre measure: Mario Bergoglio and Adolfo Nicolás. The 'rowing' imagery was floated by the Pope's September 2014 exhortation to the Jesuits on the 200th anniversary of the Restoration of the Society, while 'depth and discernment' were gems of Fr Nicolás, elegantly expressed in his 2015 annual 'response to ex officio letters' to the Society: "Given our current situation of cultural changes and reduced numbers, *discernment* takes on new meaning... Closely connected with discernment is *profundity*. This has been one of our strongest points in the past, and we cannot afford to lose it." Rowing and reflecting, process and profundity, wings and roots, sails and anchor were polarities that sought harmony in GC 36, which was unique in Jesuit history.

Preparatory Processes for Societal Rowing

GC 36 had a prehistory. In many ways it was a 'first' since: (a) it began

long before the Plenary Assembly in October 2016; for, Provincial and Regional Congregations had already elected commissions to prepare drafts of probable decrees; (b) each Conference elected a Brother to represent it; (c) it was paperless, using only tablets, wall screens and other electronic devices for transacting business; (d) we had a Jesuit-Pope who spent a whole morning with Jesuit-companions; and, (e) a non-European was elected as Superior General to steer the Jesuit Barque.

deep waters. My excitement turned to surprise in March 2015 when I was elected as delegate from my Gujarat province; and later to GC 36's 'Renewal of Life and Mission Commission' (LMC) at the south Asian Regional Congregation in November 2015. Surprise turned to worry and dread when I was nominated 'moderator' of the LMC. Thankfully, a mantra which I've evolved over the years, namely, "*nothing is accidental, nothing is coincidental, everything is providential,*" helped me sail towards



Reminiscing over the past two years, I was extremely excited when Fr Adolfo Nicolás convoked GC 36 on 08 Dec 2014. This was mainly because I hoped that the 'Francis wave' would unleash a tsunami with prophetic breaking and building, inundating and invigorating a church - and, I dare say the Society of Jesus - seemingly content with floating in not-too-

the unknown deep, aided by the breath of God's Spirit.

In the preparatory processes, the members of commissions were often reminded that Jesuits were tired of receiving documents, decrees, and more documents. It was therefore hoped that GC 36 would do the following: (a) Strive for an integration and interconnectedness of what

previous GCs - especially GC 34 and GC 35 - had decreed; and (b) As per the instruction of Fr Adolfo Nicolás, identify 3 most important 'Calls' which the Eternal King seemed to be calling us to, today. Much of this has been achieved, though not in a way I'd anticipated. However, I summarize the gains of GC 36 in what I would call its A-B-C-D thrust: 'A' for Audacity; 'B' for Bridging; 'C' for Collaboration; and 'D' for Discernment. Let's briefly reflect on each of these.

will without doubt move between the duty of constantly calling the Society to dare the '*audacity of the improbable*' and the evangelical willingness to do it, with the humility of those who know that, in this service where the human engages all his energy, 'everything depends on God.'

Explaining this '*audacity of the improbable*' Cadoré continued: "Far from being naive, this audacity is realistic. It is a realistic audacity, first, because it is based on a primary gift:

Skilled helmsman that he is, on 15 Oct '16, at his First Thanksgiving Eucharist, Arturo Sosa rode the waves created by Cadoré by reiterating the 'audacity of faith' and rowing deeper. Like a mariner guided by the polestar, he turned our gaze towards Mary, the Star of the Sea, saying: "If our faith is like that of Mary, mother of Jesus and Mother of the Society of Jesus, our audacity can go even further and seek not just the improbable, but the impossible, because *nothing is impossible for God*, as the Archangel Gabriel proclaims in the scene of the Annunciation" (Lk 1:37).

Audacity of the improbable! Audacity of the impossible! Do we have it? Other 'A's can also be associated with this 'A', namely, the Ignatian 'apostolic availability' and the Arrupean 'apostolic aggressivity' that launched the likes of Francis Xavier, De Nobili and De Britto to Indian shores, burning their boats in total submission to the blowing of God's Spirit. This audacity of faith - daring to take on the improbable, nay, the impossible, is the indispensable disposition needed for any success in mission. Such audacity comes from believing in the depths of our heart that it is God who calls us. How else can we respond but with a generous: "*Take Lord, and receive All is yours: dispose of it wholly according to your will*"?

2. Bridging: Being Ministers of Reconciliation with God, others, creation

Under the subheading '*On mission with Christ the Reconciler*' n.21 of decree 1 of GC 36 says: "In preparation for the 36th General Congregation, Fr General Adolfo Nicolás invited the Society to enter into a process of seeking to hear 'the call of the Eternal King, and to discern the three most important calls that the Lord makes to the whole Society today'. Our Provinces and Regions, through the Province and Regional Congregations, responded

"We must accompany and remain close to the most vulnerable."



1. Audacity: Aiming not merely for the Improbable but for the Impossible.

It's said: "First impressions last." At the inaugural Mass, Master of the Order of Preachers, Bruno Cadoré, got the boat rowing by daring Jesuits to be filled with 'audacity' driven by firm faith. He said: "An assembly such as yours, rooted in a tradition of such rich evangelization, carrier of so many and such varied experiences,

'rekindle the gift of God', an invitation that echoes others formulated by Paul: 'Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord' (Rom 12:11); 'Do not quench the Spirit!' (1 Thess 5:19); 'Do not grieve the Holy Spirit!' (Eph 4:29). This is probably the main task of a Congregation such as the one that opens for you today: to draw on the audacity of the improbable in fidelity to the work of the Spirit."

to this invitation. The call to share God's work of reconciliation in our broken world emerged often and powerfully. What GC 35 had identified as three dimensions of this ministry of reconciliation, namely, reconciliation with God, with one another, and with creation, assumed a new urgency." Moreover, under the subtitle *'Toward the Renewal of Our Apostolic Life'* n.31 of the same decree reads: "All our ministries should seek to build bridges, to foster peace."

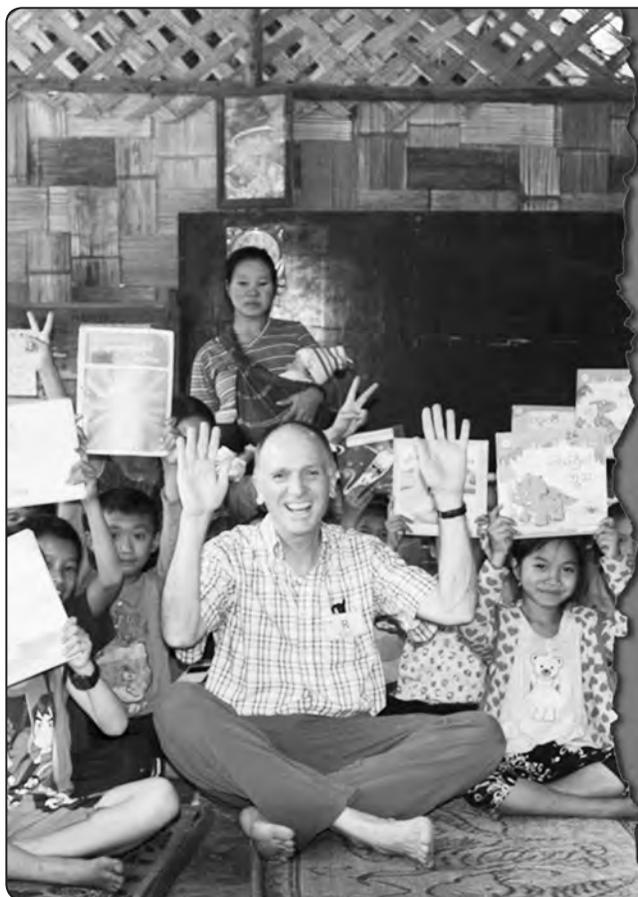
As individual Jesuits and as Society, there's no doubt that we feel the brokenness - both, inner and outer - and hear the corresponding call to 'be bridges' and 'build bridges' with God, towards others (especially the poor) and with nature. Animated by Paul's words: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18), decree 1 entitled *'Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice'* reminds us that, "While we speak of three forms of reconciliation, all three are, in reality, one work of God, interconnected and inseparable." What does this three-in-one reconciliation entail?

2.a. Bridging with God: demands bearing the 'joy of the gospel' to everyone. However, first, every Jesuit must experience this deep joy within himself. Pope Francis asked every Jesuit to be "a servant of the joy of the gospel" and, consequently, to "ask intensely for spiritual consolation." In this regard, GC 36 (dec.1, n.23) reminds us that: "A special gift Jesuits and the Ignatian family have to offer to the Church and her mission of evangelization is Ignatian spirituality, which facilitates the experience of God and can therefore greatly help the process of personal and communal conversion."

Bridges towards God need to be built in cultures where secularization is rampant and in countries where believers - especially the youth - are "abandoning the church in search for

personal meaning and spirituality" (dec.1, n.24 a,c). In our south Asian context, "interreligious dialogue in all its forms remains a necessity, one that is not always easy and that risks misunderstanding" (dec.1, n.24b). To build Godward bridges, "Jesuits must continue to give importance to theological and scriptural studies by which we help people deepen their understanding of the Gospel in their diverse cultural contexts, with their

and helping build peace" (dec.1, n.25). Although all our broken brethren require attention and assistance, GC 36 pinpoints "three [groups that] have appeared with consistency from many of our Provinces and Regions:" [a] The displaced peoples (refugees, migrants, and internally displaced peoples); [b] The marginalized groups (Dalits, tribals, indigenous peoples and women); and, [c] Communities wounded by fundamentalism,



The Society initiates processes and leaves spaces. This is important. Other religious occupy spaces, the monasteries. The Society initiates processes.

hopes and their challenges. These studies should involve accompanying people from the depth of their spiritual traditions" (dec.1, n.24d).

2.b. Bridging within Humanity: arises amidst the brokenness "of the shocking forms of suffering and injustice that millions of our brothers and sisters endure." Herein we hear the second call of a crucified Christ summoning us "anew to a ministry of justice and peace, serving the poor and the excluded

intolerance and ethnic-religious-political conflicts. Quoting Fr Arrupe, Pope Francis said, "Wherever there is pain, the Society has to be there!" Indeed, during his 24 Oct address to us, Jesuits, he stressed the importance of "allowing ourselves to be moved by our Lord on the Cross."

Pope Francis never tires of exhorting the world to "build bridges". On 9 Nov '14, on the anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, he said: "Where there is a wall there is a closing of the

heart. We need *bridges*, not walls!" In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he wrote: "An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it *bridges* distances, it is willing to abase itself if necessary, and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others." (n.24) and in n.67: "In our world, different forms of war and conflict are re-emerging, yet we Christians remain steadfast in our intention to respect others, to heal wounds, to

affirming: "We raise our voices against the harsh and inhumane policies of the current administration, which thinks nothing of building a wall and slamming the door in faces of the world's most vulnerable people. In these challenging days, we renew our commitment to be bridge-builders between people of differing political views while also standing firmly for the values of the Gospel and of our Catholic Social Teachings." Exemplary bridge-building, indeed!

are linked with environmental degradation. These are not separate crises but one crisis that is a symptom of something much deeper: the flawed way societies and economies are organized" (dec.1, n.29). While joining the cosmic symphony with a resounding "*Laudato si, mi Signore!*" to the Creator-God for the wonders of creation, GC 36 entrusts us with a "multifaceted challenge of caring for our common home [that] calls for a multifaceted response from the Society. We begin by changing our personal and community lifestyles, adopting behavior coherent with our desire for reconciliation with creation" (dec. 1, n.30). Here too, "We must accompany and remain close to the most vulnerable." In all our bridge-building, we must be aware that our resources are limited. Hence, while ministering mainly to those on the margins in the spirit of the *magis*, we seek a snowballing of our efforts by creative collaboration with others.

3. Collaboration: Creative cooperation among compassionate companions

The Society has long promoted 'collaboration' as a cherished ideal. Recchoing the essence of decree 13 of GC 34 entitled "cooperation with the laity in mission" and decree 6 of GC 35 on "collaboration at the heart of mission," decree 2 of GC 36 entitled '*Renewed Governance for a Renewed Mission*' says: "Discernment, collaboration and networking offer three important perspectives on our contemporary way of proceeding." Numbers 6 and 7 of this decree "express gratitude to all those who contribute to and play significant roles in Jesuit ministry," and point out to obstacles and challenges that we encounter, respectively.

Granted that Jesuits collaborate with others to some extent, the Ignatian *magis* challenges us to ask: what 'more' can we do? Today, the Society is infected with

Our discerning "disposition to attend to the Spirit in our relationships must include those with whom we work (collaborators)."



build bridges ..." To leaders of the EU and to an apparent veiled rebuttal of Trump's boast of building a wall along the US-Mexican border, Francis said: "Tear down walls, *build bridges*."

As I write this piece, our Jesuits of the USA-Canada Conference have publicly denounced 'The Trump Administration's Executive Order' banning migrants from 7 Muslim nations from entering the US,

2.c. Bridging with nature: is inextricably interconnected with our bridging with God and within humankind. With an organic and *advaitic* (non-dualistic) view of the cosmos, we will realize what Pope Francis has been stressing as: "The fundamental connection between the environmental crisis and the social crisis in which we live today. Poverty, social exclusion, and marginalization

the viruses of individualism and institutionalization. At the micro level, many of us endorse a 'touch me not' principle. Moreover, at the macro level, instead of being evangelically effective structures serving the neediest, our Jesuit institutions could end up being elitist and burdensome 'white elephants' in the long run. Aware of these obstacles and dangers, GC 36 proposes collaboration and a concomitant 'networking' as a much-needed corrective.

As 'companions of Jesus' we are, first and foremost, co-labourers with Christ, the Reconciler. Thus, as Christ's 'companions' - deriving from the Latin *cum + panis*, referring to those bound together 'with bread' - we seek nourishment from the 'Bread of Life' even as we nourish and support each other. Indeed, "GC 36 calls on Father General to continue the steps taken by Father Nicolás to promote greater solidarity of human, institutional and financial resources throughout the Society in order to achieve greater apostolic effectiveness" (dec.2, n.19). Our Jesuit 'companion-ship' should enable us further to take more and more collaborators on board through 'networking', which is explained in dec.2, nn.8 & 9.

Globalisation has altered our perceptions of place and time and redefined 'centre' and 'periphery'. Multinational corporations gain unimaginable wealth and power across the globe through manipulative markets, predatory alliances, electronic cash flows, outsourcing of labour, etc. Pope Francis was right on target when he says: "Initiating processes is different from occupying spaces. The Society initiates processes and leaves spaces. This is important. Other religious occupy spaces, the monasteries. The Society initiates processes." We must row towards initiating processes, creating collaborations of compassionate minds and hearts,

conceiving new spaces for ministry, outsourcing of work, handing over ineffective institutions to others and offering Christ-like service in non-Jesuit and interfaith endeavours that move outward to new peripheries.

4. Discernment: for Direction and Depth

One of the most frequently heard words in the GC 36 Aula, group discussions and prayers was 'discernment'. The word and its variables appear 19 times in the '*Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice*' decree one, and 26 times in the '*Renewed Governance for a Renewed Mission*' decree two. Pope Francis referred to discernment 8 times in his Address; and in his Homily at the closure of GC 36, Fr General Arturo Sosa mentioned discernment 4 times, describing GC 36 itself as "a powerful experience of discernment." Indeed, discernment is one of the finest spiritual treasures that the Society has to offer to Church and World, at large.

GC 36's decree 1, n.4 provides us with a powerful image of discernment at the origins of the Society: the meeting of the First Companions at Venice (1537). "There, the companions confronted the frustration of their plans to go to the Holy Land. This drove them to a deeper discernment of the Lord's call. Where was the Spirit drawing them?" This is the question that we, as Society, must ask today: Where is the Spirit drawing us? Minus discernment, our rowing will lack direction and depth. Under the subtitle '*a discerning community with open horizons*' nn. 7-16 of the same decree elaborate what apostolic discernment entails. Likewise, decree 2, n.1, on governance states: "From its earliest days, discernment has guided the development of governance to better serve and support the Society's mission, the *Missio Dei*." It then gives discernment pride of place (besides collaboration and networking) as "our way of proceeding,"

Just as collaboration must be created in ever widening circles beginning with Jesuits themselves, so must discernment begin "in contemplation of God at work in our world and allows us to draw more fruit in joining our efforts to God's designs" (dec.2, n.4). "By living discernment, we can give it to others. Sharing in discernment leads to a shared vision. Forming collaborators for mission means first that we be formed for discernment" (dec.2, n.5). Furthermore, our discerning "disposition to attend to the Spirit in our relationships must include those with whom we work (collaborators). Often they teach us this openness to the Spirit. Important discernments concerning mission are often enriched by their voices and their commitment" (dec.1, n.14).

Keep rowing, expert rowers!

GC 36 opened with calls for audacity and enabled bridge-building, collaboration and discernment at various levels. At its closure, we have just two decrees. Unlike other GCs with many guidelines and apostolic preferences, GC 36 has insisted on basics. Specific apostolic preferences will be drawn up through further processes of discernment of Conference Presidents with Fr General. But for us all, there are miles to go and myriad promises to keep. Says Pope Francis: "Only discernment saves us from real uprooting, from true 'suppression' of the heart, which is selfishness, worldliness, the loss of our horizon - our hope, which is Jesus; it is only Jesus... The ship of the Society has been tossed around by the waves. The night and the powers of darkness are always near. Jesuits must be brave and expert rowers. Row then, even with the headwind! Let us row together in the service of the Church!" ■

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Jesuit Psychologists and Counselors form a forum

The website on Jesuit psychologists and counselors of the Assistancy, commissioned by Fr. George Pattery (POSA) and Fr Raj Irudaya (ADF) was launched on Republic day, 26 Jan '17. The website link is <http://jesuitpsychologistscounselors.com>. This website is the outcome of a meeting on formation called by the ADF, for which there were seven Jesuit psychologists from the Assistancy. Different provinces have trained counselors and psychologists and it is important for them to get together, to advance formation in the modern context. The meeting was to discuss formation at different stages, and ways by which Jesuit psychologists and counselors could interact with each other.

Through an interface of their common Ignatian heritage and psychology, the members will discover and share knowledge and resources. It is hoped that creative psycho-spiritual processes in formation will be discussed in order to adapt to the swiftly changing demands of the 21st century.



The mission of the group is to share training/skills and resources to aid in the ongoing professional development of Jesuit psychologists/therapists/counselors, to help improve access to intellectual and experiential growth opportunities, to promote training of the next generations of psychologists/therapists/counselors, to help in implementation of sustainable programs of formation and to create a movement which ensures that all Jesuits have access to well-trained Jesuits, who would help and inspire them to ways of life that are immediate and lasting.

Some of the proposed activities are the sharing of latest research, peer consultation, discussing of cases, developing research projects across the Assistancy, identifying areas of need in formation and in various ministries, researching and developing tools or interventions specific to formation, to help in the professional assessment and "accompaniment" of formees, and through the website to reply to queries posted by those registered on the site. The criteria for admission to group is that the counselor/psychologist should be a Jesuit of the south Asian Assistancy and should have an advanced degree i.e. minimum a master's degree - in counseling, psychology or an allied degree.

The web administrators wish to thank all those involved in its development and request names from all provinces of counselors/psychologists to add to those already on the website.

- M.A. Emma, SJ, Dinesh Braganza, SJ &
Konrad Noronha, SJ

SIGNIS honours *Jivan* editor with Lifetime Achievement Award

The worldwide Catholic media organization, SIGNIS has honoured the editor of *Jivan*, Fr M.A. Joe Antony, SJ, with 'Lifetime Achievement Award in Journalism and Writing.' The award was presented to him in a function at Citadel, Chennai,



on 21 Feb '17, the second day of the Signis India's national assembly. Signis Tamil Nadu, which hosted the national assembly this year, nominated him as one of the six individuals from different fields chosen for Lifetime Achievement Awards.

Mr Bharathi Raja, eminent film director, who was the Chief Guest, presented him a statuette and Mr Gustavo Andujar, President, Signis World, presented him a plaque with the citation, which said the award was "in recognition of an outstanding contribution towards building a culture of peace in the society through the medium of journalism."



While introducing him, Fr Adaikalaraj, Vice President, Signis Tamil Nadu, mentioned his contribution as the editor and publisher of the *New Leader*, a national Catholic fortnightly, for 20 years and editing *Jivan*, the magazine of South Asian Jesuits, for the past 17 years. He mentioned also the books he has written in English and Tamil and more than 200 lyrics for Tamil devotional hymns, to some of which he has also composed music.

On the first day of the national assembly, the *New Leader* was discussed as one of the rare success stories in the field of Catholic media. Fr Antony Pancras, editor, the *New Leader*, generously praised Fr Joe Antony's contribution to the magazine, describing how he took it over when it was about to be closed for lack of subscribers and soon gave it a new life and reputation and made it not merely financially viable but profitable.

- J.S. Jerald

“It’s a miracle!”

“He is not in a hurry, but he has a sense of urgency”

- Antonio Spadaro, SJ on Pope Francis

Jesuit Fr. Antonio Spadaro doesn't have any of the titles or authority or cachet normally associated with influential churchmen in the Vatican. But this Italian Jesuit has interviewed Pope Francis several times and is known as one of the pontiff's trusted advisers.

Spadaro's main job is as editor of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, an authoritative periodical that is reviewed by the Vatican before publication. Yet it is his identification with Pope Francis and his efforts to reform the Catholic church that has made Spadaro, 50, a lightning rod for the pontiff's many critics, especially conservatives.

Excerpts from an interview Spadaro gave to RNS in late November '16 at his office at the Villa Malta, the headquarters of *Civiltà Cattolica*:

Pope Francis has started so many different projects and reforms on a range of issues. What is next for the Pope and the Catholic Church in 2017?

The way that Francis makes decisions is not to make plans and proposals, with big things to do here and little things there. No, it's just real discernment. He understands what to do by walking along the way. So it's unpredictable, even for himself. He told me, in our first interview in 2013 and at other times, that it's always a surprise. There's no way to foresee what he's going to do.

But I would say that what I have felt from him is a little sense of urgency - not rushing, no, but an urgency - to take advantage of the time. To seize the moment.

Although he turns 80 years old in December?

But it's not a sense of pressure. He has no sense of hurrying at all because he knows the Church is up to God. It's not up to him. So he is leading by opening processes. He can see at least the end of some of the processes he started. He doesn't feel any kind of pressure or hurry. But he wants to seize the moment, to take advantage of the time which is given to him. It's a sense of responsibility; it's not a sense of hurry.



I see that because he is always calm and quiet. This is amazing to me - it's kind of a miracle!

In a recent interview he said he “sleeps like a log” for six hours a night. He also said he prays a lot, and his stamina is “a grace of the Lord.” What’s his secret?

Yes, he’s never stressed. He’s always at work but never stressed. That’s kind of a miracle. But as he says, he is a man of prayer.

All of this is born out of prayer ... ?

It starts in his chapel. He doesn’t have an office. He has a room in Santa Marta. His office is his chapel.

The next Vatican synod, set for October of 2018 on the theme of young people, certainly seems like a major focus, doesn’t it?

The big topic, or theme, that I am seeing coming up many times in recent months is “discernment.” That is at the core of *Amoris Laetitia*, especially discernment for priests and seminarians. It is the lengthy “exhortation” that Francis published last spring summing up his take on the deliberations of two major church meetings, or synods, on the church’s approach to the modern family. Some conservatives have opposed it. He realizes that the problem at the core of *Amoris Laetitia* is not a dogmatic problem. Which it’s not - it’s not a dogmatic problem.

The problem is that the Church must learn to apply the practice of discernment better and more deeply and not just apply rules in the same way for everyone. The Church must be attentive to people’s lives, to their journey of faith and to the way in which God works in each person. So a pastor can’t be a pastor by applying general rules to individual people. The Church has to grow in discernment. That would be also one of the most important topics of the next synod.

Meanwhile, the critics of this discernment – like those four

cardinals – say they need “yes-or-no” answers?

I don’t know if they are critics of discernment. I just know that the Pope has said that life is not black and white. It is gray. There are a lot of nuances, and we have to discern nuances.

This is the meaning of the Incarnation - the Lord took flesh, which means we are involved with real humanity, which is never fixed or too clear. So the pastor has to get into the real dynamic of human life. This is the message of mercy. Discernment and mercy are the two big pillars of this pontificate.

Is there a sense the opposition to Francis’ approach is growing and more intense?

No, no! The problem is that some opponents make a lot of noise, especially on social media. They create an echo chamber. But you can hear the noise only inside the sacristies. If you get out of the sacristies you can’t hear anything. So only the people inside the sacristies can hear this big noise.

The question is not about four cardinals or any others. Francis has said it many times, that he likes opposition. It is not a problem for him. He has always had opposition in his life. He got used to opposition and he realized that life is made by tension. And because life is made by tension, if there is no tension there is no life. A good sign of the effectiveness of the process of reform is exactly the emergence of the opposition.

But Pope Francis distinguishes between two kind of opposition: There is opposition which is criticism by people who care for the Church. They love the Church. They really want, in good conscience, the good of the Church.

But there is another kind of opposition, which is just imposing one’s own view, which is ideological opposition.

The Pope listens to the first and is open to learning. But he doesn’t

pay too much attention at all to the second kind.

Is the “good” opposition growing? And what would that mean for the Pope’s approach?

The good opposition is discreet. There are people who talk to the Pope and are very straightforward. And he likes these kind of people since they don’t make noises that are theatrical expressions.

In 2013 he told me, at the start of our first interview, if you think that something I am saying is wrong please tell me. I was very struck by that. It was a little thing but it showed me how open he is to being criticized.

But you have to take account of the fact that there are some gestures or documents, like *Amoris Laetitia*, which is the fruit of a long process. It is not just the Pope saying this, it is two synods, and the synods were very open and straightforward. And he liked that a lot.

And at the end he wrote his exhortation because he knows his job as Pope - because he is not just a “nice” Pope.

What do you mean by that? So many people think he is in fact very nice and that’s why they love him.

I am tired of hearing this, that the Pope is “nice and kind.” Yes, he is nice and he is kind, of course. But he knows what being a Pope means. He is absolutely aware of his job. He knows what to do and he knows what kind of power he has - which is a power of service.

He is the Pope, and he knows he is the Pope. He is fully conscious of his ministry as the successor of St. Peter. So he exercises the authority of the keys of Peter when it is necessary. But he listens a lot, he gets information, he is open. He prays a lot before doing something. But when he takes a decision, this decision comes from a long process. This is very important. Listening, praying and discerning.

So when he acts as Pope it is not a personal whim?

He is very tough. He takes decisions. But it is the result of a process. He is not just nice; he is tough. He is merciful. He is quiet and calm. ... Jesus gave a witness of the love of God. He wasn't just nice. The Pope's way of acting and of saying things comes from the Gospel. It is shaped by the Gospel. It is not shaped by the desire to be nice.

Looking forward, people are also talking about what happens "after Francis." He is 80 years old. What is the future of the papacy? We have seen reaction after Obama, with the U.S. electing Donald Trump. Is there going to be a similar dynamic with Francis?

I am not interested in this question. It does make sense, of course. But I'm not interested in that because I really believe in the surprises of God and I think there is the right Pope at the right time, as there has been in the past decades.

I just think that the process that Francis has started is not reversible. But this does not mean that his successor has to be like him. He could be completely different. We will see, but we don't know.

Francis also seems to respect tradition in ways that are often overlooked. He hasn't gone over the limit of 120 cardinals, for example, the way John Paul II often did.

He's not liberal, absolutely. He's not conservative but he's not liberal. He's something different. And he also doesn't like to be surrounded by "Bergoglians" - by people like him. So it's a completely different way of understanding.

How is the reform of the Roman Curia going? There have been many organizational changes.

Structures can change, but Francis has said you have to change the

soul before changing the structures. And the soul is changing. ... The vision of the departments is very inclusive, not dividing each office up into a different part of church life or teaching.

For me, the biggest challenge is not to cut the people of God into rules and parts, so the priests are here and the laypeople are over here. There is a different vision, a more pastoral vision, more global, more rooted in the Second Vatican Council. The



"I just want to push Christ to the center of the Church. I mean, more and more. So if Christ is at the center of the Church, he will do the reform. It's not up to me. It's up to him."

reforms are ongoing but the spirit is the right one and the spirit is going to reshape things, slowly. It takes time, but we are not in a hurry. It's the fruit of a consultation. It is going forward. Things are going on. They are developing quite well.

What is most important for me is: What is the intention of the Pope? Once I asked him: But do you want to reform the Church? His answer was: "No." I remember this very well. We were in his room at Santa Marta. He said: "I just want to push Christ to the center of the Church. I mean, more and more. So if Christ is at the center of the Church, he will do the reform. It's not up to me. It's up to him."

If you put Christ at the center you will be able to change everything. This is very important for me because it made me realize that he is not interested in doing lots of changes, he is not worried about changes. He is worried about the inner wheel of the Church. For him it has to be Christ.

For example, think of mercy. Mercy means putting the core of the Gospel inside the heart of the Church. Not rules, not problems, not norms. The center of the Church is the mercy of God. So if the mercy of God is at the center you can understand everything in a different perspective. And you can do all the reforms that you like.

That also helps you to understand his own role in the Church. He doesn't feel himself to be the center of the Church, as if everything was up to

him. That's why he doesn't feel the pressure, the stress. It's not up to him. It's up to God. He is a channel and he works for that. After concluding his working day he eats well and sleeps well. This is his perception of his role in the Church.

His health is good?

Very good, yes. In the evening he is tired. But he recovers very easily. Sometimes during the trips, for example, I can see him very tired at the end of the morning. Then he goes to sleep for two or three hours, and then, pow!

He knows how to deal with himself. I told him a couple of years ago, "Take care of yourself, preserve your energy." He said, "Don't worry about that. When I feel tired I stop." So he will cancel audiences, or sometimes when he feels tired he eats an apple and he takes a nap. So he knows how to deal with his health.

Courtesy: www.ncronline.org

BY HEDWIG LEWIS, SJ

The “gift” we were looking forward to was delivered as promised early January. Barely containing my excitement, I scrolled down Decree One, pausing at §13: “In our world that knows too much division, we ask God to help our communities become “homes” for the Reign of God. We hear the call to overcome what can separate us from one another. Simplicity of life and openness of heart foster such mutual concern. Moreover, living together as friends in the Lord nurtures the vocations of our men in formation and can inspire men to enter the Society.”

In days gone up we were told that the religious community was “a home away from home”. Later, the paradigm changed. “Community” superseded the description of a normal family and comparisons were odious. Now, GC 36’s definition had me replace my thinking cap: “The Jesuit community is a concrete space in which we live as friends in the Lord (§9).

Living together as ‘friends in the Lord’ creates a “home” with a difference. There is “room for encounter and sharing”- “a place of discernment” (§10). There are “some basic characteristics and attitudes” to be cultivated, like “availability, mobility, humility, freedom, the ability to accompany others, patience, and a willingness to listen respectfully so that we may speak the truth to each other” (§11). Moreover, “life together is always at the service of mission, but because these fraternal bonds proclaim the Gospel, it is itself a mission” (§9).

The composition of the community in today’s Society of Jesus is three-dimensional: First, friendship among Jesuits comes as a gift from above, packaged with the Jesuit vocation itself. Friendship grounds both human growth and divine “devotion”, and lays the authentic basis for Jesuit obedience. Second, conversation is the typical Jesuit instrument for friendship and for the apostolate. Third, the Jesuit apostolate consists precisely in extending this friendship to others. (Howard J. Gray SJ, RIS 89/1998). These are well documented in Decree 1.

GC 36’s appeal is that, through our God-given gift of friendship, “each of us should constantly desire that our own apostolic work develop, be stimulated, and helped to bear fruit, through the encouragement of our

GC 36’s refreshing look at community



brothers” (§8). Schooled in the Spiritual Exercises we are convinced that “all is gift” – especially our fellow-Jesuits. Can we treat them as such, and through our acknowledging their worth, appreciating their talents and contributions, honouring their achievements, ask God to “take and receive” them as our collaborative gifts to God?

The typical Jesuit instrument for friendship is “spiritual conversations” (§12), which create the ambience that transforms our communities into “homes”

under the “Reign of God”: spaces of truth, joy, creativity, pardon, and of seeking the will of God (§10). Every “concrete space” or live-in enclosure of the Jesuit community must have wide-open doors to reach out to and to welcome others, as we “rediscover hospitality” (§16). “As Pope Francis reminds us: we are called to find Christ in the poor, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to understand them, and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them” (§15).

The reality of being “friends in the Lord” acquires spiritual depth when there is mutual transparency and unconditional feedback. St Ignatius’ instructions to the Jesuits attending the Council of Trent must be seen in this light. “On one night, let one of you ask the others to correct him in what he may have done amiss, and he who is corrected should make no answer unless he is asked to explain the matter about which he has been corrected. On another night, another will do the same. Thus each one in turn, so that all can be helped unto greater charity and to greater influence in all things.”

This Ignatian dynamic finds an echo in our times through the “Critical Friend”. ‘The Critical Friend’ is a powerful idea, perhaps because it contains an inherent tension. Friends bring a high degree of unconditional positive regard. Critics are, at first sight at least, conditional, negative and intolerant of failure. Perhaps the critical friend comes closest to what might be regarded as ‘true friendship’ – a successful marrying of unconditional support and unconditional critique” (Wikipedia). Critical friends in the Lord are the refreshing factor in community life. ■

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The ten commandments of mercy

BY RON ROLHEISER, OMI

Among the Ten Commandments, one begins with the word “remember”: *Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day*. It reminds us to recall something we already know. There are commandments of

Mercy is God’s essence. Scripture uses words such as loving-kindness and compassion to try to define what constitutes God’s mercy, but the central biblical concept, captured in the Hebrew concept of *hesed*, connotes a relationship that loves, embraces, and forgives even when, and especially when, we cannot measure up or deserve what’s given us.

poor to be an extension of God’s love and not of human ego, they need to be predicated upon compassion, mercy. Deepest inside of every religion is the invitation: Be compassionate, merciful, as God is compassionate.

3. Remember that we all stand forever in need of mercy.

There is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who converts than



mercy written into our very DNA. We already know them, but we need to remember them more explicitly. What are they?

The Ten Commandments of Mercy:

1. Remember that mercy lies deepest in God’s heart.

Few things so much approximate the essence of God as does mercy.

2. Remember that mercy is the essence of all true religion.

Inside religion and spirituality, within all faiths, three things try to lay claim to what’s central: *proper religious practice, outreach to the poor, and compassion*. Ultimately they are not in opposition, but complementary pieces of one religious whole. But for religious practice and outreach to the

over ninety-nine righteous persons. Does God love sinners more than the righteous? There are no righteous persons. It’s rather that we feel God’s love more when we admit that we’re sinners. None of us ever measure up. But, as St. Paul so consolingly teaches, the whole point is that we don’t have to measure up. That’s what mercy means. It’s undeserved, by definition.

4. Remember that, having received mercy, we must show mercy to others.

We only receive and appropriate God's mercy and the mercy of others when we extend that same mercy to others. Mercy has to flow through us. If we don't extend it to others we become self-indulgent and too harsh on others.

5. Remember that only the practice of mercy sets us free.

Receiving and giving mercy is the only thing that frees from our congenital propensity to self-seek, self-justify, and judge others. Nothing frees us more from the tyranny of ego than does the practice of mercy.

6. Remember that mercy is not opposed to justice, but is its fulfillment.

Mercy, as Walter Kasper so aptly puts it, is not "a kind of fabric softener that undermines the dogmas and commandments and abrogates the central and fundamental meaning of truth." That's the accusation the Pharisees made against Jesus. Mercy is where justice is meant to terminate.

7. Remember that only the practice of mercy will make God's Kingdom come.

Jesus promised us that someday the meek will inherit the earth, the

poor will eat plentiful, rich food, and all tears will be wiped away. That can only happen when mercy replaces self-interest.

8. Remember that mercy needs too to be practiced collectively.

Our lives are a dialogue between God's mercy and our weaknesses.

It is not enough for us to be merciful in our own lives. Mercy is marginalized in a society that doesn't sufficiently attend to those who are weak or needy, just as it is marginalized in a church that is judgmental. We must create a society that is merciful and a church that is merciful. Mercy, alone, enables the survival of the weakest.

9. Remember that mercy calls us to do works both spiritual and physical.

Our Christian faith challenges us to perform mercy in a double way, corporeally and spiritually. The classic corporal works of mercy are: *Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, shelter the homeless, cloth the naked, visit the sick, visit the*

imprisoned, and bury the dead. The classic spiritual works of mercy are: *instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the afflicted, admonish the sinner, forgive offenses, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the living and the dead.* God has given us different gifts and all of us are better at some of these than at others, but mercy is manifest in all of them.

10. Remember that our lives are a dialogue between God's mercy and our weaknesses.

The only thing at which we are adequate is being inadequate. We are forever falling short at something, no matter the strength of our sincerity, good intention, and willpower. Only mercy, receiving it and giving it, can lead us out of the choppy waters of our own anxieties, worry, and joylessness. Only in knowing mercy do we know gratitude.

Pope Francis asked us all to live last year as a year of mercy, to contemplate the mystery of mercy "as a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace." Mercy, he believes, is the secret to putting a credible face to God, to putting a credible face to our churches, and to walking with steadiness inside our own lives. ■

Courtesy: www.ronrolheiser.org

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(sd)
Jerry Sequeira, SJ

Without making room for God's word in their heart, people will never be able to welcome and love all human life, Pope Francis said in his message for Lent, which begins this year on 01 March for Latin-rite Catholics.

"Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love," the Pope said. "The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable," he wrote.

Released by the Vatican on 07 Feb '17, the text of the Pope's Lenten message, entitled, 'The Word is a gift. Other persons are gift,' focused on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in the Gospel of St Luke (16:19-31).



"Instead of being an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity toward others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace," he added.

The rich man's eyes are finally opened after he and Lazarus are dead; Lazarus finds comfort in heaven and the rich man finds torment in "the netherworld," because, as Abraham explains, "a kind of fairness is restored" in the afterlife and "life's evils are balanced by good," the pope said.

The rich man then asks for an extraordinary sign - Lazarus coming back from the dead - to be given to his family members so they will repent and not make the same mistake as he.

*"Without making room for God's Word,
you'll never be able to love all human life"*

- Pope's Lenten message

The parable calls for sincere conversion, the Pope said, and it "provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life."

In the Gospel account, Lazarus and his suffering are described in great detail. While he is "practically invisible to the rich man," the Gospel gives him a name and a face, upholding him as worthy, as "a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast," the Pope wrote.

The parable shows that "a right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognising their value," he said. "A poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change."

But in order to understand how to open one's heart and see the other as gift, a person must see how the word of God operates.

One way to do that, he said, is to be aware of the temptations and traps the rich man fell victim to, derailing his search for true happiness.

The nameless "rich man" lives an opulent, ostentatious life, the Pope wrote, and his love of money leads to vanity and pride - "the lowest rung of this moral degradation."

"The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal," he said. "For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door."

Love of money, St Paul warned, "is the root of all evils," and the Pope said, it is also "the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion."

But, Abraham said the people have plenty of teachings with "Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them," the Pope said.

This explains what the real problem is for the rich man's and those like him: "At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God's word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbor," the Pope said.

The Pope asked that Lent be a time "for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbour."

"May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need," he said, especially by taking part in the various Lenten campaigns sponsored by local churches. ■

Courtesy: www.catholicerald.co.uk

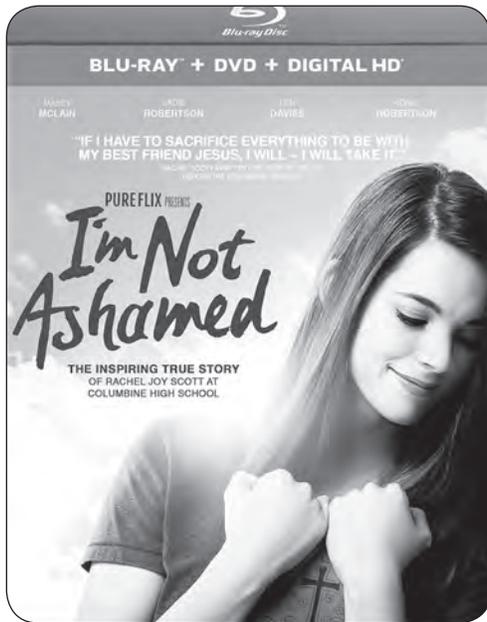


Struggling to live our faith

I'm Not Ashamed

A film by Brian Baugh

Starring Sadie Robertson, Jennifer O'Neill, Ben Davies...



Rachel Joy Scott was a free spirit who longed to change the world. When her father left the family when she was young, it left her confused and searching for affirmation in her friends. However, after a spiritual experience one summer while staying with her cousins, Rachel knew she would never be the same again. But she still struggled, with her old friends always tempting her to be like them. But she still felt like she needed to change the world. In the end, as tragedy hit Columbine High School, she did change the world, and touched many lives in the process. Rachel was not a saint, she was just a teenager who struggled to live out her Christianity, as many of us do. Yet though she was surrounded by confusion and turmoil, she made a difference with the short life she had. *I'm Not Ashamed* succeeds in communicating this important message.

Organic terrace garden



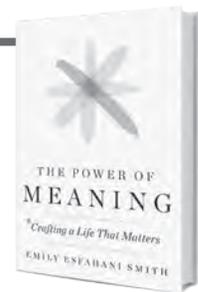
The Garden City of Bengaluru is striving to live up to its moniker. In the shadow of a monstrous skyscraper being erected on Sampige Road, across a traffic-clogged street, an organic terrace garden filled with tulsi, chilli, lime and rosemary pumps oxygen into air tainted by the coughing of blackened exhaust pipes. This is 'the Green Path Organic State,' an eco-initiative that houses an eco-store and organic cafe. The quiet, green space, cocooned amidst the worst of city life, is testament to changing priorities and a newfound balance that civilisation is seeking with nature. Here, one can buy herbs for Rs. 50 a pot, have a wholesome lunch of raagi rotis and beetroot fresh from the farm and stock up on organic alternatives at the in-house store.

One of their recent projects involved setting up a Square Foot planter bed at the Munchkins Montessori & Day Care so that gardening could be incorporated into their early learning curriculum. Today, toddlers at the school grow their own mint, lemongrass and coriander plants in boxes made with recycled wood, and filled with an easy-to-dig organic mixture of garden soil, cocopeat and vermicompost.

Courtesy: www.thebetterindia.com

The meaning of all this

This wise, stirring book argues that the search for meaning can immeasurably deepen and fulfill our lives. There is a myth that the search for meaning is some esoteric pursuit - that you have to travel to a distant monastery to figure out life's great secret. The truth is, there are untapped sources of meaning all around us right here, right now. Drawing on the latest research in positive psychology, Emily Esfahani Smith lays out the four pillars upon which meaning rests: Belonging, Purpose, Storytelling, and Transcendence. *The Power of Meaning* will strike a profound chord in anyone seeking a richer, more satisfying life.



The Power of Meaning: Crafting a Life That Matters

By Emily Esfahani Smith

Published by Crown Publishing Group (NY)

Price: Rs.1229/- Pages: 288

The Bible through her eyes

Scripture scholar and Dominican Sister Barbara Reid is the general editor of the Wisdom Commentary, a series of feminist commentaries on every book of the Bible, the first of its kind to offer feminist interpretations of the entire Bible. Contributors hail from around the globe and bring experience and expertise from a variety of traditions and cultures, something Reid says is crucial to reading and interpreting the Bible. She's quick to point out, however, that there are many forerunners to the Wisdom Commentary: "This is not a modern day phenomenon. Women have been interpreting the Bible through their own experience and their own lenses from time immemorial."

What does it mean to do feminist biblical interpretation?

Feminism is a perspective and a movement that begins by recognizing that there are great inequities toward women in the church and in society. The movement advocates for changes in not only interpersonal relationships but also the structures that keep all people from flourishing. It's not only about women. All of us benefit when the inequities against women are addressed.

Feminist biblical interpretation approaches the Bible with the consciousness that the Bible was, for the most part, written by men, for men, about men, and to serve men's interests.

Now, as I say that, I am not trying to denigrate men. It's very important to recognize the historical contexts from which our scriptures come and that, for the most part, the perspectives represented in the scriptures are not women's.

Feminist biblical interpretation starts from that basic recognition and then approaches the Bible with a set of questions such as: Where were the women? What was their experience?

How would they have received what was being said about them or addressed to them? What do we know historically about what women were doing? What do we know about the cultural mores of the day?

For example, if Paul says women should keep silent in churches, what

who are poor and in rural Mexico, for example, hear biblical texts. Do they sound very different to a privileged, white, North American woman like myself? That's part of what goes into feminist biblical interpretation; it tries to keep the perspective of women's experience in the foreground.



did the women think about that? What was the precise situation he was addressing? Clearly women had to have been speaking out, if Paul is saying, "You shouldn't speak out."

We don't paint all women with the same brush because experiences varied depending on whether they lived in the city or in the countryside, whether they lived in Greece or Rome, Jerusalem or rural Galilee, or whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

We start by trying to get to the root of their experiences and ask how we can put ourselves in their shoes before we start to relate the scripture to today. And we do the same hard work of analyzing social realities and contexts in our day, too, because the same text won't mean the same thing to different people in today's world.

On one of my sabbaticals, I had the opportunity to spend time in different parts of Latin America. I very much wanted to learn how women

Another part is to do critical analysis of the social, cultural, and historical structures that create the inequities. Then we ask how what we're interpreting affects the real-life situations of women and men in the church today.

Is this a new way of reading the Bible?

Women have always told Bible stories to their children and relied on it to help navigate challenges. The problem is that until recent decades women's work in biblical interpretation has been largely lost.

We know of a few forerunners from early days. One that I discovered while working on the Wisdom Commentary series was a woman named Helie who lived in the second century. Her parents wanted her to marry, and she refused. They brought her before a judge who tried to force her to get married. The judge quoted to her 1 Corinthians 7:9:

“It’s better to marry than to be aflame with passion.” Helie first says she recognizes that’s what Paul says, but then she comes back with, “But not for everyone. Not for holy virgins.”

She’s really one of the first women we know of who questioned the notion that one meaning of the text fits all times, places, and circumstances. In a certain sense, she’s already a fore-runner to those who espouse the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation. These scholars say you have to take the historical context into account and not manipulate the text to mean what you want it to mean.

We also know of a Jewish woman who lived around the same time by the name of Beruriah. She came from a family of rabbis. She challenged her husband, Rabbi Meir. When he prayed for the destruction of a sinner, she argued that Psalm 104 says that you should pray for the destruction of sin, not the sinner.

Women have always questioned the prevailing biblical interpretation, that of their husbands or the men who are interpreting the Bible in their communities. They’ve always paid attention to their experience and brought their critical minds to it.

Why do you think feminist biblical interpretation gets marginalized in scripture studies?

For a long time the historical-critical method, where you look at and analyze the historical context of scripture, has been considered a standard approach to biblical interpretation. Any method that starts by acknowledging the particular lenses we bring to the text is often considered something other than standard biblical interpretation.

All of us have our limitations in what we bring to the text. Our own perspectives very much color how we interpret the Bible. Feminists are trying to urge all biblical interpreters to recognize their own bias.

Take the parable of the vineyard workers in Matthew 20, the one where the vineyard owner goes out five times during the day and all throughout the

day keeps hiring more people to go out to the vineyard, and then at the end of the day pays everybody the same.

I always had a terrible time with that parable because it didn’t seem fair that others come in at the last minute and get the same wage. Having been baptized on the sixth day of my life and having worked in the church my whole adult life, I saw myself as one of those called early and were in the vineyard working from the morning and hoping that there’d be some equitable recompense at the end of the day.

As much as I struggled with that, I never saw it from the perspective that was shared with me by a woman when I was giving a workshop years ago in Denver. I’ve never forgotten what she saw in that parable. She explained to me that she was a single mother. Her husband had left her. She had three children. She had no education, no skills, and struggled to make ends meet. She waited day after day in unemployment lines hoping somebody would hire her. She was willing to do anything just so that she could feed her babies. “The people who are standing on the corner all day, they’re not lazy people,” she said. “They’re like me. They’re willing to work. They’re probably the ones who have disabilities, who look old, who look feeble, who look sick, who the vineyard owner is going to pass up, because he thinks he won’t be able to get as much work out of them as from the younger, heartier, healthier ones.

“They get passed up until the vineyard owner is desperate to get his harvest in, and he’ll take anybody,” she said. “The way that I see it, if that vineyard owner gives the workers who came last any less than the minimum to be able to feed their families at the end of the day, what good is that at all?”

“If that vineyard owner is God, then what this parable tells us is that everybody deserves to eat at the end of the day, and it doesn’t depend on how long you worked. You don’t work for your food in the kingdom of God,” she said.

Then she pointed out that even though some workers had been toiling

all day in the sun, they’d also had the assurance, all day long, that at the end of the day they were going to be able to feed their children.

From my privileged perch, I never would have seen the parable that way. In a similar way, many of my male colleagues simply would not see the absence or presence of women or how a text might affect women.

Do you have a favorite biblical passage that this method reinterprets?

In Luke 18: 1–8, the parable of the widow and the judge, most people see the judge as the God figure. They stand on their head and turn cartwheels to try to figure out how an unjust judge can be a God figure.

But I see the widow as the God figure, our God who always takes the side of the one who’s been wronged, who is absolutely persistent, and who will not give up until justice is accomplished. The widow is a kind of patron saint of feminists because she’s the unexpected face of God. She is so tenacious and persistent. She has to go back to court day after day. She gets ignored. She gets put to the back of the line.

Now, this isn’t in the text, but I imagine that the judge hears first the cases of those who have money to bribe him. But the widow will not go away, and her persistence is what finally brings about justice.

She’s also not foolish enough to think that she has converted the unjust judge. At the end, he still says, “I have no respect for God or for any human being.” He says it’s only because he’s afraid that she’s going to give him a black eye that he’s going to give her justice. That line is not usually translated that way, but that’s what it says literally. It’s a funny image of a powerful judge cowering before a supposedly powerless little widow.

As the reader of the parable, we know she’s not going to hurt him. It’s a delightful twist that she’s now the one who’s got the power, and he has relinquished it to her. She hasn’t changed the whole system, but she has gotten one small victory for justice.

This widow can encourage feminists as she is an icon for what it means to do the work of justice. She's incredibly persistent, but she also teaches that when you have nothing left to lose, you step out of bounds.

What can feminist biblical interpretation unearth about Jesus' relationships to his disciples?

The Gospel of John uses the metaphor of friendship more than any other gospel. It's the primary metaphor Jesus uses for his relationship with his disciples. He very explicitly says in his final discourse to the disciples in John 15 that "I call you friends, no longer servants, but friends."

I wish that we would put that line from scripture above every church door and on all of our walls, because, for some reason, the metaphor of lord and servant has really stuck as our primary way of understanding our relationship with God. The great feminist scripture scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has pointed out that this kind of imagery keeps very firmly in place patriarchal systems that keep women subordinate to men.

We've translated this 'lord and servant' metaphor into how women then see themselves as subservient to powerful men. However that metaphor is very complex. There can be a liberating aspect to it, for example, when African Americans use that metaphor to talk about being slaves of God, slaves of the Lord, slaves of Jesus. It can be liberating and subversive for Blacks to assert that they are not slaves of a white master, to say: "We are slaves of our God and Lord only, and you can't enslave my heart. You can't enslave my spirit. You can't enslave my soul."

Pope Francis, in his New Year's Day address last year, had some very strong comments about modern forms of slavery and the systems that keep it in place - for example, the trafficking of women and children and disadvantaged males. I wonder if taking his lead, we might start putting aside more of that master-slave metaphor for our relationship with God and Jesus. One way of approaching this is to begin

using some other metaphors like the friendship metaphor that's so strong in the Gospel of John.

How is interpreting the Bible an act of power?

Whoever interprets for the community shapes the minds and hearts and spiritual lives of people, whether it be a biblical scholar who writes her reflections or a preacher who preaches from the scriptures.

Women have been greatly affected by these power dynamics that keep them in subservient positions. Interpreting the Bible differently and encouraging people who have traditionally been in subservient positions to ask different questions is both empowering for them and threatening to those in power.

The same thing happens in Jesus' life: He empowers the disenfranchised, and that's a very strong challenge to those who have power, privilege, and status. The powerful will always do their very best to silence or even kill any prophet who challenges the status quo. We see that dynamic very clearly at work in the life of Jesus and all those who've followed in his footsteps.

Sometimes people dismiss or speak critically about feminist women and describe them as only wanting to grab power. They make it sound like power is something evil or something that will ruin women. I think power is a good thing. We need to use power in its best and most transformative ways.

The gospel is a powerful tool and preaching the gospel is an act of power. The gospel empowers those who have been oppressed and challenges those who misuse it.

What many feminists advocate today is that women should not be kept out of arenas where power is exercised in the world and in the church simply on the basis of their sex. We're all impoverished when women's gifts are not able to be fully used. This affects all of us. It's not a power grab for women. It's women wanting to use their gifts for empowerment for the whole church.

Why is it so hard to dismantle the language and culture of

patriarchy in our church and the world?

I don't think any unjust system gets broken down easily. Take for example Paul's insistence that there is no more Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. The dividing wall between Jew and Gentile was one of the very most difficult for the early Christians to work through. Even though we would probably say that that got resolved in the first centuries of the church, a very long legacy of Christian anti-Judaism remains.

It took 18 centuries of Christianity and the U.S. Civil War to address the question of slave and free. The Bible was used to shore up a system of slavery in this country. And even though slavery is now illegal in this country, there are many new forms of enslavement throughout the world. The slave/free dichotomy is something we still have not overcome.

I think we've made great strides in overcoming gender barriers. It is always going to be hard work. Part of it is how we're brought up. We were brought up to think that's the way life is. It's very hard to dismantle that and reimagine the world differently.

People resist dismantling gender inequality very strongly because it really does mean turning your whole world upside down and reframing the way that you think about everything in the world. It does entail a struggle, and people have to be prepared that it's not going to be an easy turnaround.

It's almost as big a shift as the shift we had to make when Copernicus and Galileo insisted that the earth is not the center of the solar system. What did it take - some 300 years for Galileo to be exonerated after having been excommunicated for advocating such notions? Our notions of how we envision the way the world runs are hard to adjust.

Feminists today would say that the gender inequities are absolutely intertwined with race, class, and all the other -isms. It's not only about gender inequity. ■

Courtesy: www.uscatholic.org

Universal mission or universal availability?



BY JOSEPH LOBO, SJ

With the renewed awareness about the Society of Jesus being a 'universal body with a universal mission', thanks to the deliberations in varied Jesuit fora, including GCs 35 and 36, the following questions have been nagging my and, I guess, many a Jesuit heart and mind:

a. Are the celebrated concepts such as 'contextuality' and 'locality' to be considered a thing of the past with the onslaught of the new awareness of 'universality'?

b. Have the great visions of GCs 32 and 34 that created in us a deep sense of commitment to the contexts 'gone with the wind' in the aftermath of GCs 35 and 36?

c. Is there a possibility of integrating the 'local' with the 'universal'?

For an adequate response, first we need address a few important related issues.

What is universality?

It is a long-established fact that 'universal Society' just as 'universal Church' is basically an abstraction. Such abstractions gain concreteness only in the local provinces/dioceses, communities/parishes and finally in individual Jesuits/Christians. Hence, commitment to any abstracted reality becomes real and concrete only when and to the extent to which it is concretized in the local. The 'universal mission' cannot be an exception to this.

Is there a universal mission?

To my knowledge there isn't! I stand open for correction. Mission/apostolates in Afghanistan, China, Rome, Africa, France, Taiwan, International houses or national centers, are contextual missions with clear specificities of their respective local situations. 'Universal mission' of the Society gets concretized in these contextual missions/apostolates.

What then is 'universal'?

One can speak about 'universal availability of an individual Jesuit for any contextual/ local mission anywhere in the world'. We also have universal/global scale problems such as, migration, refugees, human trafficking, environmental degradation, all sorts of exploitation of the vulnerable by the MNCs etc. But the 'global issues' have specific and varied local *avatars*. These manifestations are not identical everywhere. Hence, although problems are of global scale, the responses need to reflect coordinated efforts of many contextual/local apostolates.

Beyond mere semantics

Are we merely playing with words here, or is there something more than mere linguistic usages? The weightier issues are related to methodology, sense of commitment, interior attitudes, availability to be sent anywhere in the world and apostolic flexibility to be effective anywhere. Any eclipsing of the 'contextual' by the 'universal' actually results in a shift in the missional and the theological method. It reduces commitment to an idea and as a result one's heart gets uprooted from the concrete reality before one's eyes. For example: let us suppose there is a national or international formation house. If the inmates in such a house consider themselves as doing a more 'universal mission' and neglect the local context in which that house is located, the formation imparted can be of an uprooted nature and hence fruitless. Formees formed thereby will not have equipped themselves with adequate methodology and attitudes to engage in any concrete mission anywhere. The same applies to those possible cases where an apostolate, however 'universal' it claims to be, ignores the local situation.

Commitment to the local and the rooting of one's head, heart and faith therein is intrinsic to such a methodology. When one is shifted to

another locality, thanks to universal availability, although the 'content' of the context changes, the contextual methodology learnt remains and becomes useful in the new context.

It should now be clear that a misperception of contextuality is a misconceived idea of 'universality' that can make our existence anywhere rootless, and mission fruitless. We often cite the examples of great missionaries of yore, ready to set out to remote parts of the globe in a couple of minutes. We can rightly call such phenomena 'universal availability'. But we often forget what they did once they reached their 'mission lands', how they were so deeply rooted in the local contexts, produced volumes on local languages, cultures, religions and customs. Their universal availability enabled them to be rooted in the contextual missions of wherever they were sent. They were not carrying out a 'universal mission', but a very contextual mission(s).

Today's global scale problems need collaboration among many 'contextual apostolates' that are carried out in many parts of the world. The collaborating apostles cannot afford to lose sight of the contextual rooting and manifestations of the global scale problems. It is to these that one needs to respond in thoroughly contextual ways, while, of course, keeping in mind the global nature of the problems. If the recent reports on social media are right, the firm stand taken by the US Jesuits against some controversial policies of their current national government is rightly a 'local response' to potentially (and actually) several global issues. By doing so they are in fact collaborating with perhaps other groups of Jesuits and non-Jesuits, who are involved in a related 'local mission' in West Asia etc.

We need to foster such collaboration among many 'contextual missions' to be effectively responding to the global scale issues. ■



“I am a citizen of the world!”

BY ANTHONY MOONNUPEEDIKAIL, SJ

The earliest mental picture I have of myself is that of me marching as a freedom fighter. I must have been about five years old. On my tiny head I had a spotlessly white Gandhi cap of the Indian National Congress. With two elder brothers I hurried to the Meenachil river front at Cherpunkal in Kerala, to listen to the fiery speeches against the British rule. Many a time with my screechy voice, I joined the crowd to shout “Bharat Mata Ki Jai!”. As a student I continued to take part in the freedom struggle.

But for about 50 years now, I prudently avoid shouting the same slogan and saluting the National Flag. In May 1966, standing on the bank of a river at the foot of the Himalayas, I promised to myself that I would never salute any nation’s flag, nor accept any national boundary. That day I was born a citizen of the world.

During that summer I landed in a village of Uttar Pradesh. My aim was to achieve fluency in speaking Hindi. Skirting that village a lovely river rushed down from the snow-clad Himalayas. Every afternoon I had a swim in the cool waters with the village youth. One day they explained to me that our bank of the river was the end of India and the opposite bank was Pakistan territory! I was amazed. On both banks lived the same tribes cultivating the land. Many were relatives. I realized that if the two countries went to war, these people would have to fight and die for two different flags. Someone at some time found in the map a river and decided that it was the natural boundary between the two countries. The residents had no say

in the matter. This realization shook me up. I decided never to approve sovereign nations, nor to salute any national flag.

The human baby, for its survival, depends on other humans. Gradually, the family, the culture and the country moulds it into their slave. Since all of us all the time are surrounded by the well-shaped slaves, we do not recognize the slavery. Of these three slave masters country is the most harmful and cruel. I think becoming human is the process of crossing the boundaries of family, culture and country.

I remember one of my last sermons in an American church. With some nervousness I said: “My dear brethren, some four hundred years ago, your forefathers and some four thousand years ago my forefathers, marched into new areas on the earth, occupied other peoples’ land and told us the lie that God gave us our country. God gave no one any country. He gave us the earth”. People laughed. The good pastor tried to argue. Knowing that all are in the same darkness in which I was once, I do not argue.

What is patriotism? It is simply the extension of human selfishness. Selfishness is the innate animal instinct in every living being, which makes use of anything around it for its growth. Big trees grow absorbing small plants.. Animals and birds grow up consuming plants and insects and small animals. “Each one for itself” is the law of the living creatures. Man subjugates all these. He also makes use of other humans weaker than himself for his advantage. Civil and criminal laws are also framed by selfish men for selfish ends.

Sovereign countries are the most successful creation of the animal instinct in man called selfishness.

Selfishness is evil and so every sovereign country is an immoral structure. Selfishness is the residue of the original sin, the darkness that envelops the whole humanity. Good spirituality and asceticism aim at conquering selfishness and making man an all-loving person. Self realization for man is that he becomes an all-loving person.

Patriotism hinders man from becoming fully human. Due to patriotism the earth is constantly drenched with the blood of the innocent. How sad it is to see a youth of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu dying in Kargil, the highest army camp in the Himalayas, defending a border line he didn’t draw up and knows nothing about. Military is an immoral organization and every war is a diabolic activity violating in a massive way the Ten Commandments of God. Living in the darkness of patriotism, we do not notice it. When man will grow into fully human, he will recognize wars as acts of fratricide and will abandon it just as he abandoned cannibalism.

Leo Tolstoy has said: “I know that my unity with all people cannot be destroyed by national boundaries and government orders”. George Bernard Shaw declared very correctly: “You will never have a quiet world, till you knock out Patriotism out of human race”. To enlightened people the whole humanity is the nation and love does not stop at any boundary. Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount will be the law of those who are fully human. Satyagraha of Gandhiji will be their weapon. The destiny of humans is universal brotherhood. All countries should surrender their sovereignty to the United Nations and open their borders for all the peoples of the world! ■

Dear Mr President...

Executive Director of Jesuit Refugee Service writes to Donald Trump

BY LEO J. O'DONOVAN, SJ

Dear Mr. President,

Congratulations on your inauguration. Americans, whether supporters or critics of your candidacy, know that in the days ahead you will have to come to grips with many challenges that will affect not only the well-being of the people of the United States, but of all peoples worldwide. All Americans hope that you will address these issues effectively and in accord with the deep values of our country.

Not least of these challenges is the U.S. response to human migration. Today people are on the move in unprecedented numbers. Some move voluntarily, drawn by economic opportunities or family ties. Others—some 65 million and growing—have been forcibly uprooted by war, persecution, ethnic and religious strife, dire poverty, natural catastrophe or environmental degradation. Their number is equivalent to the entire population of Great Britain.

Our organization, Jesuit Refugee Service, knows well the struggles refugees face. We know how eager they are to live in safety, use their skills to regain self-sufficiency and prepare their children for a better future.

Refugees are survivors. As Americans, we share their values: the will to overcome any obstacle, to assert independence, to defend hard-won freedoms and to achieve success through sheer determination. This should come as no surprise because so many Americans have come to our country as refugees. In earlier days,

these were Irish escaping man-made famine, Scots driven from their land, Jews and evangelicals escaping Soviet repression. In recent years they have included Vietnamese prisoners of war, the workers and translators who supported U.S. forces during our wars in Iraq, and survivors of conflict in Somalia, Myanmar and Syria. In the past four decades, about three million such refugees have been offered new lives in the United States under the U.S. resettlement program. They are weaving their lives into the tapestry of this country through the work of their hands.



Our country's welcome of these newcomers expresses who we are as a people. It is a sign of our commitment to the rights of refugees to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution. It reflects our desire to respond to the call of the Jewish and Christian scriptures to welcome strangers among us, especially those in danger or great need. It is rooted in the recognition that all men and women possess a shared human dignity and, in the eyes of faith, are sons and daughters of a loving Creator who calls us together as one human family.

Though essential for those most in need, asylum and resettlement can assist fewer than 1 percent of the world's refugees. Most will remain

in temporary exile until they can return home. This reality places a tremendous strain on the very poor countries that host the vast majority of refugees. It is essential that U.S. assistance to these host countries be continued and, indeed, increased. The United States should also intensify its leadership in diplomatic efforts to alleviate the underlying causes of forced migration, and to facilitate safe return when conditions allow. As Pope Francis said before Congress during his U.S. papal visit, "In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities."

Mr. President, the generosity of the United States in response to the needs of refugees is a source of our reputation as "the last best hope of humankind" and expresses our highest moral values. Our leadership in this effort will also benefit our country economically and politically by contributing to world peace and stability. In today's uncertain international environment we should seize the opportunity to advance human dignity through a revitalized refugee response. When you consider actions you might take to fulfill your promise to make America great again, remember the greatness of heart that is at the foundation of just and humane U.S. refugee assistance. Our nation and our world look to you for a magnanimous response to those who have been forced from their homes.

Respectfully yours,
Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J.

(Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., is the Interim Executive Director of Jesuit Refugee Service in Washington, D.C., U.S.A.)

Courtesy: www.americamagazine.org

“We are trying to fix our policy on sexual harassment”

interview with Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas



Why does the Catholic Church appear to protect its clergy accused of rape? CBCI's Secretary General, Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas talks on Church's position on such matters in a telephonic conversation with Anoo Bhuyan of Outlook magazine. Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas declined to answer questions on specific cases, but talked about the Church's position on such matters. Excerpts:

What is the official position of the Catholic Church in India on cases of sexual abuse by the clergy?

We are totally against any sexual offence. It is against Catholic teaching. We are against any form of disrespect to the dignity of women, not just harassment or rape. If we have failed in any way, we would apologise to the people we have hurt. That is the official position. This is why we are working on our own sexual harassment policy at work. CBCI is coming out with a document within a month.

In what you have just said, there is an acknowledgement of these crimes taking place. According to the Vishakhaguidelines, every workplace is supposed to have a policy to deal with sexual harassment. What is the shape of CBCI's policy on this?

The policy is zero tolerance for sexual harassment. We want it to be easy to implement. We will have monitoring cells and complaint cells at diocese or institution level. We want to respond to complaints speedily too. We are interested that all employees are educated about their role and the respect they should show to other humans. We have also started implementing POCSO at our institutions. We are

moving from school to school to make the staff POCSO-compliant. Besides punishment, I feel proper education has to take place in society. We have cases within the Catholic church just as outside in the society.

The Vishakha guidelines came from the Supreme Court in 1997. Some of the biggest cases of sexual abuse in the church are decades old. Isn't this response from the church late and lethargic?

I have spent the last 21 years in Rome and have just come back to India. How can I answer what action has been taken and what has not? The whole country is affected by a certain malaise. The real question is why the law takes so long to deliver justice in the country.

Is this the fault of society's "malaise"? But doesn't the Church believe in being 'in the world, but not of the world'? Shouldn't we expect better standards from the Church?

When I said it is a malaise in society, I was not defending what is happening. We apologise for whatever might have happened and we would not like it to happen again. And we are trying our best to implement whatever has to be implemented in the best way it can. But you are picking a few rare cases. They remain rarest of the rare. We do not want even these to happen.

In several cases, the victims -women and children - are weak and vulnerable, while the Catholic Church is powerful at many levels. The victims have suffered while the priests have been safeguarded. You said the law is slow, so how fair is it to expect victims to simply go to court?

No, it is not simply about going to court. We have to clean up our mistakes too. I think the power of the Church is often exaggerated. We want to use our moral power so that society can be clean. I don't think it is true that we use our power to cover up facts. You can't take a few examples and colour everybody. The Church is often the most humiliated in the press.

That's because the church has a higher pedestal, so minor transgressions will be magnified. In this case, give me a counter story. Tell me a case where the victim has been supported by the church and the accused priest has not been protected. What we have instead are cases like that of Palanivel Jeypaul, who pleaded guilty of molestation in the US but was reinstated as a priest in India.

How can I give you a counter case when most cases are dealt with on a confidential basis. Also, I am not the right person to speak to on cases like this as they are under the local areas.

What about the moves to canonise Fr Onamkulam, who was falsely accused and sentenced to death by a sessions court for the murder of Mariakutty. So is there a counter story to this trend, where the Church came down heavy on a priest?

I have returned to India only recently and recently taken charge. I do not have all the material available with me right now to respond to you, as I am on the road and travelling in Ranchi. We are sorry for where we have failed and we are trying to fix our policies now. ■

Courtesy: www.outlookindia.com

Summer Programmes

offered by South Asian Assistancy

1. WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES AND SKILLS

Jointly organised by Formation Commission and JESA supported by Assistancy Development Office.

Development work in the Society of Jesus is a service to the poor for their empowerment and freedom. This is a ministry performed in faith, proceeding from Ignatian discernment. The global economic scenario is changing rapidly and calls for more organized and professional efforts at resource mobilization.

Course Content:

- Spirituality of fundraising
- Relationship with benefactors
- Management of resources
- Skills in managing projects and reporting/ accountability.

Dates: 1-7 May 2017 (both days inclusive)

Venue: Indian Social Institute, Bangalore

Course Fees: Rs 6000/- (inclusive of board & lodging, course fees, stationery & field visits)

Contact Person: Fr. Siji Noorokariyil, S.J.

Coordinator, PDD & ADD

Email: jcsa.pddco@gmail.com

Mobile: 090066 52021/09430888479

2. SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS COURSE / WORKSHOP

This Course/Workshop is being envisaged and organized on the basis of Analysis, Awareness and Action pedagogy to take a critical stock of the prevailing situations in the fields of social, economic, political and religious situations in our country.

Keeping this objective in view, a few relevant themes have been worked out for the workshop. The very Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic and Republic nature of our country is at stake since the uprising of communal forces. The preamble of our constitution which guarantees Justice (of social, economic and political), Liberty (of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship), Equality (of status and opportunity) and Fraternity (of the dignity of the individuals and the unity and integrity of the nation) is becoming a distant dream for the ordinary people of our country.

An integrated view of the situations is desired to be achieved through this workshop. Socio-economic, religio-political and gender contexts with alternative discourses and media will form the content of this workshop. Social

scientists and activists will conduct this course through appropriate field visits and reflections. Before moving into the stage of theological formation, the formees are expected to have undergone this course.

Dates: 18-30, April 2017

Venue: Indian Social Institute, Bangalore

Course Fees: Rs. 9000/- (inclusive of board & lodging, course materials & fees).

Contact Person:

Fr. Jayaseelan Arockiam SJ

HOD, Human Rights and Training Unit

Indian Social Institute, Bangalore

Email: isihumanrights@gmail.com

Mobile: 09440183106

3. WORKSHOP ON CRITICAL THINKING ON CONTEMPORARY INDIA

The 21st Century India has been experiencing fundamental changes in society, polity, economy and culture. Intertwining of modernity and tradition has produced complex social relations. Though villages are 'vanishing' and giving way to the ever expanding urban landscape, yet village India carries its resonance to the urban India. Legitimacy and rationale of old social identities based on caste, tribe and community are challenged and reconfigured after negotiations and confrontations. India has been struggling hard to find innovative ways to balance growth with equity.

The course is aimed at providing a critical understanding of perspectives through which the contemporary context of rural and urban India can be understood. It is expected to make young Jesuits comprehend the broad contours of the spatiality, polity, economy and cultural aspects of villages and cities in India along with their convergences and contradictions. This will help develop a critical thinking on the growth and the development processes within and across such spaces in the country.

Dates: 23 April 2017 Arrival and 1st May 2017 Departure.

Course Fees: Rs. 7,000/- (inclusive of board & lodging, course materials & fees)

Venue: Centre for Culture and Development, Sevasi, Vadodara, Gujarat

Contact Person: Dr. Lancy Lobo

Email: drlancylobo48@gmail.com

Mobile: 09426336747 / (O) 0265-2372001.

BY JAMES MARTIN, SJ

Some people have asked me, in person and on social media, why I've been posting so much about migrants and refugees these days, beyond the fact that it is so much in the news. Here are several reasons:

First, because some of the actions of the new administration are so clearly antithetical to Christian values that I cannot stay silent. I'm not a political person, but I am a Christian, and I feel compelled to speak out on this issue. On all life issues, to be sure, but especially on this one, for a reason I'll soon explain.

prone" countries are doing so because they're fleeing terror, not promoting it. Finally, the Syrian people desperate to escape their country are in imminent danger of death.

Fourth, I want to correct some widespread misunderstandings about the Gospel. Some of the commentary from otherwise thoughtful Christians has been stunning. To me, it's tantamount to saying, "Jesus never said that we should care for all the poor. Just people in our own family, right?"

For example, Jesus doesn't say help the stranger only if there's no risk to you. Or help the stranger only if it's convenient. Or help the stranger only if he or she is the same religion that you are.

How could Jesus be any clearer about the need to care for the stranger?

But there's a final reason that I feel moved to advocate for refugees: because of my love for them. From 1992 to 1994, I worked with East African refugees in Nairobi, Kenya, during my time with the Jesuit Refugee Service. During those two years, I came to know many refugees, from Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, Ethiopia and many other countries. Our ministry in Kenya was to help the refugees who had settled in Nairobi start small businesses to support themselves. (I speak at length about this in my book, *This Our Exile*.)

They were, without a doubt, the most hardworking, prayerful, hopeful,



There's no way I could be silent

Second, because the Gospels are so patently, almost absurdly, clear about the Christian requirement to care for the stranger. Jesus could not possibly be any clearer. In the Gospel of Matthew, for example, Jesus says that we should treat the stranger as if he were him. "I was a stranger and you did not welcome me," he says to those who are unwilling to do so.

This saying comes when he is speaking about how we will all be judged at the end of time. By the way, the passage is sometimes referred to as the "Judgment of Nations." He's not speaking simply about individuals, but, yes, about nations.

Third, because there is still so much misunderstanding about migrants and refugees. Here are just a few truths that people seem to be forgetting or ignoring: Immigrants are far less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans. The vast majority of Syrian refugees are women and children. The overwhelming majority of refugees who come from "terror

Think of Jesus's Parable of the Good Samaritan, from the Gospel of Luke. A Jewish man is lying by the side of the road after having been beaten on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho. Two men—a priest and a Levite—pass him by. That is, two people from his own religious group. They are probably frightened: that road, still in existence today, was notoriously dangerous, with robbers lying in wait for travelers. So they passed by the stranger.

Finally, another man stops, a Samaritan (the opponents of the Jews at the time). At risk to himself, the man stops. He doesn't say, "Oh, it might be dangerous." Or maybe he does—but he helps him anyway. And he not only helps the man, he binds up his wounds and takes the man to an inn and pays for his stay.

That's one of the points of the story: He helps him anyway. Moreover, the Jewish man finds that his salvation came from the one whom he had considered an enemy.

joyful and honest people I've ever met. And they had seen so much suffering and misery. One woman had seen her entire family killed before her eyes. Another man had to make his way to Nairobi through the bush, with wild animals in pursuit. Another had her house burned down just when she was starting to eke out a living.

They had to deal with things that most of us would find unimaginable: prejudice, starvation, torture, murder, genocide. And yet they were filled with hope. And humor.

I count them, still, as among my friends.

So I feel that I know something about this issue, and when I see how they are being vilified and mistreated, I am, like Jesus often was, moved with pity. There's no way that I could keep silent.

(This essay, titled 'Why I advocate for Refugees,' originally appeared on Fr James Martin's public Facebook page)

Courtesy: www.americamagazine.org

EMMANUEL RAJ ANTONISAMY, SJ

(MDU) 1945 - 2017



Fr Emmanuel Raj welcomed with a smile everyone who came to visit him at the hospital and kept saying, "Thank you" or "Praise the Lord." The call of the Lord came to him on 03 Feb '17 morning.

Fr Emmanuel Raj was born on 17 Dec 1945 at Pacheri, a substation of Vembattur–Michael Pattanam parish in Sivagangai diocese. He was the eldest child in his family with two brothers and a sister. Since his father, Mr Antonisamy, was a teacher in the school at Michaelpattanam, his family settled down there. He entered the novitiate in Beschi college on 24 May 1962. A pious and prayerful novice, he was the one who volunteered to preach, whenever the novices were asked to preach an extempore sermon, when they were out on villa days. After one year of Juniorate in Beschi, he was sent to Berchmans Hall in Chennai for his undergraduate studies.

After theology in Pune he was ordained on 02 May 1976. He was appointed the General Prefect of the Catholic Boys Boarding at St Mary's, Madurai for a year. In the following year he was the procurator and teacher at St. Mary's, Dindigul. Then he was sent to St Xavier's, Palayamkottai and he taught in the Hr.Sec.School from 1986 till May 1988. He went on to teach in the College of Education while serving also as the Director of the B.Ed. Hostel. This seems to be the time when he began to develop problems related to mental health. He was sent to Beschi Illam, Dindigul for rest. He improved and became the academic coordinator in the M.S. University in Palayamkottai till May 2005. He was the Principal of Ansaldo College of Education in Maruthuvambadi, Chetpet from 2005 till 2012. As his health deteriorated, he was sent to St. Mary's, Madurai. In August, 2016 he became very sick and was taken to St Mary of Leuca Hospital in Moonrumavadi on 13 Aug '16. The doctors found he had jaundice, but when he was healed of jaundice, other complications set in that affected his liver. On 20 Aug he was taken to Meenakshi Mission Hospital and kept in the I.C.U. for 8 days. The doctors said that there was no hope of his recovery and he was discharged from the hospital. He returned to St Mary's, but soon he had to be rushed to the hospital again.

He passed away peacefully in the morning of 03 Feb. His body was brought to St Mary's at about 9.45 a.m. and a lot of people came to pay their respects. The funeral Mass began in the Cathedral at 4.00 p.m. presided by the Provincial, Fr Sebastia L. Raj. In his homily Fr Sebastian Soosai praised God for the many good qualities of Fr Emmanuel. After the Mass, Fr P.Arockiasamy, Rector, St Mary's, and Fr. Michael Jeyaraj, former Provincial, paid rich tributes to Fr Emmanuel Raj. Mr.A. Amalraj, his second brother, thanked the Jesuits, particularly those who looked after him in his last days. The final commendation was done by Fr Provincial and Fr Danis Ponniah, Rector, St.Xavier's, conducted the burial service in the cemetery. May Fr Raj, the hard working educationist, rest in peace!

- Eronimus Santiago, SJ

VICTOR ARULAPPAN, SJ

(MDU) 1945 - 2017



On 13 Feb '17, having returned after guiding a retreat, Fr Victor looked tired and complained of throat pain. At night while he was watching TV, Fr A. Joseph, Superior, Dhyana Ashram, Chennai, who was with him in the T.V. room, suggested he should sleep early and offered to celebrate the Mass next morning. Saying he will be up for the Mass, Fr Victor retired to bed. The next morning he didn't turn up for the Mass and Fr Joseph celebrated it. Initially they thought he might like to sleep longer, as he felt tired. But as time went by they decided to open the door. They found him in a sitting position near the clothes stand. As there was no pulse, they called for the doctor who, after checking, said he must have died around 5.30 a.m. of a massive heart attack.

The news of his death was received by Jesuits with shock and sadness. His funeral, originally scheduled to be held at Loyola, Chennai, had to be shifted to Beschi, Dindigul, as most of his family and relatives in and around Dindigul felt they won't be able to travel to Chennai.

Fr Victor Arulappan was born in Silukkuvaarpatti near Dindigul in 1945 and joined the Society in 1962. After completing his formation he was ordained in 1974. As part of his tertianship he undertook something few would dare to do. He got the superiors to let him live a beggar's life for a month in order to experience the reality of poverty. With no money to depend on, he wandered around dressed like a beggar, begging for his food and sleeping in public places like railway stations. He made his last vows in 1982.

He spent 8 years at St Xavier's, Palayamkottai, as the Hostel Director, Minister, counsellor and then as Rector. He spent 8 years at the Sacred Heart Residence, Dindigul as the Regional Director of Apostleship of Prayer and editor of *Thoothan*, the Tamil Messenger. For 10 years he was at Dhyana Ashram, Chennai, directing retreats and counselling students at Loyola. In 2007 he became the first Chennai Mission Superior and worked earnestly for the development of the region. After his 6-year term ended he served as the Team Leader at Ranipet and then at Vadampakkam. He returned to Dhyana Ashram in 2016.

A deeply spiritual man with a strong faith, he never said no whenever he was called to celebrate the Eucharist. A spirited and dynamic preacher, he counselled and guided married couples, youth and the religious. He readily helped a number of poor Dalits receive an education.

A large crowd of relatives, Sisters and Jesuits attended his funeral Mass on 15 Feb, presided over by the Provincial, Fr Sebastia L.Raj, who said Fr Victor's death was a personal loss for him, as he was always a friend. Fr Bosco (AND), his close relative and friend, preached a touching homily. Frs A. Joseph, Justin Emmanuel, Victor's nephew, Sr Rose, his sister and Mr Nicholas, his uncle testified to his life of faith and service. Fr Jebamalai Raja, Chennai Mission Superior, did the Final Commendation and Fr Ignacy Arockya, his nephew, conducted the burial service.

- M.A.J.A.

Christian institutions or commercial institutions?

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is reported to have criticized institutions run even by Christian managements as business centres. As was to be expected, his statement seems to have irked the Church. But no claim, even by the highest religious authority, can by itself guarantee the truth. After the Gujarat violence, then Fr. (now Bishop) Alex J. Vadakumthala met with some Catholics and their friends at St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad, "for evaluating the Church's contribution in the field of education... [They realised] that in a moment of crisis they [former students of Catholic institutions] acted in partisan manner and started fighting with each other... We have succeeded in giving them information but failed in imparting real life changing values" ("We are pilgrims to the humanity of love", *Light of Truth*, 16-31 March 2014, pp. 3 & 15, here p. 15a).

From what I see happening in the Hindi belt, I have enough reasons to say that many English medium institutions are commercial, and that is even creating a serious moral crisis among the clergy. In the eighties and nineties the bishops of India requested the services of a competent social scientist to make an empirical survey to evaluate the performance of the Catholic clergy and the impact of Neo-Pentecostal groups. That was a very commendable step. But as it so often happens, the bishops did not take the findings seriously. Both the surveys showed the Catholic clergy in bad light.

It is time that we now have two more empirical surveys by independent and competent social scientists to evaluate the impact of the English medium institutions run by the Church, and the pastoral adequacy of our bishops. The two questions are intimately connected.

- Fr Subhash Anand
Udaipur, Rajasthan - 313 001

P.G. DIPLOMA in IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

This new programme started at JDV, Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune, is a one-year rigorous programme in Ignatian Spirituality. Students who complete this P.G. Diploma may obtain an M.Th in Spirituality by doing one more year of studies in General Spirituality. Contact: Fr. Jossie D'Mello SJ/ JDV, Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion/ Ramwadi, Nagar Road/ Pune - 411 014. Email: jdvdpign@gmail.com; jossiedm@jesuits.net / Phone: +91 08625018646, 020- 41036 144 / 111.

We went to meet the Imam

Recently we did a course on Christian-Muslim Relations at Tarunoday, RTC, Ranchi. Victor Edwin, the instructor of the course, made presentations on the faith and life of Muslims in India. He pointed out that religion can be studied from the texts of the particular religion (Textual Approach) or it could be done by understanding the religion from various human contexts (Contextual Approach).

While emphasizing the importance of both approaches he suggested that the useful starting point will be learning from those who practice a particular faith. On a Friday, we set out to meet Imam Muhammad Misbahi at his madrasa.

He is the Imam (faith leader) of the Muslim community in Bariatu, Ranchi, What impressed us most was his heartwarming acceptance and hospitality. Indeed dialogue and hospitality are complementary. We were reminded of the words of Pierre Francois De Bethune as he emphasized in his book:

Interreligious Hospitality: The Fulfillment of Dialogue

that the words spoken within a hospitable environment take on their full force and meaning. Certainly hospitality is the environment that is best suited for any fruitful effort in dialogue. We were greatly impressed by his deep knowledge of the faith and customs of the Muslim believers. He knew well the significant closeness that exists between Christianity and Islam. During our interaction we reflected with the Imam on a number of issues that touch upon Christian-Muslim Relations and Indian Muslims. The Imam was courteous in clarifying our doubts.

We need to build up strong community relations between Christians and Sarna religious followers in the Tribal heartlands of Jharkhand and Chathisgarh.

- Sch Vimal Shishir Kerketta, SJ
Jharkhand - 834 001

Effective process

The cover story in the January '17 issue of *Jivan* titled, 'Electing the Superior General,' by Robert Danieluk, SJ, helps us understand that the process of electing a General, which has evolved over the years, yields the desired results. This becomes clear if you look at our Generals in the recent past. I've meditated on their gifts, qualities and contributions. They happen to be servants of the joy of the Gospel. They are contemplation-centred men of action. They happen to be persons who are humble, simple, humane and humorous.

From what we have seen so far it is clear that the new General, Fr Arturo Sosa, too belongs to this mould - that he has the audacity that comes from faith to face not merely the improbable, but even the impossible.

I want to thank Fr Danieluk for his historical and comprehensive look at this process of electing the Jesuit Generals.

- A. Felix Joseph, SJ
Trichy, Tamil Nadu - 620 002



Lessons for Life

I've learned from Rome...

BY LUKE RODRIGUES, SJ

See the mother the Church is: I found the façade and colonnade of St. Peter's Basilica very impressive. But far more impressive was the sight of pilgrims who flock there, people drawn from all countries and all states of life. I could powerfully experience the Church as a mother, gathering into her arms all who sincerely seek God.

Experience the Society as one body: I was aware of the universal dimension of our Jesuit vocation but these years in Rome made this reality come alive. We were 53 Jesuits living in the Curia, coming from 24 different countries. Beneath this diversity was a strong bond of unity that enabled us to relate freely and form deep friendships.

Celebrate Diversity: Even while experiencing unity, it was obvious that cultural differences existed, and these needed to be respected. A smart comment in English or Hindi could exclude many from the conversation. Indian curry makes my mouth water, but its aroma might not be too pleasing to another one. It was a grace to learn about other cultures and respect their distinct approaches to life.

Celebrate your uniqueness: There were several persons from other countries who do enjoy curry and other things Indian. On the one hand, there was a certain way of proceeding in the community that we had to respect. On the other hand, there were many occasions to express or talk about our own culture. While sharing about India I grew in my own appreciation of our motherland and her rich culture.

Cultivate your artistic sense: Italians consider themselves responsible for the beauty of the world! There are countless paintings, sculptures, and majestic monuments in Rome and all over Italy. Just gazing upon them and drinking in their beauty helped raise my dormant sense of art. All through the year there are high



Fr Luke Rodrigues, SJ, belongs to the Bombay Jesuit Province. He lived in Rome for seven years, working with the World Christian Life Community.



quality operas and concerts. I was struck by the frequency with which school children visited museums and received training in art and music.

Be generous: Italy has been hit hard by the ongoing financial crisis. Nevertheless, the people continue to be generous and welcoming. I was inspired to see the heroic efforts they make to welcome migrants and provide for their needs - to see the large number of volunteers who reach out to the homeless on the streets of Rome.

Express yourself freely: There is joyful exuberance whenever Italians gather together. While conversing with the locals, it was hard to understand the rapid stream of words, but the facial expressions and hand movements made it easy to follow the conversation. It is indeed true that you can silence an Italian by shackling his hands!

Find a way ahead: The Romans were among the first to set down a simplified code of law, but today the Government offices are embroiled in a bureaucratic maze that confuses both citizens and foreigners alike. Yet, there is always some helpful official who finds a creative way out of the impasse. Eventually, things move ahead to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Find your own spiritual path: The abundance of churches and monasteries all over the country reflect the rich spiritual tradition of Italy. Over the centuries, the quest for God was expressed through different religious congregations. This quest continues today in a different form. Despite the all-pervasive materialistic culture, numerous lay movements are flourishing, offering a variety of pathways to encounter God.

Be a 'Romantic': I mean someone who loves life and lives it to the full. Interestingly, the etymology of the word 'romantic' means 'in the Roman manner'. It was a joy to be in the Eternal City, encountering good natured people and imbibing their positive attitude to life. 'Life is Beautiful' is the title of a famous Italian movie. My seven years in Rome gave me many opportunities to experience the beauty of life. For this, I am deeply grateful. ■

GREEN COVER

Co-existing with elephants

Attapadi region was a tropical forest paradise in the Western Ghats. Under the canopy of giant trees, small Adivasi communities and an abundance of animals lived in harmony, on the bounty of the rich forests and rivers.

In the last decades, trees were felled for timber and forests converted for cultivation. Rains diminished. Rivers were dammed. Adivasis and animals suffered the most from the 'development', with scant concern for the tropical rainforests. The Adivasi way of life was destroyed; animals lost much of their forests.

Elephants once thrived earlier on the rich forests. As cultivation expanded and rivers dried up with increased irrigation, their food and water too dried up. Elephants had little choice but to raid farms for water and food. Shouts and crackers, even fire and electric fences could hardly stop them.

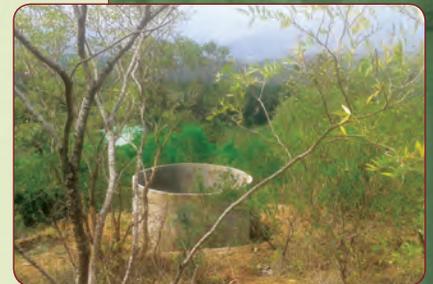
The Jesuits in Kerala bought 22 acres in the heart of Attapadi, to develop a Bio diversity Reserve – Eco Reserve Attapadi (ERA). The farmers fought Elephant visits, the Jesuits decided to welcome them. Two large tanks were built at ERA, at the right height for elephants, and kept filled.

Elephants soon discovered their tanks! In the beginning they came occasionally in 1-2's at night, drank water, and drifted into cultivated fields, much to the anger of the farmers. Soon they seem to have sensed our welcoming attitude! Groups began coming, lingered longer, and left for the hills behind, sometimes staying 1-2 days there. Nowadays they walk in even during the day, and head for the water kept for them! They sometimes stay 2-3 days in the hills behind, avoiding the cultivated fields. They seem primarily looking for water. Once some visited the Jesuit house at ERA; not all appreciated the courtesy call!

Elephants are very intelligent, and sensitive. Do they realize and appreciate our attitude of welcome, and offer of water to them? Has that changed their attitude to other humans around too? Why not?

Deer in big numbers visit us too; Rabbits and Wild Boars also. ERA built a small, reachable pond for them too! They do eat (not destroy!) plants. Can we welcome them too? God created them, as He created us. They need food and water as we all do. Don't they have a right to live? We grabbed their lands. Is it fair to keep it only for ourselves? A change of attitude towards them - in feelings and actions - could lead to a more harmonious co-existence. We are all God's creatures – one family.

- James Morais & Rappai Poothokaren, SJ



MOMENTS



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“Lent is the time to connect with the poor, resist our unceasing cravings, and pray – to gather with friends and family, share in God’s good provision, eat delicious food, tell stories that encourage us all, and celebrate the risen Lord.”

- Chris Seay