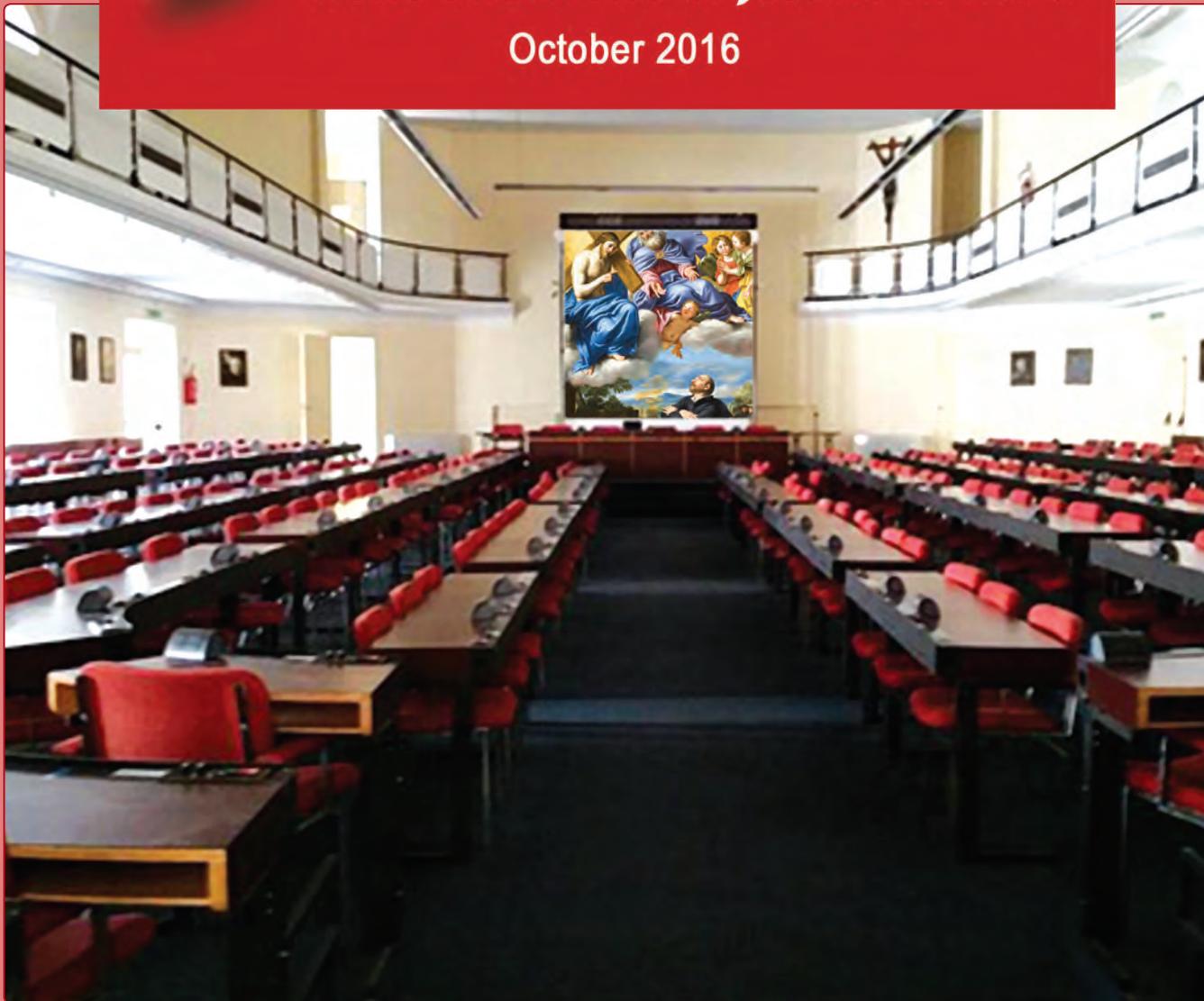


# JIVAN

**News and Views of Jesuits in India**

October 2016



## **GC 36 & La Storta**

**GCs 1 - 35**  
Hedwig Lewis, SJ

**Jesuit journey of**  
Adolfo Nicolás, SJ

**Health & Happiness**  
Ted Bowling, SJ

# My Closest Stranger

BY KINLEY TSHERING, SJ

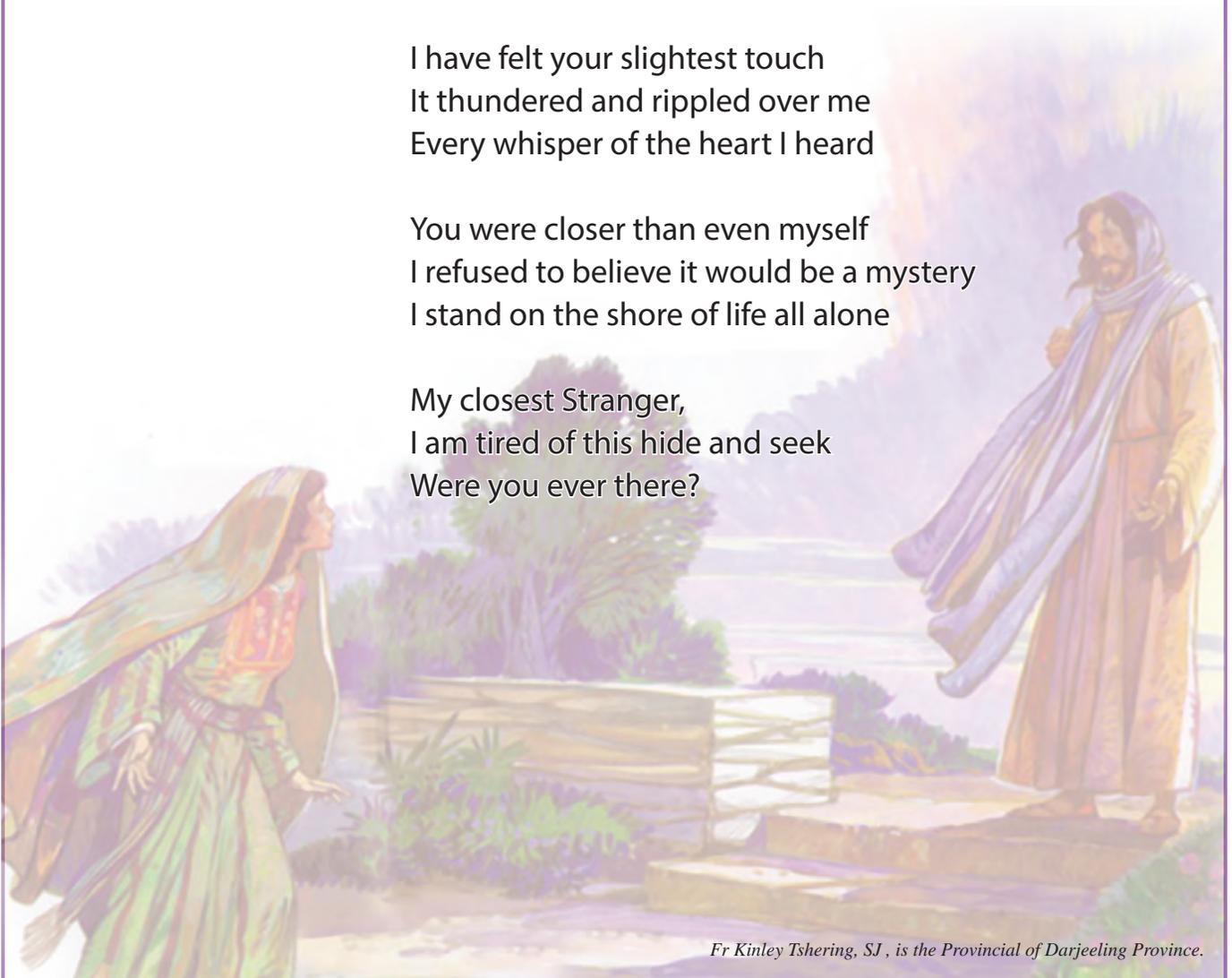
It's like I have known you from eternity  
Before the stars began to blink  
Before I was born.

It's like a story I have known form childhood  
From the beginning to the dead end  
A story that never grows old

I have felt your slightest touch  
It thundered and rippled over me  
Every whisper of the heart I heard

You were closer than even myself  
I refused to believe it would be a mystery  
I stand on the shore of life all alone

My closest Stranger,  
I am tired of this hide and seek  
Were you ever there?



*Fr Kinley Tshering, SJ , is the Provincial of Darjeeling Province.*

OCTOBER 2016

**Editor:**

M.A. Joe Antony, SJ

**Editorial office administration,  
typing & layout:**Udaya Prabhu  
Visuvasam**Correspondents:**Benedict Santosh, John Rose,  
Shailendra Boora, Victor Edwin**Advisory Board:**Agapit Tirkey, Benny S.,  
Jerry Rosario, John Joseph,  
V.T. Jose, Luke Rodrigues,  
Michael Amaladoss, Rex A. Pai**Publisher's Name**

Jerry Leo Sequeira, S.J.

Indian

Gujarat Sahitya Prakash

P.B. 70, St. Xavier's Road, Anand - 388001, Gujarat

**Place of Publication**

Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash

P.B. 70, St. Xavier's Road, Anand - 388001, Gujarat

**Printer's Name**

Jerry Leo Sequeira, SJ

Indian

Gujarat Sahitya Prakash

P.B. 70, St. Xavier's Road, Anand - 388001, Gujarat

**Printing at**

Anand Press

P.B. No. 95, Gamdi - Anand - 388001, Gujarat

**Matter for publication****to be sent to:**The Editor, *Jivan*  
C/o IDCR

P.B. 3301, Loyola College, Chennai - 600 034

Phone: 91-44-28175656

email: jivaneditor@gmail.com

**Circulation & change of address:**Circulation Manager, *Jivan*,  
Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, P.B. 70,  
Anand - 388 001, Gujarat.  
email: jivandoot@yahoo.co.in

As a service of information for the South Asian Jesuit Assistancy, *Jivan* is sent to Jesuits and their colleagues, collaborators and friends. Articles appearing in *Jivan* express the views of the authors and not of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. The Editor regrets he is unable to return 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.

**T**he time has come. The graced kairos moment has arrived. Let us see what God does at our GC 36. By the time you are able to read this issue of *Jivan*, our Delegates, assembled in Rome for the GC, would have spent nearly two weeks and, in all probability, would have elected a successor to the eminently amiable Fr Adolfo Nicholas.

Regular readers of *Jivan* would know that *Jivan* has made a significant contribution to the task of preparing for the GC by inviting Jesuit thinkers from the two Asian Assistancies to share their views on what this GC should focus on. These have appeared as cover features for more than a year now.

Almost all agreed that GC 36 need not labour to come up with more documents and more decrees, as we have enough of them already. But they had different views on what the focus of the GC should be.

Among those who looked at the worldwide Society, Michael Amaladoss pointed out that GC 32 took up the challenge of the Second Vatican Council to renew religious life to be able to meet the challenges of the day. It defined our mission as promoting a 'faith that does justice.' He reminded us that GC 34 re-envisioned mission as a three-fold dialogue of the gospel with the poor, the cultures and the religions. GCs 32 and 34 have produced a comprehensive list of documents covering every aspect of the Society's life and mission. GC 35 insisted on inter-provincial collaboration. Its gift was a felicitous phrase: "a fire that kindles other fires." Geographic and apostolic priorities were listed both by GC 34 and 35. But, he felt, all these have not led us to carry out our mission in an integral sense. "While we do try to reach out to the poor we do nothing to transform society in any meaningful way, dialoguing with cultures and religions and reaching out to change-makers in society." He said that GC 36 should focus on the proper implementation of the orientations given by GCs 32-35 and sharpen and operationalize what we need to do in the three areas of ecology, collaboration with people, especially women and youth, and renewal of personal and community life.

Sebastian Painadath felt that GC 36 should perceive the presence of the divine Spirit in the global awakening in the Church and in the world - the new global consciousness. Since the Catholic Church is heading towards a crisis situation in which many of the traditional religious

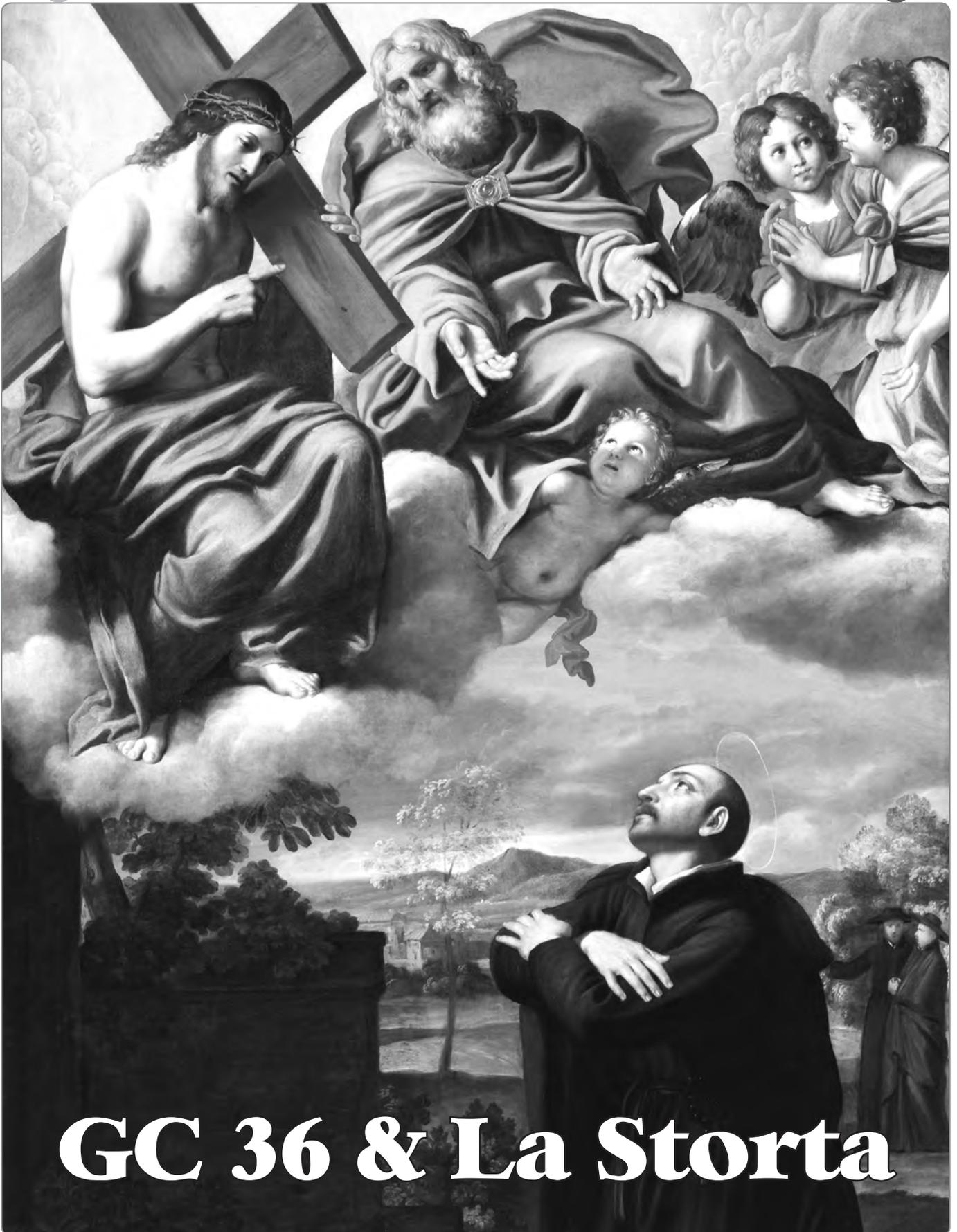
Congregations will be wiped off from the map of the Church, the time has come to think of radically new forms of consecrated life. The traditional pattern of religious life bound by the three vows may not attract many in the future. So, he asked, 'Can GC 36 explore the scope of a Jesuit Family in which Jesuits and the believing community of both men and women feel a sense of belonging, sharing the resources and working together for our one mission?'

Francis Gonsalves said that GC 36 should revisit three areas highlighted in GC 35 - Community, Identity and Mission - upon which Jesuit life rests. Godfrey D'Lima said if GC 36 builds on the legacy of the prophetic GC 32 we can contribute effectively to salvation history. Leo D'Souza felt that this GC should lead to an 'ecological conversion' of all Jesuits. Echoing Fr Nicholas, Hector D'Souza said that the GC should make us people marked by three scents or smells - "scent of the sheep, the scent of the library, and the scent of the future." Paul D'Souza said that living in a culture marked by speed, superficiality, complacency and compromises, we should launch out to find affective depth, intellectual depth, effective depth and collaborative depth. Based on what the Bombay Province Congregation came up with, Prashant Olalekar said the three calls of the Lord today to Jesuits are inclusive spirituality, communal harmony and collaboration.

Others focussed on what the GC should bring about in our South Asian Assistancy. Julian Fernandes emphasized that we need to re-discover, really recover in practice, our Jesuit vocation to the universal Society of Jesus. So, he said, it is time for radical changes in our traditional governance structures and came up with some bold new suggestions. Rudi Heredia pointed out something very important: Here in South Asia we have been deaf to GC 35's call to a "Mission of Reconciliation." Blindly following the Latin American model, our social apostolate is premised on a conflict model and a confrontational praxis. Myron Pereira felt that we in South Asia are fumbling with yesterday's answers to tomorrow's questions. He asked, "Modernity, mission and a well-managed Society - is this a possible 'India dream' for the next GC?"

Let us pray with hope and leave it to the Delegates. They, in turn, should leave it to God. They should let him achieve whatever he wants for our Society through GC 36.

-M.A.J.A



# GC 36 & La Storta

BY FRANCIS A. I. DAVID, SJ

**T**his question of ‘what shall we look forward to?’ that arises before every General Congregation (GC) is nothing new. I believe it must have been asked before all the thirty five GCs held so far. However we look at it, it persists inevitably as an impetus needed for all our tasks in participating in the salvific work of God, as we face the

Founder and all who join his enterprise are being placed with the Son as a ‘touch-base’.

Why La Storta? It is the vision gifted to the Society. It is our foundational experience that calls us to look forward beyond Rome. The words that Ignatius heard during this vision are words of divine consolation and profound relevance: “I will be propitious to you....” In fact we can never stop gazing at the vision of La Storta. The vision teaches Jesuits how to regard the world. It opens the mystery of the Trinity in its work of love for the salvation of the world.

#### **Information & confusion**

Today we are able to obtain torrents of information simply by the touch of our fingertips. Because of the torrential flow of all kinds of information, we are unable to attend to



*The distinctive Jesuit  
feature must be  
‘to look forward’  
and to ‘look upward’  
- as Jesus raised  
his eyes  
to Heaven.*

contemporary challenges of our world. In other words, “what to look forward to” is at once an abiding question and a grace.

#### **La Storta**

In the light of this abiding question, firstly GC 36 must chart its deliberations from a collective spiritual experience. This invites us all to begin from a common referential point of contemplation. I propose the vision at La Storta, where the mission of our

every facet of human life that demands our attention. Every bit of information is actually tossing us to every side of an issue and calls us to decide whose side we are on.

A good example could be the announcement of a long list of activities and events which overwhelms the participants at the Sunday Mass in a parish. Even prospective candidates, who are inquiring about joining the Society, want to know everything about it instantly. They seem to search for all possible information primarily, instead of seeking grace and discernment. This hunger for information has also changed our way of perceiving, interacting and attending to issues at hand. We may feel happy and proud that we have all the

information needed, and may not be even aware that we ignore the 'one thing necessary.'

In this situation how do we get the world, which is driven by an insatiable hunger for information but devoid of virtue, to understand the one necessary thing? If all that we consume from the commercially oriented media

order to remind ourselves of the one necessary thing. We should seek to hear the Voice that speaks on different occasions with different tones. It may search at times, as it did at the Garden: "Where are you?" (Gen 3:8). On another occasion it may whisper consolingly as it did in a cave: "Why are you here?" (1 King

want for information and ready-made solutions is the elusive trap that felled the first humans - a trap set by God's rival: 'Take absolute control of the Tree of Knowledge!' It would seem that humanity has never learnt to escape from that intoxicating temptation to acquire an absolute control of information



*A congregation that gathers to deliberate and represent the whole Society across the globe and the new leader it will elect should hope in the promise of La Storta.*

cause in us more confusion than understanding, how shall we discern and discover what God asks of us at this moment?

### **Dialogue with the Word of God**

Whatever we may expect from GC 36, it is sure to be just an annotation to the three foundational documents of ours: *the Spiritual Exercises*, *the Constitutions* and *the Autobiography of St Ignatius of Loyola*. So while preparing for GC 36 we must pay attention to these documents that have lasting benefits for the Society, in

19: 12-13). At other times it may instruct or command: "Make way for the Lord!" (Mark 1:3). "Listen to Him!" (Luke 9:3).

If GC 36 asserts that every Jesuit today cannot be satisfied with mere information but will have to dialogue with God, who guides all those who seek his help, it will make a lasting impact on the Society of Jesus and its service to the Church and to the world. It is a critical and momentous task.

Why is this so important for our world today? Most people are unaware that underlying the

all at once, forgetting that only the Alpha and the Omega knows everything.

Jesuit excellence is not about trying to know everything. So 'what to look forward to' should be first of all a grace. What we eventually look forward to is about a future when Isaiah's vision of a banquet when all tears will be wiped away and shame removed (Isaiah 25:6-8). This eschatological future is unfolding, as God is at pains to tear away every fibre of human enslavement to knowledge and technology that do not serve

human well-being but greed for money and control. The serpent that cheats and lies seems to succeed in tempting many people to try to possess the Tree of Knowledge.

An honest question will be: How many Jesuits really look forward to another GC – to a new leader? After all, electing a new General will be the first major task of this GC. When Fr Adolfo Nicholas will hand over the baton of leadership, will it mark the end of one era and the beginning of another?

#### **Models of forward looking**

Pioneers like Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci, blessed with a

final analysis, a congregation that gathers to deliberate and represent the whole Society across the globe and the new leader it will elect should hope in the promise of La Storta and trust that ‘God will be propitious to us.’ This rules out pessimistic voices. What we need is a person who is blessed with the grace and virtue of forward-looking.

The distinctive Jesuit feature must be ‘to look forward’ and to ‘look upward’ - as Jesus raised his eyes to Heaven, praying for all those entrusted to him, and as St Stephen gazed up to Heaven even as he was tortured by the maddening crowd.

does not forget his past but one who is aware that his call is for the future of this world. It is the grace of looking forward. This grace of forward-looking is very important in a world that seems to be gripped by violence, war, terror and fear. The Call of the Eternal King is to labour now and to follow him in glory later.

#### **Example of our Brother, our Leader**

If we need a model for someone who seems to be blessed with this grace of forward-looking in spite of the problems of the present, we need only to look at the figure of our brother, Pope Francis. In these three

*If we need a model for someone who seems to be blessed with this grace of forward-looking in spite of the problems of the present, we need only to look at the figure of our brother, Pope Francis.*



great intellect but also genuine virtue, have charted the ways for the Society and the Church to reach out to the frontiers of culture and of human excellence. Expertise without virtue will not take us anywhere. In the

Wherever he may be and whatever he might do, there is a profound grace that marks a Jesuit – the deep knowledge that he is a sinner who is called to be a companion of Christ like St Ignatius was. He is one who

years he has launched a quiet and tender revolution. His three years as the Pope provide ample evidence that he has the grace to look forward to, no matter how the enemy within and without may react. Such a grace can come

only from God, who says, "I will be propitious to you..." His *Evangelii Gaudium*, then *Laudato Si*, and *Amoris Laetitia*, the way he engages with the multitudes that need mercy, and the way he interacts with the powerful in politics and religions show that a religious leader can point to a way forward, even in the midst of the seemingly insurmountable cycle of human tragedies.

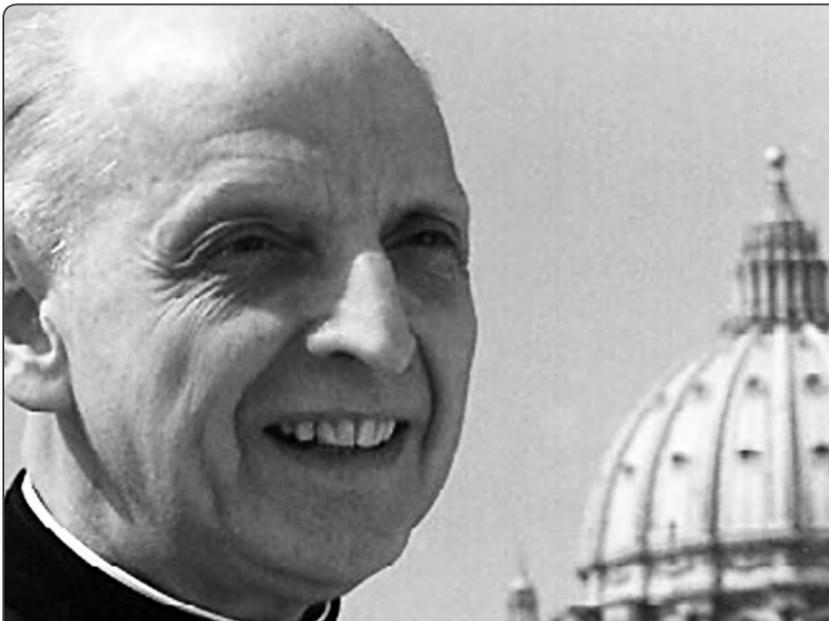
to you." After all, every General Congregation should heed the Second Vatican Council's directive for appropriate renewal, marked by attempts to recapture the Founder's original spirit (*Perfectae Caritatis*).

Ours is a time of amazing changes. Everything seems possible and impossible all at once. We live in an unbridled consumerist culture, with

swipe of the screen can preserve one life, or one thousand lives. Given this reality, the labourers on the mean street will ask us: what can your GC do for us?

#### **Towards action**

Hopefully GC 36 will bring together Jesuits who are not fond of engaging in intellectual discussion for its own sake. What matters is the desire for practical action in the following



*"The mystical experience of La Storta was for the Society a pledge that it would share in the graces of the Founder in the measure in which it remained faithful to the inspiration that gave it birth."*

*- Pedro Arrupe*

Let us hope that our new General and in fact, every Jesuit, will have, like Pope Francis, the grace of looking forward in spite of all that the present world suffers from. We will obtain this grace if, through prayer and contemplation, we are able to re-live the La Storta experience of St Ignatius and so able to hear the reassuring words of our Leader, "We will be propitious

a longing for fast money, fast commodities and fast information. At the same time virtue is fast fading. Patience, understanding and tolerance are disappearing. With just a tap or swipe of our fingertips all information is available. Data seem to dictate our lives. Just a tap on the screen can annihilate individuals or an entire people. When used by good people, a

of Christ for the service of God through the Church that is spread across the world. A Jesuit's deepest interest should lie in directing ideas towards effective action. Exchange of views and discussions should be geared towards "the election" - decisions.

#### **Different but united**

Since all Jesuits share in the same experience of the

Spiritual Exercises, no matter what cultural background they may come from, they are able to be united in spirit and in their approach to the realities of the

should not give rise to paralyzing despair. The dangers threatening humanity should not discourage us in our efforts to overcome them.

Storta, with its utterly simple divine word of “being placed with the Son”, echoes anew the mystery of the covenant – God is with his people; and the paschal

*The paschal promise, “I shall be with you till the end of the ages,” resounds in “I will be propitious to you.”*  
– Peter H. Kolvenbach



world. This should bind them together at a deep level, urging them to face the challenges of the world through the tools bequeathed by Ignatius to us: prayer, discernment, reflection, and trustful sharing of personal experiences. It is through them that we would be able to acquire the internal freedom, which flows only from total confidence in him who is the source of all human freedom. These will resurrect in us the grace to look forward, to raise our eyes to heaven.

The disproportion between the crying needs of the world and our own limited resources

### Conclusion

GC 36, therefore, must pray and hope for the grace of La Storta. Arrupe remarked, “What was for Ignatius the culmination and summing-up of so many graces received since his conversion (that is, the mystical experience of La Storta) was for the Society a pledge that it would share in the graces of the Founder in the measure in which it remained faithful to the inspiration that gave it birth.”

Fr Kolvenbach, on the occasion of the 450th anniversary of the Vision of La Storta, pointed out, “In the spiritual event of La

promise, “I shall be with you till the end of the ages,” resounds in “I will be propitious to you..”

The certitude of this firm assurance, “I will be propitious to you,” born of that La Storta experience, is a liberating force. It assures us that nothing can constrain or impede us from participating in the mission of Jesus - offering the loving mercy of God in Jesus to our brothers and sisters in today’s world. ■

*Fr Francis Alberto Irenus David, SJ, (MAS) is JCAP’s Vocation Directors Coordinator. He lives at Sabah, West Malaysia. He can be contacted at: [alfirenus@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alfirenus@yahoo.co.uk)*

## New Education Policy: MDU Jesuits' initiative

If the educators in Tamil Nadu have organized meetings in various places, taken out protest rallies and merged various associations to form united federations in order to register their objections to the Draft of the New Education Policy (NEP), announced by the Central Government, the credit should go, to a large extent, to the Jesuits in Tamil Nadu. The two organizations of the MDU Jesuits - the Secondary Education Commission (SEC) and Jesuit Centre for Educational Research and Training (JCERT), St Xavier's, Palayamkottai, have taken the lead in conscientizing the teaching fraternity in Tamil Nadu on the dangers hidden in the NEP.

Jesuits were the first to organize a symposium in Tamil Nadu on NEP. This was organized in collaboration with Loyola College of Education on 29 Nov 2015 in Loyola College of Education. Eminent educationists like Prof. Ramanujam,



Dr Vasanthi Devi, Dr. S.S. Rajagopalan were the resource persons. About 350 participated in this. Participants included heads of minority institutions, education coordinators of different congregations and action groups fighting for educational rights. As a result of the symposium, many letters were sent to MHRD from various institutions in Tamil Nadu, signed by parents, teachers and school administrators.

Teachers, parents, religious and students were conscientized in several places in Madurai, Kovai, Palayamkottai and Bangalore on the proposed draft of the NEP. A lot of responses were sent to MHRD as a result of this.

Fr John Kennedy, SJ, Director, JCERT wrote articles in *Jivan* and *Companion* on NEP. A seminar was organized for the Jesuit educators – 20 selected teachers from each of our schools, at St. Joseph's College, Trichy on 05 June '16. The representative team from each school conscientized the other teachers in their respective schools and evolved action plans after the seminar.

Fr Kennedy was instrumental in the formation of the Forum for Equal Education in Tirunelveli with members from

Catholic, CSI churches, Muslims and a few human rights groups. This group is actively involved in several programmes regarding NEP.

Tamil Nadu Science Forum, JCERT and SEC brought together 23 unions of the college teachers, universities and schools for a seminar on NEP at Loyola College, Chennai on



30 June, 2016. About 1000 teachers and professors attended this seminar. It was decided to have such meetings at the district level unionwise and launch awareness programmes at all levels on NEP. The group had its second meeting on 03 Aug '16 at St Joseph's, Trichy. The participants decided to continue with the awareness generation programmes and release an 'Alternative Education Policy' (AEP) on 08 Oct.

A core group has been formed under the leadership of Dr Vasanthi Devi for drafting the AEP. This group, christened the Federation for the Protection of Education Rights, had its first meeting on 13 Sep '16. Fr Stephen Pragasam, SEC Coordinator and Fr Arockiasamy Xavier, Principal, Loyola College represented the Jesuits. Topics were devised, divided and given to each one to prepare a draft. Fr. Kennedy has been asked to prepare a paper on teacher education to be included in the draft of the AEP. The consolidated policy will be released during a seminar in Chennai on 08 Oct.

In collaboration with the State Platform for Common Schools and Forum for Equal Education, the Jesuits brought together representatives from major political parties and people's movements for evolving common action plans to counter NEP like a demonstration in Chennai with atleast 5000 people, involving all the major political parties and people's movements on 29 Sep '16 - another demonstration and a meeting in Delhi with likeminded MPs during the forthcoming parliamentary session, probably in the second week of November '16. Also a joint action committee against this anti-people education policy has been formed.

- John Kennedy, SJ

BY PRASHANT OLALEKAR, SJ

“God Laughs and Plays” is the title of a sermon by Meister Eckhart, the profound 13th century prophetic mystic who was censured for his radical ideas. This is how he shares this insight of a humorous God. “My Lord told me a joke. And seeing Him laugh has done more for me than any scripture I will ever read.” After reading this quote I googled ‘God and laughter’ and was horrified to see a youtube of demonic laughter which I promptly shut down. I began wondering why laughter is associated with demons and also why there are hardly any images of a laughing God.

That evening I took a group of students from St. Xavier’s college, Mumbai as part of their Honours course on “Joy of Self Discovery” for a Movement Meditation session at Asha Daan, a home run by Mother Teresa’s Sisters for the physically and mentally challenged destitutes. At the start while preparing the students for the session a child, who was so badly deformed that it was not easy to distinguish its gender, came into the centre of the group and began wishing each one of us with delightful, unabashed laughter spread across its face. Like a bolt of lightning a mystical insight hit me: ‘This is the laughter of God, a God who is beyond gender, a God whose face shines resplendent in brokenness.’

The sharing of the students opened up new depths of relationship to the realities of life. This experience of inexplicable joy in the midst of utter vulnerability prepared me to grasp the depth of this other quote from Meister Eckhart which may be passed off as a joke by traditional theologians.

“Do you want to know what goes on in the heart of the Trinity? I will tell you. In the heart of the Trinity the Father laughs and gives birth to the Son. The Son



## When I saw God laugh

laughs back at the Father and gives birth to the Spirit. The whole Trinity laughs and gives birth to us.”

On 31 July, the feast of our founder St. Ignatius, I went again to arrange for the next meditation. The sister who was showing me around took me to the ward for children with complicated disabilities. She said that since all were bedridden they would not be capable of any movement. Just then I saw a young girl staring at me. I smiled at her and was pleasantly surprised to notice the gentle parting of her lips and the twinkling of her eyes in response. Her compassionate smile is etched in my memory. What a precious gift on the

feast of St. Ignatius!

The parting gift was from an elderly Muslim lady called Raziya. When she noticed that I was going around blessing the inmates she called me and desperately pleaded that I pray to Allah for the healing of her fractured leg. I am praying to “Allah” as promised. God knows what this means.

Many students could not come due to the Malhar preparations on 09 Aug ‘16, when 12 of us paid an informal visit to Asha Daan for a meditation with the destitute women who are physically and mentally challenged.

Why are these people treated like human garbage in a technological age of rapid development? What does communal harmony mean in such a context? How can we be a voice for the voiceless? These were some of the questions that deeply troubled us. There seems to be much scope for an integrated approach to learning from the poor and marginalized. After our initial awkwardness in interacting with them we gradually opened up to the gift of hope from those whom we usually consider hope-less. ■

*Fr Prashant Olalekar, SJ, (BOM) is the Head of the Department of Interreligious Studies, St Xavier’s College, Mumbai.*

# General Congregations

## - 1 to 35



BY HEDWIG LEWIS, SJ

### **General Congregation (GC) 1: 19 June to 10 Sep 1558**

*Superior General elected: Fr Diego Lainez*

Called following the death of Ignatius of Loyola in 1556. But because of the tension between Pope Paul IV and King Philip II of Spain, the Congregation was delayed by two years, when peace returned. With just 20 members. GC 1 made a number of administrative decisions, including the establishment of the office of 'assistant' for the General and the grouping of Provinces into 'Assistancies'.

### **GC 2: 21 June to 3 Sep 1565**

*Superior General elected: Fr Francis Borgia.*

Given the rapid growth of the Society in just 25 years, and the expansion of its works, the Congregation passed more than 120 decrees, some of them momentous for the later life of the Society. It decreed that each province should establish a novitiate and a house set aside for the training of young Jesuits.

### **GC 3: 12 April to 16 June 1573**

*Superior General elected: Fr Everard Mercurian.*

GC3 sought clarification on obedience. The question was: Do those who had professed four vows owe obedience to a rector or minister who was a professed of three vows and

to those who were not professed? The congregation clarified that the power of superiors did not flow from their personal qualities, or by virtue of their vows, but resided in the General who delegated it to them. So, one did owe them obedience.

### **GC 4: 7 Feb to 2 April 1581**

*Superior General elected: Fr Claudius Aquaviva (37 years old).*

The congregation went on to pass 59 decrees. The fifth of these decrees were related to the length of determined time of prayer.

### **GC 5: 3 Nov 1593 to 18 Jan 1594**

This was the first Congregation to be called during the lifetime of a General. Some disgruntled Jesuits had marshalled to their cause the power of King Philip II of Spain and the Spanish Inquisition to compel the Society to introduce major changes into its fundamental identity. Aquaviva managed to persuade both the King and the Pope that these agitators represented a small minority in the Society. GC 5 denounced the agitators as 'authors of sedition' and 'deceitful sons of our institute'.

### **GC6: 21 Feb to 29 March 1608**

This was the shortest congregation lasting only 38 days. It made obligatory a daily hour of prayer and an annual eight-day retreat for all Jesuits.

### **GC 7: 5 Nov 1615 to 26 Jan 1616**

*Superior General elected: Fr Matius Vitelleschi.*

This was the first General Congregation in which none of the

original companions of Ignatius were present. It passed a decree forbidding Jesuits from attempting to win ecclesiastical or secular office for their relatives/non-Jesuits, without the permission of Fr General.

### **GC 8: 21 Nov 1645 to 16 April 1646**

*Superior General elected: Fr Vincent Caraffa.*

This was the longest Congregation, with sessions continuing for 145 days. It discussed the recommendation of Pope Innocent X that Congregations should be held every 9 years, that local superiors, should have a three-year term, and that local Province Congregations should elect the Provincial. Though the Congregation voted against the first proposal, the Pope ordered that it be implemented.

### **GC 9: 13 Dec 1649 to 23 Feb 1650**

*Superior General elected: Fr Francesco Piccolomini, aged 75.*

GC 9 introduced set terms for Jesuits before they could be granted solemn profession: 10 years for those who had completed their studies before entering the Society, and 17 years for those who did all their studies in the Society. This would continue to be the rule for more than 300 years, until GC 31.

### **GC 10: 7 Jan 1652 to 20 March 1652**

*Superior General elected: Fr Alexander Gottifredi and Fr Goswin Nickle.*

This Congregation saw the election of two Generals. Fr Luigi Gottifredi was elected on 21 Jan. The

Congregation was still in session when on 12 March, Gottifredi died, having been General for less than two months. Five days later, Fr Goswin Nickel was elected the General.

**GC 11: 9 May 1661 to 27 July 1661**

This Congregation elected as permanent Vicar Fr Giovanni Paolo to support the ailing Fr Goswin Nickel, who was 84 years old and ill. He was also given the right to succession. GC 11 also dealt with the issue of Jesuits who published books without proper permission, and allegations of laxity in the moral teachings of some Jesuits.

**GC 12: 22 June 1682 to 6 Sep 1682**

*Superior General elected: Fr Charles de Noyelle.*

At this Congregation, Fr Charles de Noyelle became the only person after Ignatius of Loyola to be elected unanimously. GC 12 made clear that whatever a Jesuit revealed to his superior or Provincial during the manifestation of conscience could not be divulged to anyone else, not even Fr General, nor even hinted at, unless the Jesuit concerned gave his consent. This helped solidify a key element of Jesuit governance.

**GC 13: 22 June to 7 Sep 1687**

*Superior General elected: Fr Thyrus González de Santella.*

The GC discussed 'probabilism' and its stricter form of 'probabiliorism'. Pope Innocent XI was one of the champions of probabiliorism. Though he did not insist that Jesuits adopt it, he wanted the GC to say that Jesuits were free to accept this approach and to argue for it over probabilism. The Congregation acceded.

**GC 14: 19 Nov 1696 to 16 Jan 1697**

The Congregation was convoked nine years after the previous one, according to the provisions established by Pope Innocent X. The delegates made an unsuccessful attempt to have the nine-year rule abolished.

**GC 15: 17 Jan to 3 April 1706**

*Superior General elected: Fr Michelangelo Tamburini.*

This GC too was summoned nine years after the last one. Fr General Gonzalez passed away before it opened. On 30 Jan, Fr Tamburini was elected his successor. It passed a decree that insisted that Jesuit authors not respond to the attacks of their adversaries with bitterness or anger, arguing that a spirit of passionate polemics was contrary to the ideals of the Society.

**GC 16: 19 Nov 1730 to 13 Feb 1731**

*Superior General elected: Fr Francis Retz*

This Congregation sought to tighten the rules on censorship of Jesuit publications, and forbade Jesuits from publishing their works without the express permission of their Provincial. A decree requesting the Pope to suspend the nine-year rule was again passed. The Pope did so this time.

**GC 17: 22 June to 5 Sep 1751**

*Superior General elected: Fr Ignazio Visconti.*

The decrees of GC 17 give no indication of the issues that would later engulf the Society and result in the Suppression.

**GC 18: 17 Nov 1755 to 28 Jan 1756**

*Superior General elected: Fr Luigi Centurione.*

GC 18 saw the creation of a new assistancy in Central Europe, comprising the provinces of Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, Lithuania and Masovia.

**GC 19: 9 May to 18 June 1758**

*Superior General elected: Fr Lorenzo Ricci.*

Fr Lorenzo Ricci would prove to be unprepared for the fierce hatred that elements in the Roman Curia and around Europe would eventually unleash on the Jesuits. Pope Benedict XIV died on 3 May, just a week before the GC began. Some effort was made to build the Society's relationship with whoever was elected as the new Pope. GC 19 asked the new Superior General to 'tender to the future pontiff the obedience of the

whole Society.' Pope Clement XIII became a protector for the Society. He died in 1769. His successor, Pope Clement XIV, eventually suppressed the Society in 1773.

**The Polish Congregations: 1773 - 1814**

*Superior General elected: Fr Tadeusz Brzozowski*

The brief of suppression was not promulgated by Catherine the Great in Russia. In 1782, at the urging of Catherine and with the advice of three former Assistants, a Congregation was held in the Russian domains in Poland. In all, five Polish Congregations were held – in 1782, 1785, 1799, 1802 and 1805. At the Congregation in 1805, Polish Jesuit Fr Tadeusz Brzozowski was elected General. In 1814, he became the first General of the universally restored Society.

**GC 20: 9 Oct to 10 Dec 1820**

*Superior General elected: Fr Luigi Fortis*

After the death of Brzozowski in 1820, this GC elected Fr Fortis, 72, the General. This GC's overriding consideration was that the Society should not be a 'new' organisation, but a continuation of the 'old' Society. One of the first acts of the GC, after the elections, was to decree that all the Constitutions and Declarations, and other rules and ordinances from before the Suppression, would be maintained in the newly re-established Society.

**GC 21: 30 June to 17 Aug 1829**

*Superior General elected: Fr Jan Roothaan.*

At 44 years of age, he was the youngest General since Fr Acquaviva, the fifth General. He would remain General for 24 years, and do much to shape the Society in that time.

**GC 22: 22 June to 31 Aug 1853**

*Superior General elected: Fr Peter Beckx*

Fr Roothaan convoked this Congregation, but died before it could assemble. A 58-year-old Belgian

Jesuit, Fr Peter Beckx, was elected on 02 July as his successor.

**GC 23: 16 Sep to 23 Oct 1883**

After 30 years of service as General, at the age of 88, Beckx called a Congregation to elect a Vicar General for the Society. The Congregation decided to elect a permanent Vicar General with the right of succession, Fr Antonjo Maria Anderledy, a 64-year-old Swiss and the Assistant for Germany, was elected. He succeeded Fr Beckx in 1887, but would serve as General for only five years before he died in 1892. *Superior General elected: Fr Antonjo Maria Anderledy.*

**GC 24: 24 Sep to 5 Dec 1892**

*Superior General elected: Fr Luis Martin.*

This GC was the only one to take place outside of Rome, owing to anti-clerical sentiments in Italy at the time. Luis Martin, the Vicar General after the death of Fr Anderledy, suggested to the Pope that GC 24 be held either in Drongen, Belgium or Loyola, Spain. Leo acceded to holding it in Loyola. On 2 Oct 1892, the Congregation elected Fr Luis Martin as the Superior General.

**GC 25: 1 Sep to 18 Oct 1906**

*Superior General elected: Fr Franz Xavier Wernz.*

Pope Pius X made two submissions to the delegates: to follow the teachings of St Thomas Aquinas in their philosophical and theological work; and to establish an institute of higher studies in Japan. The congregation accepted both proposals.

**GC 26: 2 Feb to 18 March 1915**

*Superior General elected: Fr Wlodimir Ledochowski*

Held in the midst of the First World War, Ledochowski, a Polish Jesuit of Austrian nationality, moved the headquarters of the Society to Zizers in Switzerland, where he remained free to direct the whole Society. GC 26 also established the new Assistancy of America.

**GC 27: 8 Sep to 21 Dec 1923**

This was the first of two General Congregations that were convened by Fr Ledochowski in his time as General. It was aimed at bringing the Society into conformity with the new Code of Canon Law that was established in 1917.

**GC 28: 12 March to 9 May 1938**

Fr Ledochowski convened this GC in order to elect a Vicar General to assist him in his work. Ledochowski died on 13 Dec 1942. Because of World War II another GC could not be called, so his designated Vicar General Fr Alessio Ambrogio Magni took over. He died 14 months later, and Fr Nobert de Boynes was elected Vicar General on 19 April 1944 by a congregation made up of the assistants and senior professed Jesuits then present in Rome.

**GC 29: 6 Sep to 23 Oct 1946**

*Superior General elected: Fr Jean-Baptiste Janssens.*

Convened in the aftermath of the Second World War, this Congregation was the first to make the social apostolate one of its central focuses. No effort was to be spared to implement the social principles of recent Popes and help restore the right order of society. It decreed that every province and region should set up a Centre for social action and research, and that talented men be assigned to these.

**GC 30: 6 Sep to 11 Nov 1957**

Fr General Janssens called this Congregation to deal with questions of importance for the Society. Due to the political situation at the time, six of the provinces or vice-provinces in Eastern Europe, and the mission in China, were unable to send representatives.

**GC 31: 7 May to 15 July 1965 and 8 Sep to 17 Nov 1966**

*Superior General elected: Fr Pedro Arrupe*

GC 31 took place during and after Vatican II, meeting in two sessions in 1965 and 1966, for a total

of 141 days. GC 31 recommended that the social apostolate should take its place among those apostolic activities having priority, and that in the entire course of Jesuit training the social dimension must be taken into account.

**GC 32: 2 Dec 1974 to 7 March 1975**

After the Second Vatican Council, it became necessary for the Society to rebrand itself – to-define what it means to be a Jesuit. GC 32 is best known for Decree 4, the document on Our Mission Today: the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement.

**GC 33: 02 Sep 1983 to 25 Oct 1983**

*Superior General elected: Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach.*

The Congregation affirmed the mission given to the Society by GCs 31 and 32: the integration of the service of faith and the promotion of justice in one single mission.

**GC 34: 05 Jan 1995 to 22 March 1995**

The major task of GC 34 was the revision of the law proper to the Society. Fr General Kolvenbach recalled that St Ignatius did not want to bequeath to the Society the Constitutions as a finished product. Decree 2 of GC 34, titled 'Servants of Christ's Mission', was the Congregation's flagship document.

**GC 35: 5 Jan to 6 March 2008**

*Superior General elected: Fr Adolfo Nicolás.*

GC 35 called for a strengthening and renewal of the Intellectual Apostolate as a privileged means for the Society to respond adequately to the important intellectual contribution to which the Church calls it. GC 35 reaffirmed that attending to the needs of migrants and refugees, the internally displaced, and trafficked people, continues to be an apostolic preference of the Society. ■

*Fr Hedwig Lewis, SJ (G.U.J), educationist and writer, resides at Loyola Hall, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.*

**Prof. Marc Rastoin SJ**, advisor to the Jesuit General on Jewish Christian affairs, delivered a lecture on “Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Contemporary France: Challenges and Opportunities” at CISRS House, Delhi on 12 July 2016. Dr. Zafar Mahmood, the director of Interfaith Coalition for Peace, organized it. In his lecture, Prof. Rastoin pointed



out, firstly, that ‘how to be a religious in a non-religious secular society’ is a critical challenge for observant Jews, Christians and Muslims in France. French secularism does not allow religious affairs to influence policy decisions of the government. Religion is pushed to the private domain. Secondly, French citizens, by and large, distanced themselves from the Catholic Church. Today, merely 59% of French citizens claim to be Catholic Christians. However, a much smaller minority practices the Catholic faith. In this context, Prof. Rastoin remarked that ‘how to be an active minority among people of different religions without isolating themselves’ is another crucial issue before French Catholics.

Thirdly, France hosts the third largest Jewish community in the world - about 600, 000. A disturbing trend, Prof. Rastoin said, is the ‘Israelisation

## **Jews, Christians and Muslims in France: the changing landscape**

- interview with Marc Rastoin, SJ

of Jews’. A good number of Jews leave for Israel, and others who remain back in France tend to develop a siege-mentality.

Fourthly, Muslims form around 8 to 10% of the French population. There is certain isolation or ghettoization of Muslims, especially the poor sections. A greater integration is another challenge before the French citizens. Prof. Rastoin noted that Christian-Jewish dialogue is well organized and a number of initiative have been undertaken by both the Catholic Church and Jewish groups. However, Jewish-Muslim dialogue is a much difficult task. Prof. Rastoin felt that Christian involvement in Jewish-Muslim dialogue can help bring about the desired results. It is important to recognize that dialogue between the members of the three Abrahamic families, Christians, Muslims and Jews, is the need of the hour in France. this lecture.

Excerpts from the interview Fr Marc Rastoin, SJ gave to **Victor Edwin, SJ**, *Jivan* correspondent in Delhi:

**How has a ‘secular France’ faced the challenge of Muslim refugees streaming into European Union countries?**

France has welcomed very few refugees (less than 10,000) compared to Germany. But there is a relatively old Muslim community - or rather communities, since the different groups have their own mosques like

the Turks, the Senegalese or the Moroccan, to name but a few. France had the largest Muslim population in Europe, much before the recent Syrian immigration wave. But the dominant mood of the French intelligentsia was - and still often is - that religion was a sign of the past, an anachronism. To see that there is a community that still considers belief in God as the most important reality in their life is something surprising and shocking to many. Their response would be something like: ‘We had dealt with the Catholics in 1905, and the ‘problem’ was solved but now there is a new religion on the ground!’

As for the refugees, the fact that most European countries have declining native populations creates a fear that the natives will be outnumbered by foreign populations and this fuels the anti-foreigner mood - often an anti-Muslim mood. The latest elections in Germany and Great Britain have clearly demonstrated this sentiment.

**How does the Catholic Church understand dialogue in the increasingly multicultural France? What are the challenges in living the spirit of *Nostra Aetate* in contemporary France?**

The French Church was very much involved in the theological discussions and interreligious meetings that led to *Nostra Aetate*. It has always been very keen on nurturing dialogical relations

with all religions. Even after the recent terrorist attacks, all the Church leaders insisted that Muslims should *not* be confused with those extremists and that dialogue was not an option but a necessity. They are on pretty much the same line as Pope Francis. Marseilles is the second largest city in France and 30% of its population are Muslims. There is a forum there called "Marseille-Esperance," where

### **How does this affect interfaith relations, especially between Christians and Jews in France?**

France has the third largest Jewish population in the world, although a very small percentage in the entire population (less than 1 per cent). Most French Jews have families in Israel. When France left Northern Africa, many French-speaking Jews, who had lived there since at least a

they tend to think their future lies in Israel: so they give more Israeli - rather than 'French Jewish'- names to their kids, who go more and more to private Jewish schools, where they learn Hebrew. Last year 8,000 people left France for Israel, a record. Of course, some do come back.

**You pointed out that Christian - Jewish - Muslim Dialogue is the need of the hour in France. Can the insight from Louis Massignon that Jews, Christians and Muslims are members of the one Abrahamic Family promote dialogue between these three groups of believers?**

Many persons engaged in interreligious dialogue mention this common point between Christians, Jews and Muslims and you will find many associations and groups using the Abrahamic connection. But lack of it is also a tricky one for there is also the question of Ishmael and Isaac!

Sometimes it is good to take as a point of departure the fact that we are different religions with different hermeneutical traditions but we have nevertheless to talk and collaborate and dialogue. Especially on the ground: feeding the homeless, serving the poor, etc. Respect and action are a necessity, however big the commonalities between our faiths. One also does not need to have some theological agreements of any sort to dialogue: what we should instill in our communities is the respect for the others and their religion whatever it is. In July in the wake of the murder of Fr Jacques Hamel by ISIS terrorists some Muslim communities and their Imams went to Catholic Churches for Sunday Masses to express solidarity with the Catholics. That was a very good sign of respect and solidarity.

**Confessional States collapse as they do not respect the religious freedom of their citizens. Secular**



In the 20th century the French Jews saw themselves as 'French citizens of Jewish faith.' Now they tend to feel they are 'Jews living outside the Land of Israel.'

all religious leaders of the city meet and share regularly and the personal relationships between priests and imams are usually very good. But in the neighborhoods where the Christians are a small minority and where the visible presence of Salafi Islam is on the rise, it is always a challenge to preach harmony and peace, because there is so much fear. It must be said that secular French people can also be very aggressive, albeit usually in an oral way, towards visibly pious Muslims and this does not help, obviously. But practicing Catholics are peace-loving and are never aggressive,

**In your lecture at the Interfaith Coalition for Peace Centre in Delhi, you talked of 'Israelisation of Jews' in France.**

millennium, chose to leave either for Israel, where French is a known language, or for France, accepting French citizenship.

So we see two tendencies coming together: First the tendency in the Muslim population not to distinguish between Jews and Israelis (*Yahud*) and to see primarily the Palestinian-Israeli conflict not as a predominantly 'national' conflict but as a 'religious' one. And second the tendency for Jews all over the world to feel a growing solidarity for the country where half the world's Jews now live. They feel less like 'French citizens of Jewish faith' - as in the 20th century - but more like 'Jews living outside the Land of Israel.' Encountering prejudices against them, mostly in the very Islamized neighbourhoods, and verbal slurs,

**nations, on the other hand, deny any public space for religions and thus curtail the freedom of public profession of one's faith. In this context, do you see any lessons from a secular country like India that respects the religious freedom of her citizens where 'people of all religions are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate their religion'?**

In theory France has the same approach to religion as India! The law of 1905 about the separation of Church from State does not prohibit religious manifestations in public anywhere: processions, street ceremonies, religious signs like cassocks and veils are not per se forbidden. The only criterion is the "public order," which means that these manifestations of faith should be announced in advance and be respectful of the daily lives of other citizens. The problem is that some intellectuals and some leftist politicians interpreted the law as something against public display of religion - as if it said all religions should be expressed only in the intimate and private life of an individual citizen. This is a negation of what a religion is by definition: a community. In the 90s the veil (the *hijab* worn by Muslim women) was banned in public places. This was not a social threat but the Salafi communities used it as an ideological instrument. Instead of banning the *burqa* from the outset for obvious civil reasons, a great confusion was created. And unfortunately this debate is still not over.

**What will be the impact of the emerging multi religious, multi cultural society on the way secularism is practiced in France?**

Religious diversity and, especially the growing and visible presence of Islam, is changing the landscape in

many European countries. For the moment it leads to a radicalization of the secular majority: they feel threatened and the terrorist attacks in the name of Islam fuels this radicalization. It would be good if more people would realize that religion is a dimension of humanity and not something opposed to science, reason or progress. A famous leftist journalist, a secular Jew, by the way,

apostolates that dialogue is seen as a luxury. And it is clear that we don't have Jesuit specialists in Islam and Muslim traditions. Nevertheless some young French-speaking Dominicans like Emmanuel Pisani and Adrien Candiard are playing a lead role.

**Kindly tell us about your work in Fr General's Council of experts in religions?**



The growing and visible presence of Islam is changing the landscape in many European countries.

Jean Birnbaum, said just that in a recent book, *Un Silence Religieux : La Gauche Face au Djihadisme*. The Left should recognize the importance and value of the religious reality.

**How do the European Jesuits contribute to Jewish Christian relations? What more can be done?**

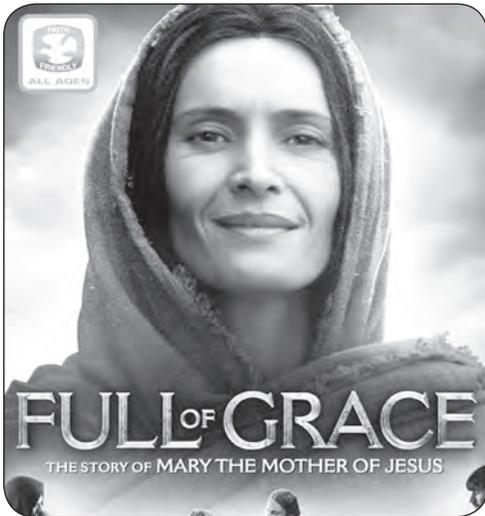
A few Jesuits are engaged in dialogue, along with many other people. In France, Dominicans, Oratorians and Diocesan priests also make major contributions. The main problem is the lack of manpower - lack of vocations. We are a bleeding Society of Jesus in a bleeding Church. There is so much to be done just to ensure the continuation of basic

I am still very new on the job and I have had only one meeting with the team of counselors and Fr General himself. What is sure is that General Adolfo Nicolas is a man deeply interested in interreligious dialogue. It is a conviction that he has developed a lot while in Japan. For him other religious traditions give us the opportunity to deepen and enrich our own faith: we can discover aspects we had not yet seen. He was very keen to follow what the last General Congregation of the Jesuits had said in 2008: Interreligious dialogue, at all levels, is a necessity of our time. For the moment our job is to inform him regularly about what is going on in every part of the world. ■



## Her last days here

*Full of Grace: The Story of Mary of Nazareth*  
A film by Andrew Hyatt  
Starring Noam Jenkins, Bahia Haifi, Eddie Kaulukukui ...



*Full of Grace: The Story of Mary of Nazareth* follows Mary of Nazareth in her last earthly days, as she helps the fractious early Church regain their original encounter with The Lord.

Set in Jerusalem, 10 years after the death of her son, Mary lives out her final earthly days and contemplates the incredible mystery of her life. Accompanied by her young maidservant Zara, she quietly awaits the return of the "Rock", the one her Son placed as responsible for the Christian people - Peter.

Arriving to Mary's home after 10 long years of traveling, preaching and fleeing from death, Peter feels the overwhelming responsibility and helplessness in front of the great task he must undertake. Spending days with Mary and recounting what happened in both their lives after meeting Christ, Peter slowly discovers that he is not leading the Church, but following what Jesus had started.

## The Sikh who cares for the sick

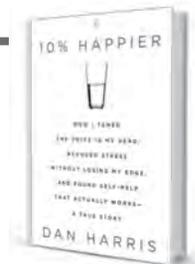


Gurmeet Singh, a Patna-based businessman who has been spending most of his time taking care of abandoned patients in the Patna Medical College and Hospital for the past 20 years, will receive the World Sikh Award in London. This will be the first time in 13 years that Gurmeet, who is in his sixties, will step out of Bihar. Every day, he visits abandoned patients in the hospital and provides them with food, medicines and other required supplies and frequently donates blood. Gurmeet runs a garment shop in Chiraiyatand. He was inspired to help patients after a woman selling plastic bags came up to his shop one day with a baby in her arms. The child's skin was burnt. Gurmeet rushed them to the Patna hospital but was told that the doctors were on strike and there was nobody to attend to the baby. This was when he realised that underprivileged people who have no one to look after them or those who have been abandoned by their families are the worst affected in such situations. He decided to start helping them himself. The Sikh Directory, which is an international organisation, recognised his work and he was selected as the winner from among 100 entries from across the world.

*Courtesy: www.thebetterindia.com*

## On what meditation could do

After having a nationally televised panic attack on 'Good Morning America', Dan Harris knew he had to make some changes. After learning about research that suggests meditation can do everything from lower your blood pressure to essentially rewire your brain, Harris took a deep dive into the underreported world of CEOs, scientists, and even marines who are now using it for increased calm, focus, and happiness. *10% Happier* takes readers on a ride from the outer reaches of neuroscience to the inner sanctum of network news to the bizarre fringes of America's spiritual scene, and leaves them with a takeaway that could actually change their lives.



### **10% Happier:**

By Dan Harris  
Published by It Books  
Pages: 256; Price: Rs.899/-

## The Jesuit journey of Fr Adolfo Nicolás

**A**dolfo Nicolás, SJ has served as superior general of the Society of Jesus since 2008. He will formally step down in October as Jesuit delegates gather in Rome for their 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation to choose a new leader and deliberate on the future of the order.

Fr Timothy P Kesicki, SJ, president of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, said that Fr Nicolás has been the right Jesuit to deliver this message. “He always asks Jesuits, ‘Are you free and available?’ In other words, will you go anywhere, do anything?”

“It’s a recovery of our universal mission, our universal identity, and the prioritisation of our Jesuit mission over national identities,” said Fr Huang, who shared that a word Fr Nicolás’ uses frequently is “depth”.

“He’s always challenging people to go deeper, to a greater depth of reflection and spiritual life, and it’s

*Fr Nicolás left Spain in 1960, while he was still in formation. He went to Japan where he was ordained seven years later and spent many years serving there.*



Eight years is not a long run for a Jesuit Superior General but 80-year-old Fr Nicolás is leaving a lasting imprint on the global community of Jesuits and lay collaborators, according to Jesuits and many observers. He has done so in ways strikingly similar to his fellow Jesuit who arrived in Rome five years after he did – Pope Francis.

“That’s what he’s been doing and saying for the last eight years. ‘Get out there, get out to the people who need you.’ It’s exactly what Pope Francis is saying now,” said Fr Joseph Daoust SJ, who served for six years as a top adviser to Fr Nicolás in Rome before returning to the United States.

Pope Francis and Fr Nicolás share what Jesuits call “a way of proceeding” rooted in the lively spirituality of St Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus, said Fr Daoust SJ.

“For Fr Nicolás, the more free and available you are, the more you come into your own as a Jesuit. And he’s lived out the message. He never went back home,” he added.

Fr Nicolás left Spain in 1960, while he was still in formation. He went to Japan where he was ordained seven years later and spent many years serving in varied roles including teaching theology in Tokyo, serving as the Provincial of the Japan Jesuit Province and ministering to poor immigrants in a Tokyo parish. He later moved to Manila where he served first as director of the East Asian Pastoral Institute and later as president of what was then called the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania. Filipino Jesuit Fr Daniel Patrick Huang, who is Fr Nicolás’ regional assistant for Asia Pacific, said that as the superior general he has helped Jesuits “recover a sense of being Jesuits first”.

a reflection of his own search. He insists that our language should be the language of wisdom. People are looking for wisdom, for a sense of what makes life important, what makes life joyful. He’s a wise man who helps people in their search for wisdom.”

During his visit to Timor-Leste in January 2014, Fr Nicolás spoke with Timorese scholastic, Rui Muakandala SJ about Timor-Leste and the Jesuit mission. When asked about his message to Timorese scholastics and young Jesuits, he told them to have big dreams and big desires. But these big dreams should be for the world. “We are not for ourselves; we are for others,” he stressed. “So continue to think big, to think of a new world, of new structures, of new possibilities, of new alternatives...to put ourselves in the service of humanity.”

- [www.sjapc.net](http://www.sjapc.net)

## Novice Masters Meet in the Almora Hills

The novice masters of South Asian assistancy gathered at SEVA Centre in Almora hills of Delhi Jesuit province for their annual meeting. On 03<sup>rd</sup> Sep '16 Fr. Varkey Perekatt, Provincial of Delhi, celebrated the inaugural Mass.

In his inaugural address Fr Varkey reminded us of the mission of novice masters. He said the very purpose of the novitiate formation was to help the novice have a personal God experience in Jesus, which enables him to decide to be a Jesuit. Spiritual direction and manifestation of conscience should help in this. Fr Varkey drew our attention to all that the novices should be taught in the novitiate - good manners, respect for elders, team work, collaboration, mature relationships, understanding of human sexuality and proper use of media for communication and mission. Since the long retreat is the core prayer experience in the novitiate, besides psychological preparation, novices should be helped to cultivate a taste for silence and guided to meditate and contemplate. He asked us novice masters to be examples to our novices. "Your personal example is more effective than what you teach," he said.

For two days Fr Joseph Sebastian (PAT), director, Rural Education Animation Development (READ), conducted input sessions on the theme of the meet, 'Spirituality of Social Involvements – Spirituality of Jesuit Social Action.' He defined a Jesuit as one called to be Good News to the poor today. Therefore in the novitiate novices should manifest obedience and generosity to be with the poor. Through experiences and experiments their faith in Christ the poor and their identity as Jesuit novices should be deepened. The depth of this identity is shown in the ease with which the poor interact with us. Commitment to the poor makes a Jesuit creative. Therefore novices should be exposed to the poor in rural areas. Novitiate should be a place of dialogue with the poor and encounter with human suffering where novices can freely discuss the human experience of poverty and suffering.

During the novitiate novices should be confronted by the demands of the Gospel. Option for the poor should play a role in the novitiate formation. In order to be Good News to the poor today, Jesuits have to contemplate the world through the eyes of the three divine persons. Secondly, we have to contemplate Christ the poor in order to love the poor and help them creatively as Jesus did. Thirdly Jesuits are called to contemplate the poor themselves. Fr Sebastian said that our contact with the poor gives a special coloring to our spirituality that makes our action radical. On the second day the inputs were focused on the spirituality of social action. Since we are all God's children, the poor deserve their God-given dignity - not just our charity. Jesus who emptied himself to become human is the center of our spirituality who enables us to be other-centered and the other is primarily the poor. In our daily Eucharistic celebration we promise to Jesus, 'Lord you have broken yourself for others. Therefore I am going to break myself for others today and tomorrow I will come back to you again with all my brokenness'.

Having been nourished and challenged by the input



sessions we entered into our two days of in-depth sharing. It led us to an action plan in areas of concern in the novitiate formation. Proper preparation is necessary for making the long retreat. Intensive journal, group dynamics, healing the inner child workshop, Zen meditation, Enneagram, MBTI, classes on developmental stages and prayer week are the means which many have found useful. The novice master's expectations of his socius could be given in writing. 'The would-be novice master' should be equipped in Ignatian spirituality and spiritual guidance and prepared well to take up this important responsibility. Faith formation of novices needs our attention. *Boys Talk, Girls Talk, Parents Listen, Teachers Listen* by Cathrine Petler and *Sex Education* by Anthony Groony are the books found useful towards the psychosexual integration of novices. Usage of media to motivate our novices is found effective.

In order to deal with guilt feelings, to raise one's self-esteem, to nurture a healthy image of God and mindfulness books like *Called to Share in His Life* by Fr Franz Jalich, SJ and for prayer *Mind and Body Combination* and *Power of Silence* by Sebastian Painadath, SJ are found to be effective tools to help our novices. Books, plays, videos, quiz and objective type questions help the novices to acquire knowledge of St Ignatius and Society. We were reminded that a thorough medical checkup of candidates before they enter the novitiate is necessary. Fr Pradeep took us to a village to interact with women in Self-help groups.

Fr I. Raj, the ADF, said the right motivation and mental health are some of the important criteria for the selection of candidates to the Society. Right from the novitiate Jesuitness - imbibing the universal nature of the Jesuit mission - has to be imparted to our formees. Pre-novices have to pass the assistancy test to be admitted to the novitiate, he said.

While evaluating this meet in Almora, we, as novice masters, felt inspired, strengthened, supported and enlightened by the meeting. This is why this annual meeting of the novice masters has become something we all look forward to. We also planned for the Novice Masters' Meet - 2017. All were highly appreciative of the theme of the meeting, because of its relevance to the village experiment in the novitiate and its close connection to Spiritual Exercises and liked the way it was presented by the resource person. We enjoyed the generous hospitality of Frs Jebamalai and Pradeep Kandulna of SEVA Almora community and thanked Fr Vimal Kishore, novice master of Patna who organized the meeting and his socius, Fr Christopher,

- R. Antony Raj, SJ

BY JOMON JOSE, SJ

Juddhi lifted his face agonizingly and peered at the reviling faces in the dark. His eyes were smeared with blood and everything was a blur. Like a whipped mongrel, he whined and whimpered. Then he spotted me in the crowd and fixed his gaze on me. I tried to look away but he recognized me for sure. "Father..." he pleaded. "Have mercy on me... ask them to release me... tell them to forgive me." He begged, "Please give me some water."

boys and girls intentionally lost their way in the forests on arrival and found their way together on departure. It was the month of fun and frolic, of mirth and merriment. It was also a month of tragedies.

It was a splendid Friday evening in March. The setting sun suffused the village in a surrealistic ruddiness. After a day's labour, husbands and wives and maids and lads were returning to their homes carrying loads of firewood and singing songs. Some young boys who came back faster were playing "hit-the-coin" and while some others were idly chatting away. Half-naked children with snot leaking noses were

When I arrived at the spot, a large group of villagers had already formed a circle around a young man called Juddhi who was shouting war cries and slashing the air wildly with a kukhuri, threatening to maul anyone who dared to go near him. Blood oozed from his nostrils. Like a cornered cat, screeching and fuming, Juddhi searched frantically for a way to flee.

This was what had preceded. Juddhiman Tamang, a good-for-nothing tippler and shirker, who made his way in the village by playing cards, fighting, and bullying others, was drunk as a skunk that day. As he always did after getting boozy, he



I looked around. All eyes were on me. What would I do? Would I show compassion to this criminal now treated as an animal? Or would I join the crowd in punishing him? Time stood still.

March was the twilight month in Tipling. The bitter cold of the winter slowly gave way to the balmy days of the spring. It was the season of the year when rhododendrons danced in an array of sprightly colors, ranging from soft rose to crimson red. It was the time when troupes of men and women sang their way back and forth from the forest carrying firewood to be stored away for the impending cruel monsoon. It was also a time of match-making and heart breaking as

darting here and there. Group of girls were seen loitering around effusively gushing water springs; some filled their jars while the others washed their limbs and emptied themselves of the day's gossips. I was sitting on the upper veranda of my house with a book in my hand, soaking in the surroundings with lose abandon.

All of a sudden, the sound of a gunshot startled the village. For a moment nothing moved. Then the yells and shouts came. A bunch of swallows that had perched on the plum tree in front of my house shrieked and fled. People ran pell-mell. I threw the book into my room and ran to the direction of the noise.

beat up his wife and gashed her head with a kukhuri. She yanked her two children, one aged three and the other one, and fled. Juddhi, thinking he was invincible, was hurling expletives at everyone who passed by and itched to pick a fight with anybody who came to his vicinity. Knowing his crazy nature, the villagers kept a safe distance from him.

That was when Madhav Ghale happened to wend his way home. Juddhi slung obscenities at Madhav and braved him to a fight. Now, Madhav was another young man who had done his term in jails for illegally possessing arms and other such crimes. At first, he ignored Juddhi because Madhav was on his parole and did not want to

create a reason to break it. Like a street mongrel that barks and howls after a spunky Tibetan Mastiff that refuses to engage him, Juddhi, triumphant now, called Madhav a bastard and his mother a whore. That was too much to bear for Madhav, a hot blooded man of twenty-two with little brains. He could accept any amount of crassness but any suspicion cast on the origin of his birth and the dignity of his mother was a matter of shame. He retaliated and both Juddhi and Madhav got into a fist fight. Juddhi took a couple of clean blows on his nose and face from Madhav.

Bloodied, with a bruised ego and flaming anger, Juddhi turned mad and wild. He made a dash for his house and fetched his hunting rifle. Some men have these long single shot rifles in their houses to hunt animals, illegally. He swayed his rifle at the crowd indiscriminately. Everyone ran skelter-shelter. He then pointed his rifle at Madhav and took aim to shoot. But his intention was thwarted by Madhav's uncle who jumped on Juddhi, grabbed his hands and pushed him. The gun went off and fortunately the bullet riveted off the wall of a toilet nearby and caused no harm to anyone.

Seizing this opportunity, several strong men, dispossessed Juddhi of his gun and flung him to the ground. He scampered to the veranda of a house nearby and was soon in possession of a kukhuri. This was when I arrived at the scene.

With the involvement of a lethal weapon like a rifle, the usual drunken brawl took a new turn altogether. Fights were common in the village. At times people have been attacked with kukhuri and other sharp swords. But this fellow's attempt to shoot one of the villagers when so many of them were there was scary and showed up many lurking fears in that village. Some people suggested that the police must be called. But the nearest police station was three hours walk away. By now it was 6 pm. No police would dare to come to Tipling that late.

I stood among the score of bystanders. Being a 'master' in the school and a spiritual leader to some in the village, I had a certain respect there. Many cast their anxious eyes on me. What happened next was sudden. Madhav, his father Lal, and a couple of young men who had been nursing some long time grudges against Juddhi from earlier skirmishes, overpowered him, bound his hands and feet, and tied him to a pillar that was used to tether buffaloes and bulls in the yard.

Each one present then took his chance at bringing down fire and brimstone on Juddhi. Vociferous din of swear words in multiple languages was accompanied by beating of Juddhi with stinging nettles. Women spat on him. Many men, including boys below ten, beat him with sticks, kicked him all over and slapped him on the face to the rhythmic claps of the spectators. Madhav, realizing that he had an enthralled audience at his feet, thought it opportune to establish himself as the foremost don of the village by yammering about the great crimes he had committed, the guns he possessed, the counterfeit money he smuggled, and the men he cut open. By this time, Juddhi's wife had come with her kids and, wailing loudly, threw herself beside her husband.

Darkness descended. The sun had set. Night fell. The drama continued. Many stood and watched, others came and went. "This devil has to be kept tied and beaten all night. No food...no water...it is our culture...our traditional punishment for someone who has done such a crime," someone shouted. The utterance of the word "our culture" and "tradition" gave legitimacy to all the madness that was unleashed. Tradition was sacrosanct. It could not be broken.

I was there. I watched it all. My mind was torn asunder. Madhav's family was my greatest support in the village. Juddhi, I knew, was a wife-beater, something I considered the most cowardly and demeaning act a man can commit. He deserved to be behind bars. But this inhuman

treatment meted out to him was demonic. No human dignity was shown to him. No one in the village came to his aid.

Juddhi lifted his face agonizingly and peered at the reviling faces in the dark. His eyes were smeared with blood and everything was a blur. Like a whipped mongrel, he whined and whimpered. Then he spotted me in the crowd and fixed his gaze on me. I tried to look away but he recognized me for sure. "Father...," he pleaded. "Have mercy on me... ask them to release me...tell them to forgive me." He begged, "Please give me some water."

I looked around. All eyes were on me. What would I do? Would I show compassion to this criminal now treated worse than an animal? Or would I join the crowd in punishing him? Time stood still.

I was reminded, then, of another time and place, another situation of death and another Master. There was this woman who was caught in the very act of committing adultery. The tradition prescribed that she should be stoned to death. They had their stones ready. She was brought to the Master by the self-righteous men. What would the Master do? The Master did not look at the men around him. He simply said, "Let anyone who has not sinned, throw the first stone." Silence. Then came the thuds, the sound of stones dropping from the hands of men at their feet. No stone was thrown. One by one the men went home.

I slowly stepped forward. I could hear sounds of gasps. Juddhi's face lit up with hope. I went near him... knelt down...looked into his eyes...

I then pulled his lacerating wife to her feet, picked up the kids and took them all to the health post in the village. I vanished into darkness. I dared not to look back.

Back in my room, sleep evaded me. Ghosts of guilt haunted me. And as I lay there peering into the darkness, in the wee hours of the morning, I heard the blare of the shaman's conch, three times...the sound of the death knell. ■

*Fr Jomon Jose, SJ (NEP) teaches at St Xavier's College, Maitighar, Kathmandu, Nepal.*

# “Today is better than yesterday!”

- says the 92-year old Scientist-Mystic, Ted Bowling, SJ

BY JOB KOZHAMTHADAM, SJ

**O**n 15 Sep 2016 the book *Science, Mysticism and East-West Dialogue*,<sup>1</sup> edited by Job Kozhamthadam in honour of Fr. Theodore Bowling, was released by Fr Edward Mudavassery, Rector, De Nobili College.

With 92 long years behind him Fr Theodore Bowling, fondly called Fr Ted, is not so much an individual as an institution. With more than 64 eventful years in De Nobili College (DNC), he is the carrier of a great tradition. Born in the city of Louisville, Kentucky, USA, he arrived in India in 1951 as a young and energetic Jesuit of 27. He came to DNC in 1952 and has been a gracious and generous member of this community to this day.

Soon after completing his formative years, he joined the Faculty of Philosophy of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth (JDV), Pune, in 1957 teaching *Questiones Connectae* or Basic Science and other related subjects. A dedicated and conscientious teacher, Fr Ted made every effort to promote scientific literacy among the future leaders of the Church so that they may become effective apostles of the Christian community and the nation in the science-dominated world of today. Outside the classroom he proved

to be a lover of trees and a friend of nature.

When I first came to JDV Campus in 1972, the old veterans used to tell us that when the Jesuits bought the campus land, it was all



barren rocky terrain, hardly wanted by anyone. Over the years it has been transformed into a 100-acre, much-wanted, eco-rich, garden-like campus with trees standing silently all around, nestled by birds of many hues joyfully singing their lovely melodies. More than anyone else Fr Ted has contributed assiduously and tirelessly towards this priceless transformation. I am sure that in a ‘concrete-jungle like Pune this contribution will never be forgotten.

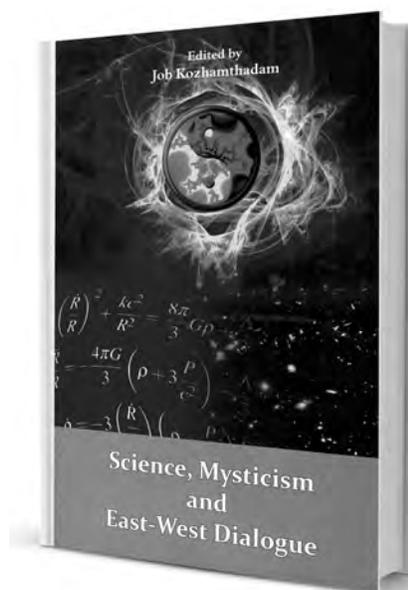
Fr Ted has been equally active outside the JDV Campus. His almost life-long commitment and nationwide service to IHS (Institute of Home Study) is well known. Founded by the Patna Jesuit, Fr Peter

Sontag in 1948, IHS was an attempt to make Christ and the Christian message known to the non-Christian world, and Fr Ted took over its reins soon after the death of Fr Sontag in 1963. He has also been the moving spirit of the Association of Catholic Inquiry Centres of India (ACECI), serving as its Founder-President for many years, giving it effective leadership and guidance. These centres of ACECI continue successfully, disseminating Christian values and principles, spreading the message of peace and justice.

The IHS tradition is continued by the St. Paul Society. In addition to all these, Fr Ted has been active, carrying out several other, at times unpopular, missions of the Church, such as promoting the Natural Family Planning.

As a simple token of recognition and appreciation, I thought of dedicating my latest book, *Science, Mysticism and East-West Dialogue*, to Fr Ted. The theme and tone of the book blend well with his life and ideals.

It is well recognized that scientific developments in general, and recent breakthroughs in particular, have impacted religion significantly. Many a false religious belief has been banished, several others have been modified, thanks to the new ideas and insights provided by science. But it has not been a one-way, negative process. Science, particularly in recent times, has also made several positive contributions to religion. For instance, in the past mysticism was given a negative understanding and rating. It was considered something irrational and undesirable – a sign of low rationality and poor intellectual status. But today in the light of developments in the theory of relativity, quantum theory, etc., this view has changed. Today many have come to recognize that mysticism, when exercised in a balanced and responsible way, is a sign of an advanced form of intellectual perception and intuitive grasp. They are able to see it as a higher form of knowing that goes beyond what can be grasped by a mere rational process. In fact, when humans are at the peak of their intellectual engagement and creativity, they enter into the world



### ***Science, Mysticism and East-West Dialogue:***

Edited by Job Kozhamthadam, SJ

Co-published by IISR (Indian Institute of Science and Religion), Delhi and ISPCK, Delhi

Pages: 280; Price: Rs.375/-

of mysticism. This level of creativity cannot be captured by a mere rational reasoning process. Historians and philosophers of science point out that great scientific geniuses like Albert Einstein, Wolfgang Pauli, Werner Heisenberg etc., were mystics in their most creative and productive intellectual engagement. This finding has led many serious scholars to see a complementarity relationship between science and mysticism. This book, with original contributions from 14 well-known and well-recognized scholars from the East and the West, attempts to substantiate this important conclusion.

This book is also an attempt to promote a healthy and productive East-West dialogue. Traditionally

modern science is closely associated with the West, although the West has no monopoly over it. Similarly, traditionally mysticism is intimately linked to the East, although no exclusive claim can be made, since in the West too there has been a strong mystical tradition. Because of this close linkage between the two pairs, it can be said that a close linkage between science and mysticism can serve as a catalyst for a healthy and effective East-West dialogue.

Fr. Ted's life and work make him a genuine bridge between the East and the West, a fitting representative of the East-West dialogue. I had the good fortune of visiting and meeting with his family members a few times in Louisville, Kentucky. They have a great tradition and a generous spirit. Having been born and brought up in that tradition, he has his western roots. Having lived and served joyfully and successfully in India for over 65 years, he has the eastern spirit as well. With his deep Catholic faith and tradition he has been able to harmonize the two. The title and theme of the book expresses this blending of the horizons.<sup>2</sup>

On 04 May this year Fr Ted scored the 92<sup>nd</sup> run of his life. This rare longevity did not come easy for him. In 1986 he needed a bypass heart surgery. Today after 30 full years he is still on his feet. What is the secret of this successful feat? A positive attitude towards life and an almost unwavering optimism. "Today is better than yesterday" is his daily status report! As Fr Ted edges slowly and steadily towards his century, we, his younger brothers and collaborators, have a lot to learn from this mystic-scientist. ■

BY CEDRIC PRAKASH, SJ

## The Jesuit martyr revered by Muslims and Christians

I visited the city of Homs in western Syria recently. It is the third largest city of the country after Aleppo in the north and the capital Damascus about 170 kms to its south. Its population, consisting of Arabs, Sunni Muslims, Alawites and Christians- reflected the religious diversity of Syria. This is the city where this Jesuit martyr lived and served the Syrian people.

Today Homs is a devastated city: bombed, battered and bruised by five years of a bloody civil war. Thousands have fled their homes. Many have died. Those who stay on in the midst of ruins, skeletal bombed-out buildings in a ghost-town, feel utterly hopeless, not knowing what to do and where to go. The children smile, but they are seized with a fear which is palpable. Children below five years know only war. The youth talk aimlessly, searching for ways and means to escape from a world of hopelessness. The adults are still tongue-tied for any meaningful conversation. Many of them just want to wake up from what they hope is just a bad dream. The tragedy which has gripped their lives is real!

They have been talking recently with great sadness about someone whom they refer to as 'Abouna Frans' - a Jesuit, **Fr Frans van der Lugt**. Their eyes light up and a sense of nostalgia envelops them, because he still lives on in their hearts and minds.

Who was this 'Abouna Frans'? Fr Frans van der Lugt was a Dutch Jesuit priest who devoted his life to the people of Syria. When civil war erupted there in 2011 he chose to remain in the country, suffering the shortages and terrors of the conflict alongside both Muslims and Christians.



He was born on 10 April 1938 in The Hague, Netherlands - the son of a banker. He joined the Jesuits in 1959 and seven years later went to the Middle East. With the exception of a short break to complete his doctorate in Psychology, he spent the rest of his life from 1976 in Syria. In Homs he founded the Al-Ard institute, where handicapped children of all religions and ethnic groups found a home - of warmth and acceptance.

His twilight years however were shattered by the civil war. As the fighting intensified, Fr Frans moved to the Jesuit residence in Boustan-Diwan (the inner city). From there he shared the sufferings of the inhabitants, refusing to leave, even as that part of the city continued to be bombed from all sides. His Centre became a home for those who had nowhere to go: Muslims and Christians, women and men, old and young. It was a haven for them and Fr Frans was their refuge.

His message to all was one of hope, of mercy and reconciliation, of justice and of peace. You will be moved if you listen to those who knew him, those who experienced his warmth, his love, his courage to give "all-of-himself" to those in need.

Because there were several rebels in the old city, that part was

under siege. There were no food supplies coming in nor were people being allowed in or out. Though a relatively 'normal' life continued just streets away in the government-held zones, starvation was claiming lives in the rebel enclave. Fr Frans existed on olives and broth fortified with weeds picked off the streets. With his training in psychology, he documented the spread of mental illness among those who found themselves besieged.

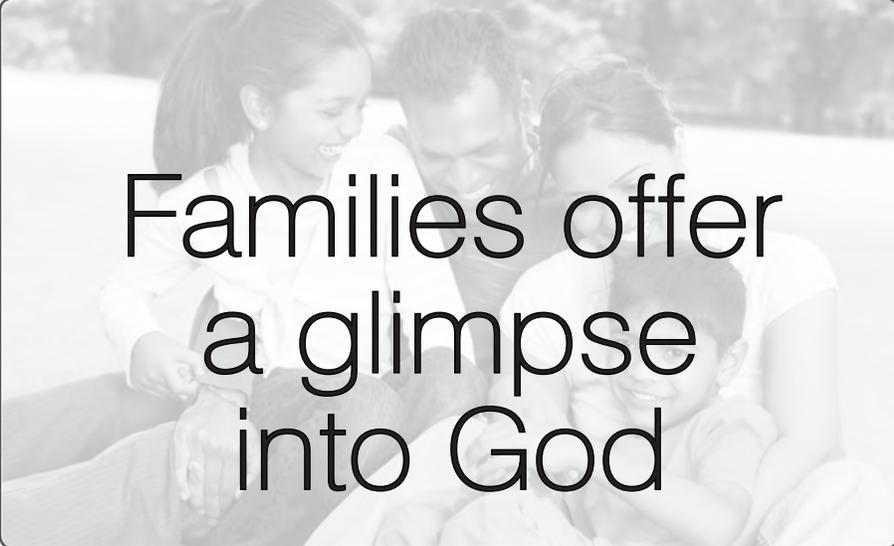
Frans was a healer - he touched the broken spirits of a battered people. If someone was physically sick, he did all he could - with the little he had - to make them well again. His forte, however, was to soothe the mental and the spiritual suffering they were going through. They sought his guidance and his direction - when they felt overwhelmed by the brutality around them.

It was a tragic irony that such a man was gunned down on World Health Day, 07 April 2014, by those who felt that this healer had no right to live and heal the brokenness of Homs and Syria. It was just three days before what would have been his 76<sup>th</sup> birthday. On hearing about his tragic death Muslims and Christians came together despite the hostilities around them - to bury him in the compound of the Jesuit Centre.

Fr Frans is revered as a saint today by both Muslims and Christians. His tomb is visited today by people from all walks of life. They pray to him for lasting peace and security in the region. They are convinced that his martyrdom will not go in vain.

I left the city of Homs, feeling deeply inspired and strengthened. ■

*Fr Cedric Prakash, SJ works with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in the Middle East.*



# Families offer a glimpse into God

*It's impossible to fully understand God. So humans come up with metaphors to try to explain our conviction of a loving God who holds us in community with each other. These images are rooted in our own experiences and cultures; the biblical image of God as a shepherd may not be as meaningful to people living in cities today.*



*For **Professor Nichole Flores**, one of the most powerful metaphors to understand God and the church is family. Like other theological metaphors, this stems from her own experiences; she grew up in a large extended Latino family. The Latino culture places a strong focus on family relationships. These families include not just nuclear families that live under one roof, but also the complex web of extended family and the family relationships that are created through the sacraments between people who aren't related by blood.*

*Flores believes not only that families offer a glimpse into God, but that they also inspire justice, if we can think of the global community as a large, extended family.*

*Excerpts from her interview published in U.S. Catholic:*

## **Why use families as a metaphor to talk about our faith?**

Latino/a theology, as an offshoot of liberation theology, is really interested in looking at experience as a starting point for theological reflection. As I began to study liberation theology and get really immersed in Latino/a theology, I started reflecting on my own experience of being a part of a really big extended family.

My grandparents on my father's side have 12 children, and all of those children have children. Just on that side of my family, I have 35 cousins. As we continue to expand, our diversity - in terms of politics, economics, and even race/ethnicity - continues to grow.

Families are places of nurture for us. We form our identities in conversation with our families. But families are also a place where we encounter difference constantly. If families are a place where we learn to love unconditionally, they are also a training ground for working out the identity tensions that happen in larger, public settings.

That experience of family was so formative for me and, as a result, my theology is rooted in my experience of extended family that emerges from my context within a Latino/a community.

Families are central in human experience. Putting families front and center means we start thinking about individuals in fundamental relationship

to the community. It resists an ethic that stresses autonomy, and it says that relationality is central.

## **What does your experience as a Latina woman bring to a theology of family?**

Latino/a families extend beyond the idea of a nuclear family. It's broadly accepted in United States culture that a family is a mother, a father, 2.5 kids, and maybe a dog. But I see a real value in thinking about family as extending beyond our own household.

Of course I want to stress that there's a very special relationship between people who live together within a household community. There's a very special role for marriage and other particular commitments within the life of the Church. But the Latino/a experience of extended family is also very expansive; it moves beyond its own borders to incorporate people who maybe don't have families of their own, or who aren't particularly nourished or taken care of by their own families.

It's so beautiful to think about the responsibility of bringing up children as a communitarian one; even the most dedicated parents need help. In my own experience of family, I've become *comadre* (mother together) to a woman who isn't Latina, through the fact that I'm a *madrina* (godmother) to her son. This relationship takes our cultures, which are different, and puts them into encounter with each other as I support her in raising this little human.

My godson has recently developed this inexplicable interest in Guadalupe, even though this isn't particularly part of his culture. And so we already see the ways in which our commitment to each other as family has started to expand our understandings of what it means to be human, to be in community, and our responsibilities to each other and to the common good.

This idea of parenting together and seeing family as extending beyond biological belonging has really neat potential for thinking about the ways people come to encounter each other

in the larger society. When family is understood in this broad way, it becomes a resource for expanding community - and the love and care and concern of communities - beyond ourselves and our particular household units.

Pope Francis' thinking in *Laudato Si'* does a really good job of getting at this. His use of the family metaphor throughout the encyclical isn't surprising, given his Latin American context and the family imagery in Catholic social teaching. One of the major contributions of his papacy will be the new ways in which he illuminates the family metaphor for us.

One of the ways we see this happening is when he uses the metaphor to describe a sense of belonging to God, to each other, and to the earth. This mutual belonging stresses the role of charity as an orienting virtue for our social relationships.

Catholics think a lot about justice. And justice is very important. But it's the bare minimum of what we need in order to flourish as human beings. Pope Francis is pressing us beyond justice to think about love as our motivation for social action. Alejandro García-Rivera is a Latino theologian who passed away a few years ago. He argues that beauty is that which moves the human heart. If he were alive today, he'd be so pleased to see Pope Francis really incorporating this thinking into his teachings on the global common good and family. We owe things to each other because we're related, but we're moved to give these things to one another by a deep sense of love and affection.

We're moved by the beauty of God's image in all of humanity and a sense of being family with all who are created in God's image. This beauty and sense of family inspires us to cultivate a more just world where people can flourish regardless of where they are in the world.

### **What does this look like in practice?**

I think that family as a metaphor can help resist some of the hardening of hearts to social injustice that can

so easily happen as the result of the deluge of information we get from social media.

It's easy to think about social injustice in the abstract. But children make suffering more concrete; they bring all these issues to the surface. This has come up in some workshops I've done on compassion and Syrian migrants and refugees. Many of us have seen the image of the 3-year-old Syrian boy, Alan Kurdi, who drowned and washed up on the beach in Turkey. That image is devastating for anyone who loves a child.

This image brought awareness to the refugee crisis for about a month. Then within the world of social media, which can be so fickle, more images of drowned children came to light and they didn't cause the same amount of heartbreak, even though they were very similar. The problem hasn't gone away.

Familial thinking can help keep suffering in view and change how we think about them. It's so hard to be constantly in the mode of mourning and lament. It's hard to constantly feel deep compassion for people who are suffering around the world without becoming discouraged, as can happen when we encounter this suffering primarily through social media.

### **Are there any downsides to using family as a metaphor?**

We know from the Second Vatican Council that there are many metaphors for Church and each one has strengths and limitations. Family is one really useful metaphor that helps highlight our belonging to one another and instructs us how we can extend love and care beyond our particular self, or even beyond our immediate family. But that doesn't mean that each one of us isn't entitled to have some sort of say in our own lives, some sort of agency that is worthy of respect based on our human dignity.

Thomas Aquinas, in his teachings about justice and the common good, says that it doesn't make sense to think about a community as separate from or transcending the individual parts of the community. The good of the community

- the common good - depends on the good of the individuals within it.

### **Does the balancing act between communitarian and individual good ever get distorted?**

This is a problem that needs to be raised even as we celebrate the renaissance of the family metaphor in Catholic social teaching and in the lives of our parishes: Family isn't always good news to people.

There are so many people who are estranged from their families. And there are also people who experience subjugation or marginalization within their family, or have demands placed upon them by their family members that are unjust.

I've been concerned with the romanticization of the family, that the use of the metaphor doesn't really get at the harm that is frequently done to family members who are too vulnerable to stand up for their own interests.

### **There are things we owe to our families, but are there things that we are expected to do but we don't really owe them?**

The language of owing things to one's family needs to be framed within the concept of justice. One does not owe things to the family that are harmful. Families sometimes inconvenience you. My mom doesn't live in the same city that I'm in, but she sometimes calls asking me to do things for my family. It's inconvenient, but this is my mother who sacrificed so much so that I could live and thrive, so I do it. I'm happy to let my family impose on me, because they're family, but what if I was being asked to do things that were really harmful to myself or to people around me? Can we say that there are limits to the things family members can expect from one another?

In her book *Out of the Depths* (Augsburg Fortress), Ivone Gebara criticizes the ways in which women "have been trained to orient themselves not to God, but to men." She argues that women have been trained to repudiate ourselves in order to take care of the men in our families. She

goes so far as to say that masculinity has become idolatrous. Women are being trained to serve first men and then God. It shouldn't be that way. God should come first.

**How should the Church respond to the misunderstandings of family?**

Part of a response would be: Are we offering resources for women to recognize their personal dignity within the context of family and relationships? This is a very complicated issue on the ground. I was once involved with a Hispanic-serving parish that trained women to be involved in community organizing. But the meetings would always include their husbands. Even if the men weren't involved in any way, cultural respect demanded that they too are invited. But the women felt really uncomfortable doing something that could be perceived as threatening their husbands. It meant: "Well, this woman can't act outside of her family without the permission of her husband." Are we offering that space and resources for women to be encouraged to do otherwise?

Whether within preparation for marriage, the context of confession, or other times, the Church needs to offer opportunities for women to realize, "I have dignity. I have worth. I, too, am important to God, not just the other members of my family - whether my husband, my sons, or even other, more powerful women. My concerns matter."

Are we challenging powerful members of families - whether husbands, sons, or very powerful women within families, or more economically privileged people within families to give up some of their own privilege? How can we orient the entire family to God, in order to resist the temptation of idolatry of our own authority and our own power within the family context?

**How can the Church respond pastorally to situations where some members of the family have drastically more power?**

I have a nickname within my extended family: Dr. Mija (*mija* means

"my daughter"). Even though I have a Ph.D. from Boston College, in their eyes I still have the status of a younger daughter. How do I have a conversation about my place in my family without upsetting the dynamics of authority, not only with the older men in my family but also with elder women who, honestly, have more authority than I do because they've seen a lot more than I have? Someday, in this vision of family, I, too, will have that wisdom of lived



experience. Even though I've read a lot of books, the lived experience will come later. Some people live in situations where questioning family power dynamics is more than awkward—it can be dangerous. What is the church doing to advocate for transformations within families? We need forums where men are challenged to think about their baggage. Are they honoring their wives? What does that mean? Pastorally, are we creating a culture where men are being called to challenge their own power and authority and be held accountable?

**How does the Church help build strong communities?**

I love it when our liturgies, communities, and churches really stress the importance of all of us supporting those who are married or supporting our young people as they're being formed in the faith as a wider community.

Baptism is being accepted and offered grace as a child of God. It brings us into a larger church family, but it also creates sacramental relationships between families. When you agree to be somebody's godmother or godfather, it creates a relationship and makes it real

in the life of the church. Even the act of attending someone's wedding creates family relationships. Sometimes we think of wedding invitations as a sign that someone likes you. But they're really a sign that this person wants you to witness the promise they are making to their spouse in front of God, and they want your help. I have tried to think of the family as a site of care and concern for those who are suffering and struggling.

*Pastorally, are we creating a culture where men are being called to challenge their own power and authority and be held accountable?*

**Does the Church adequately respond to real-life families?**

Many times, the Church doesn't know how to respond to people who don't fit the relationship model we've elevated as the ideal - a married couple with children, etc. It's been harder for me and my husband to plug into the community because he is Protestant and I am Catholic, and we don't yet have kids. I hear a similar thing all the time from folks who are single, and I definitely experienced that as well—the challenges of finding a sense of belonging at one of the most difficult times in your life. I have to admit, I felt really lost at that point, like I had fallen through the cracks of the church.

If we're thinking about Church as this big extended family, do people need to be having kids in order to be a part of this family? Do we need our family members to be trying to get married? Do we have space, either sacramentally or vocationally, for the single life? There's a need for pastoral sensitivity around these issues of marriage and children and family. ■

*Courtesy: www.uscatholic.org*

## Expectations are okay, but where are the evaluations?

Several long articles, these last months, are preparing us to live the coming GC 36 of the Society, with 'dreams' and expectations expressed. This is, of course, interesting and useful. But, unless mistaken, I haven't seen anything in the line of 'evaluation' of the work done after GC 35. How and to what extent have the decrees of the last Congregation passed into the life of the Society, and fired (a "fire that kindles other fires") its apostolic dynamism, particularly in South Asia? Has the Society moved in a significant way towards the 'frontiers' of our traditional Catholic milieu? Eight years is not much and there is no suggestion that a final assessment could be made. But at least do we perceive some new orientations? Have the 'global preferences' and 'five apostolic priorities' [d.3, No 37ff] become part of our mindset? Do they enter into consideration when at assemblies and other meetings, particularly Province consults, there is question of working on apostolic priorities? Are these 'global preferences' (Africa, China, Intellectual apostolate...) part of the discernment process when the time comes to give an apostolic orientation to the secular studies of our young men? Are our communities giving a better 'collective witness of life'? Personally I have questions and even doubts about that – particularly regarding the intellectual, cultural and interreligious dialogue apostolate - but I wish someone who knows better enlightens us.

- Etienne Degrez, SJ  
Kathmandu, Nepal

## Informative and interesting

Thank you for the variety of informative and interesting material you have provided in the Sep '16 issue of *Jivan*. The editorial on the qualities of St. Teresa of Calcutta is quite helpful in understanding this extraordinary follower of Christ. The contribution of Fr Stephen Tong on GC 36 is a well thought-out piece on what one may expect from the approaching Congregation. The short article by Fr Myron Pereira is a very appropriate contribution in the context of discussions regarding restructuring in the Society these days.

It is also something positive that you bring in important news about the SJ in different parts of the world, though the subtitle of *Jivan* is 'news and views of Jesuits in India'. Keep it up!

- Mani Nedumattam, SJ  
Jaipur, Rajasthan - 302 021

## Restructuring of our minds

One must thank Myron Pereira for hitting the nail on the head with reference to restructuring by raising most relevant questions for our reflection. The easiest part of restructuring is spatial or geographic change, i.e., shifts from the hills to

the plains, from urban to rural and so on. This involves mostly money, and no sooner an institution shifts from urban to rural, it has a tendency to convert it into 'urban' even if it is outside the formal urban spaces!

Restructuring of one's mind by being receptive and appreciative to fellow Jesuits in our communities, networking and sharing of resources is the greatest challenge to us Jesuits. A new initiative in an old campus is likely to be given a label of an encroacher and find resistance in sharing resources.

New wine must find new wineskins!

- Lancy Lobo, SJ  
Vadodara, Gujarat - 391 101

## Bold new steps

The letter written by Fr General, inspired by Pope Francis, is a call to us Jesuits to reflect seriously and involve ourselves in ministries that will further the welfare of the people.

It has been proved that baptizing people to make them members of the Church, qualify them to receive the sacraments (and also get admission in Catholic institutions, do not solve the problems that affect their welfare. The Catholic countries of South America and now the whole of Europe are examples of this. Some other approaches are needed and this is what the Pope is telling us. Hope we, the Jesuits in India, will reflect over the Pope's appeal and take bold steps in taking up new ministries.

- William Macwan, SJ  
Vadodara, Gujarat - 390 002

### 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.

### ECO SPIRITUALITY RETREAT

Retreat Guides: Frs Lancy D'Cruz, & Rappai Poothokaren SJ / Dates: 28 Oct '16 PM to 04 Nov '16 AM / Costs: Food & Shared Rooms – 6 days x Rs.350 = Rs.2,100 / Place: Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Netrang, Netrang-Rajpardi Road, Next to G.E.B. substation, Bharuch Dt. 393130. Please register soon by writing to:  
Fr Lancy D'Cruz, SJ: lancy\_dcruz@hotmail.com  
Fr Rappai Poothokaren, SJ: rappaisj@gmail.com  
Mobile: 919723449209 / 919426304943.

# Lessons for Life

## *I've learned from Rome...*

BY XAVIER ANTONY SELVAM, SJ

### **Follow Francis**

Living in Rome when Francis is the Pope is a great blessing. I am deeply touched by his every gesture, word, and deed – not only because he is the first Jesuit Pope but mainly because of the way he radiates Jesus to the world and of the importance and respect he gives to every single person, especially the poor and the suffering. There have been many moments I was moved into tears while just looking at him and listening to his soul-elevating homilies and messages. I learn from him the way I need to live my Jesuit life for the poor, the needy, and the refugees.

### **Pray always**

My companions and formators at the Gesù inspire me to pray. A man may work and bring money to his family, but if he does not spend time with his wife and children, theirs will not be a happy family. Likewise, I may do plenty of useful activities and may spend the whole day in studies, but if I don't spend time with God, an intimate relationship with him is not possible.

### **Love the Society**

To live at the Gesù community wherein St Ignatius himself lived for 17 years is another grace. Whenever I get some free time, I step into his room to take in a lot of Ignatius. I go into the Gesù church to pay short visits to the tombs of St Ignatius and Fr Arrupe and seek their intercession for me and others. Our community has around 50 scholastics from across the globe. All this has increased my love for the Society.

### **Widen your horizons**

During my theological studies in Rome, I have visited quite a few Jesuit Provinces. I always felt welcomed and cared for in every community. I have met some great Jesuits – great because of their well-known contributions to the Church and the Society. This widens the horizon of my Jesuit vocation.

### **Live in the present**

In general, Italians do one thing at a time. They don't worry about tomorrow. I have some good Italian friends

*Sch Xavier Antony Selvam, SJ (MDU), is studying III year of Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. He resides at the Gesù community.*



who seem to be always joyful. Once I asked one of them about the secret of his happiness. He told me, 'As long as we are alive, let us be happy and make others happy by living in the present. What am I going to gain by thinking about the future or worrying about the past?'

### **Go for depth**

Our outgoing General, Fr Adolfo has inspired me to become a man of depth. At times I have asked myself what it means to be deep. To be a man of depth, one doesn't need to be a learned intellectual nor extraordinarily talented. All that one needs is to have a profound awareness of who one is, how one thinks, and what one does. In other words, it is to be a man of every-minute-discernment.

### **Live the life given to you**

Life never deceives one if one remains open to its flow. I cannot expect my life to be always perfect and successful.

If I do so, it is certain I am going to destroy my happiness. Life blesses us with all sorts of experiences. I need to be ready and willing to live life as it comes to me and not as I want it to be.

### **See the goodness**

These days, I feel deeply convinced that every person is good. There is a profound goodness in all of us. It is just the situation that makes us go wrong at times. I find that the Examen of

Conscience is the best means to constantly experience the goodness of others and of my own.

### **Be helpful**

Italians, by nature, are very helpful and respectful. Once I was in need of some academic help and so requested some of my Italian classmates to help me. On the very next day, they did what I requested. I was surprised by their sensitivity and kindheartedness to help others.

### **Be joyful always**

A senior Jesuit told me on my birthday, 'Selvam, I have lived for 82 long years. I have been a joyful person. One single advice I would like to give you today is that you be joyful always. This is my wish for you on your birthday. We can still be joyful and peaceful even when undergoing hard moments in life' ■



# GREEN COVER

## SAS builds Biogas plants

Shramik Abhivrudhi Sangh (SAS) of Goa Jesuit Province has been constructing Biogas Plant cum toilet units for rural households of Belagavi district in Karnataka since two decades. Karnataka government recognized SAS as a Turn-Key-Agent for the promotion and construction of such units. We have been instrumental in providing them to more than 15,000 households.

The households with such units, especially their women, derive immense benefits. It provides them a better living environment. Their scramble for firewood, dependence on dung-cakes for smoky cooking, wastage of cattle-dung badly needed for agriculture, the long wait until dark for defecation in the open – all such issues are resolved by biogas plant cum toilet units. They directly protect the climate, conserve forests, liberate women, ... The little blue biogas flame has become a symbol of hope and a powerful tool to care for God's Creation.

For a third of the world's people, the energy crisis is the daily scramble for cooking-fuel. Their search for firewood, once a simple chore, has now become a day's work for many. They use wood and cattle-dung to cook food in most Indian villages. The traditional cooking method releases only 17% of potential heat in wood-cooking, 11% in dung-cake cooking – wasting 83% of the firewood and 89% of the dung-cake. Women waiting for darkness to relieve themselves is a sad story of our country. Sadly, we have not realized the potential of biogas plant cum toilet units to overcome the crisis of cooking fuel, CH<sub>4</sub> emission and disposal of night soils.

The Advisory Board on Energy estimated the potential for family-based Biogas plants at 16-22 million. They would deliver energy equivalent of 13.4 million tons of kerosene and fertilizer equivalent of 4.4 million tons. Biogas Plant converts fermentable organic matter, in particular, human and animal waste into combustible gas and fully matured organic manure. Biogas eliminates the age-old practice of burning wood, cattle-dung and kerosene for fuel. It saves women and children from smoky kitchens - a major cause of lung and eye diseases. A Biogas plant cum latrine unit is an effective and economic means for sanitary disposal of human excreta.

Manure from the biogas plant is better than ordinary manure in quality and quantity. The digestive process in the biogas plant kills seeds of weeds and organisms causing disease. Biogas manure is rich in nitrogen, phosphorus, potash and humus. 'Deenbandhu' is the most efficient and economical model, costing 45% less than the KVIC model.

**- Joseph Chenakala, SJ**



# MOMENTS



© Francis Lobo, SJ

*"If you want the rainbow, you have got to put up with the rain."*

**- Rabindranath Tagore**