

# JIVAN

News and Views of Jesuits in India

July 2016



*GC 36 should give us  
A Fuller Sense of Justice*

**Three waves**  
of tribal immigration

**Learn to love**  
Pope's interview

**Indian citizen**  
at the age of 90

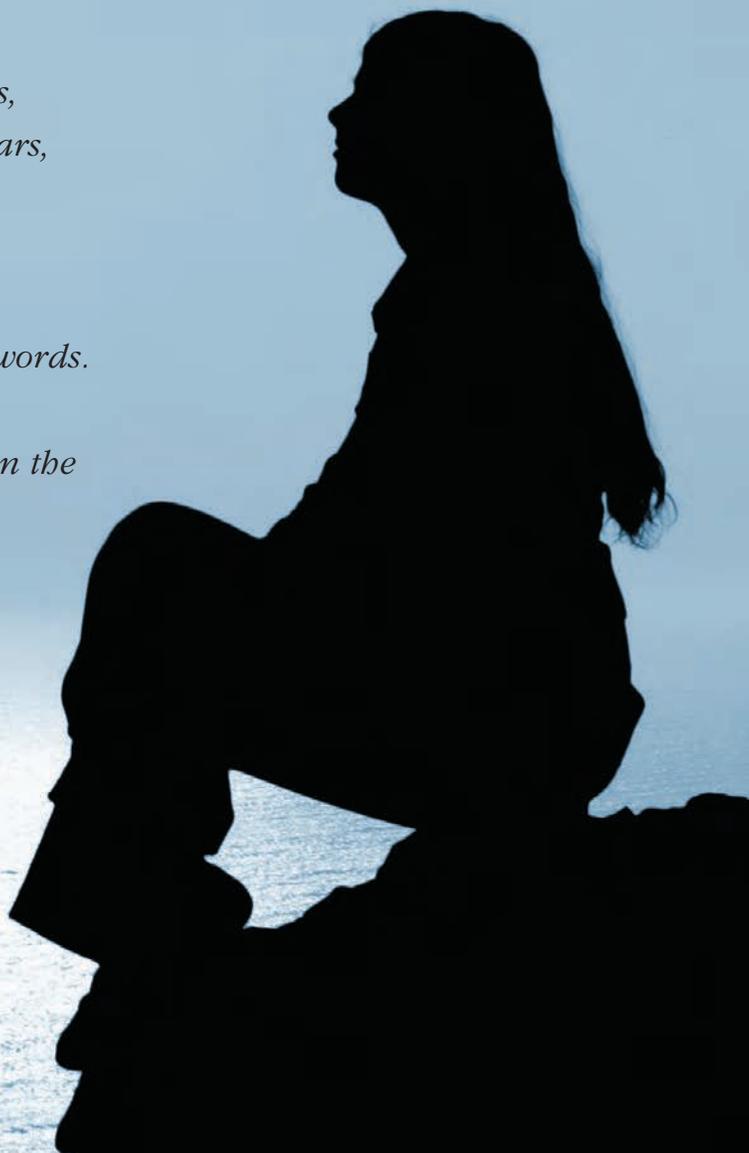
# What are we?

BY KRITI

*What are we in the end?  
Stories written on our spine,  
a heart that broke too many times,  
the mind that carries so many years,  
the love that drove us insane,  
the darkness that never left,  
the light that entered,  
the moments that left us with no words.*

*What are we?  
Everything that sits silently right in the  
middle of our soul  
that nothing ever can take away.*

*Courtesy: Live & Learn by David Kanigan*



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**Y**es, I was once a student of their literature. Yes, I edit a magazine whose language is theirs. But apart from these I have nothing to do with Britain. Yet I felt very sad when I learnt that a majority of its people voted to leave the European Union.

Elections are inevitable, but there is no guarantee that they bring about the desired results. Because they can be manipulated. Voters - their minds and emotions - can be swayed by a lot of things.

You must have heard about what happened in Austria, that small, beautiful country of meadows, music and museums. Presidential elections were held in Austria on 24 April '16. But since no candidate received more than 50 % of votes, a second ballot became necessary. According to their Constitution, only the top two who secured the highest number of votes could contest in the second round. The two men who faced each other for the second round were a study in contrast.

The one who got the most votes in the first round was a man whose profile could scare you. Norbert Hofer of the Freedom Party of Austria, is a 45-year-old "raging right winger, who walks around with a Glock pistol tucked in his suit pants."

The other was Alexander Van der Bellen, a member of the Austrian Greens, contesting as an independent. A left-leaning septuagenarian, he reminded the voters of the old, civilized, humane Europe which seems to be under threat.

During those four weeks between the two ballots all of Europe agonized over a possible far-right triumph. The possibility of Hofer winning the election jolted Europe, jogged memories and revived old fears. Remember Adolf Hitler? And the tragedies he unleashed on countries and the lives of thousands of people? He was from Austria too. So a lot of people feared if the dark shadows of 1930s would return to haunt Europe.

Parties and politicians that represent the far right are getting popular not merely in Austria but everywhere. They are successfully exploiting the worries and fears of people over their past and the future - their heritage and security. They are anxious if Islam, particularly what they see as 'Islamisation' of Europe, hastened by immigration and the recent waves of migration, will wipe out all that they treasured and enjoyed in the past. Since the European Union seems to allow these to happen, the aggressive right wing elements

are asking their compatriots to quit the European Union. This can be seen in France, Germany, the Netherlands...

This is why the Brexit campaign succeeded. This is why Hofer got the most number of votes in the first round in Austria. Thank God, he lost narrowly in the second round. His opponent, Bellen scraped through in postal ballots, with a wafer thin 0.6% final lead. But the divide became clear: Cities supported Bellen, while rural areas went for Hofer. The white-collared voted for Bellen, while the blue-collared pumped for Hofer. Women were for Bellen while men wanted the right wing Hofer.

This divide is discernible in the results of the British referendum too.

Now it is easy to see why Donald Trump has so easily crushed his opponents and managed to become the Republican candidate in the U.S. presidential elections, just four months away.

If you thought this is just a Western phenomenon, you should read about what happened in the Philippines recently and get to know the man who has been elected its President - Rodrigo Duterte who has been called "the Trump of the East." And there are writers who cite Modi's India too as an example for the right-wing surge.

Marc Jongen, a philosopher aligned with the rightwing outfit in Germany called AfD (Alternative fur Deutschland - Alternative for Germany), argues for rage to confront the challenges posed by Muslim migration. Rage is, in fact, the child of fear, although they look very different.

Thankfully we have saner voices to caution us. Martha Nussbaum, a philosopher and an intellectual, works as a professor of law and ethics at the University of Chicago. In an interview she gave during her recent visit to India, she spoke of her new book, *Anger and Forgiveness*. She said the rise of Donald Trump indicates a widespread sense of helplessness in middle America. "People are all too ready to turn helplessness into rage, because it makes them feel powerful: they think that if they punish this or that group they can become full and masculine again. Of course this is not productive. Retributive anger does not change the past, and it does not change the present and future... The Hindu right has always fed on a similar sense of anxiety." (*Times of India*, 29 May '16)

Pray that in elections everywhere fear and rage may be defeated. May people unite to see that hope and love triumph!

- M.A.J.A.



*GC 36 should give us*  
**A Fuller Sense  
of Justice**

BY ROBIN KONING, SJ

**M**y major hope for GC 36 is that it will promote a fuller vision of what social justice entails. I believe the way we as Jesuits tend to think about justice, which then affects our choice of engagements in the social arena, has not kept up with developments in the Church's social teaching.

The Church has come to include, as part of its justice concerns, and in a holistic fashion, what are commonly known as 'life issues' such as abortion and euthanasia. The Society, on the whole, has not taken up these particular challenges, at least not as part of its social justice mandate. These life issues find little echo in most Jesuit conversations about justice and they are largely missing from the areas of engagement or research or advocacy of our social action centres. Hence my hope that GC 36 will redress this imbalance with a fuller sense of justice.

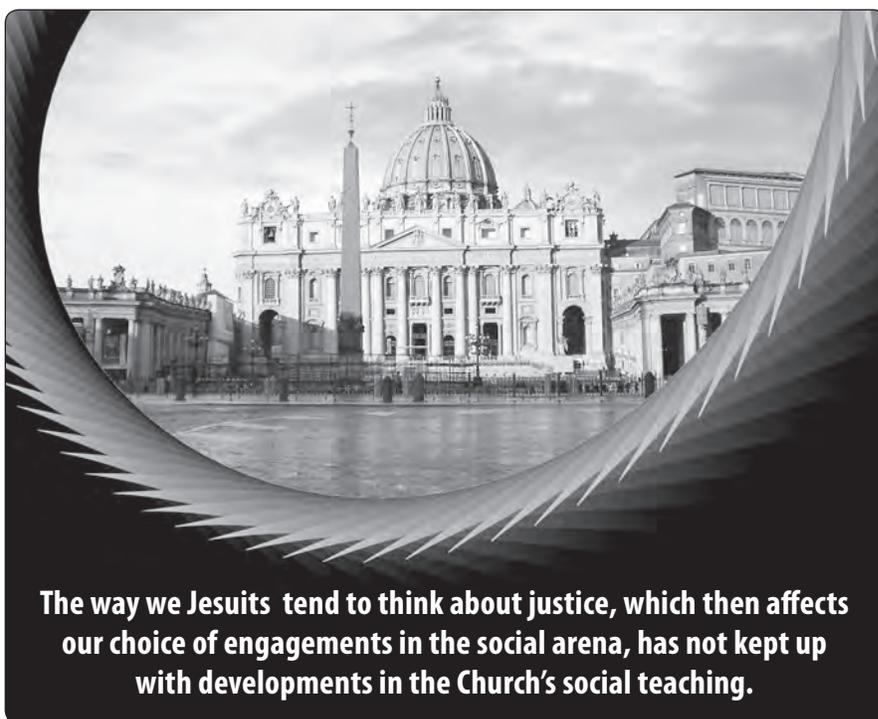
#### Developing Articulation of our Mission

To seek such a rethinking is in keeping with the development of the Society's vision of social justice since GC 32's powerful statements in Decrees 2 and 4. The main thrust of these documents is often expressed in terms of the Society's mission "to engage, under the standard of the Cross, in the crucial struggle of our times: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes".

In reviewing the Society's experience of this mission, GC 33 noted both the graces and the sometimes "incomplete, slanted and unbalanced" readings of Decree 4 (35). But still it confirmed our mission as expressed in

Decrees 2 and 4, asserting boldly that these represented "the application today of the Formula of the Institute and of our Ignatian charism" (41).

GC 34 sought "to deepen and extend, in a more explicit way, those integral dimensions of our mission to which Decree 4 drew attention" (2.14). Four such integral dimensions were noted and related: "The aim of our mission (*the service of faith*) and its integrating principle (*faith directed toward the justice of the Kingdom*) are dynamically related to the *inculturated proclamation of the Gospel* and *dialogue with other religious traditions* as integral dimensions of evangelization" (2.15). The Congregation explicitly understood this as a broadening of Decree 4 and a development of its insights (2.20).



**The way we Jesuits tend to think about justice, which then affects our choice of engagements in the social arena, has not kept up with developments in the Church's social teaching.**

GC 35 re-affirmed this development (3.1-7) and went still further. Having reflected on the reality, the promise and the tensions of our vastly increased global interconnectedness, it proposed a broadening of the Society's sense of its mission to include explicit reference to reconciliation. "We now want to deepen our understanding of the call to serve faith, promote justice, and dialogue with culture and other religions in the light of the apostolic mandate to establish right relationships with God, with one another, and with creation" (3.12).

Hence the Society has indeed grown in understanding of its contemporary mission, with the basic summary statement of GC 32 about the service of faith and the promotion of justice being elaborated further in terms of its integral connection with inculturated proclamation, interreligious dialogue, and reconciliation.

For GC 36, I would hope for a further articulation of this mission which gives prominence to the link between life ethics and social ethics, a link which has been more and more a part of the Church's social teaching.

### Church's Teaching on Justice and Life Issues

*Rerum Novarum* set the main tracks along which Catholic social teaching would run for some time. Since it did not mention those issues usually designated 'life issues', such as abortion and euthanasia, nor did

as human rights alongside other rights which had long been the concern of the social apostolate. We see this first in John Paul II's *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*: "Respect for all rights takes on great importance, especially: the right to life at every stage of its existence; the rights of the family...;

it as such. It speaks of a range of social concerns which are part of the Church's proclamation of the gospel of life. And its primary focus on issues abortion and euthanasia presents them as issues of justice. The Pope draws what he calls a "striking analogy". A century previously, *Rerum Novarum* defended the fundamental rights of workers who were oppressed since "the Church could not be silent" about such injustices. So today the Church has a duty to speak out in the same way "when another category of persons is being oppressed in the fundamental right to life" as "a great multitude of weak and defenceless human beings, unborn children in particular", are having their "fundamental right to life... trampled upon" (5).

By the time we come to Pope Benedict XVI, this highlighting of "the strong links between life ethics and social ethics" is so much a feature of the Church's social teaching that he is able to speak of it as "a new area of magisterial teaching" (*Caritas in Veritate*, 15). He himself goes on to demonstrate this by linking life issues with a number of other social issues - the right to food (27), the development of peoples (28), and the environment (51).

This holistic approach to social justice issues finds helpful expression in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, published by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in 2004. There we find the family given prominence in a major chapter devoted to "The Family: The Vital Cell of Society" (209-254). Abortion is treated in the *Compendium* in three separate places - in relation to human rights; in relation to the family; and in relation to the responsibilities of politicians (155, 233, 570). We should



**Life issues find little echo in most Jesuit conversations about justice and they are largely missing from the areas of engagement or research or advocacy of our social action centres.**

some of its successor documents. This is not surprising given that issues like abortion were not yet prominently agitated in the legal and political arena until the 1960s.

But when voices that demanded legalization of abortion grew louder, the Church's social teaching began to refer to it more frequently. *Gaudium et Spes* does not mince its words: those things that are "opposed to life itself", such as abortion, are called "infamies" (27) and "abominable crimes" (51). "Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception" (51). After this, a number of social encyclicals refer to abortion.

In some subsequent social encyclicals, life issues are mentioned

justice in employment relationships; the rights inherent in the life of the political community ...; the rights based on the transcendent vocation of the human being. (33)

*Centesimus Annus* too says clearly that the first of the 'most important' human rights to be named is the right to life, "an integral part of which is the right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception" (47). Later on, this same encyclical will explicitly mention "respect for life from conception to death" as precisely a concern of the Church's social doctrine (54).

*Evangelium Vitae* is not usually counted as a social encyclical, and yet there are good reasons for viewing

note also that the right to life is again placed in relation to human rights and the just ordering of society. The *Compendium* says that “the right to life, from conception to its natural end” is “the condition for the exercise of all other rights” (155) and that abortion represents “a dangerous threat to a just and democratic social coexistence” (233).

Lest we think this “new area of magisterial teaching”, this integrated account, was a concern only of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, we need only turn to Pope Francis. His three major documents to date all include significant statements on life issues, and particularly on abortion. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, calling us to concern for the vulnerable, he mentions a range of groups, such as the homeless, refugees, indigenous peoples, and the victims of human trafficking. He then turns to “the most defenceless and innocent among us”, namely the unborn. He dismisses those who see the Church’s position on abortion as “ideological, obscurantist and conservative”. If we do not defend the rights of the unborn to life, we lose “solid and lasting foundations” for the defence of any human rights (213-214).

*Laudato Si’* integrates its primary concern with ecological justice with concern for issues connected with family, marriage and life. “Neglecting to monitor the harm done to nature and the environmental impact of our decisions is only the most striking sign of a disregard for the message contained in the structures of nature itself. When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities, ... it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected.” (117) And, being so connected, “concern

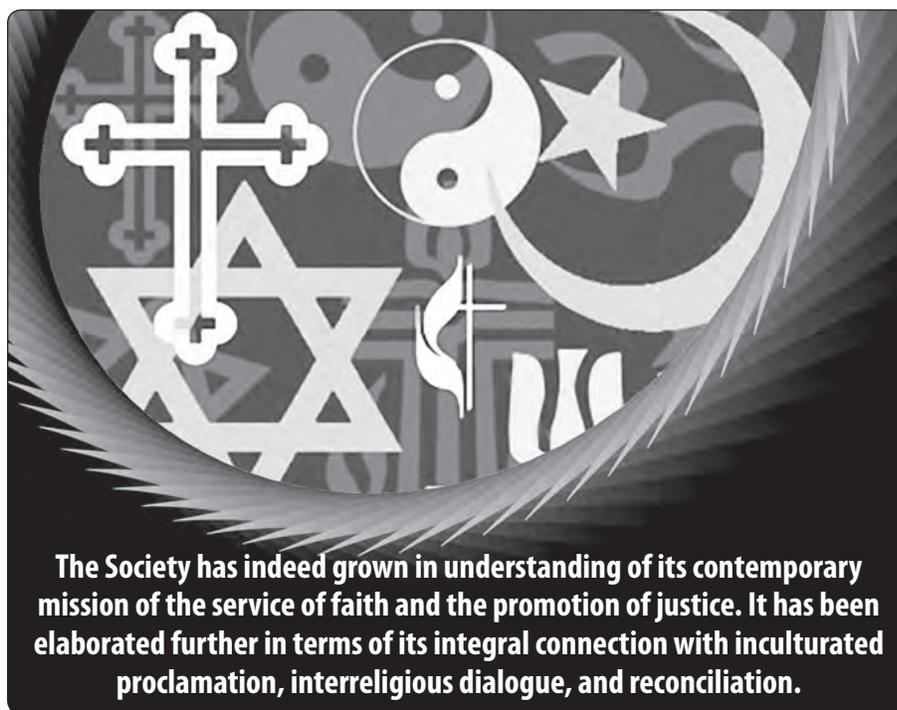
for the protection of nature is ... incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?” (120)

Similar themes emerge in Francis’ latest exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*. “The family is the sanctuary of life” which becomes “a horrendous contradiction when it becomes a place where life is rejected and destroyed” (83). The Pope encourages a change of attitude towards the unborn in situations where the child

(169). “So great is the value of a human life, and so inalienable the right to life of an innocent child growing in the mother’s womb, that no alleged right to one’s own body can justify a decision to terminate that life” (83).

### Jesuits and an Integrated Approach

For at least 30 years, then, the Church has sought to hold together, under the heading of her social teaching, both the issues that had traditionally been treated under that head – workers rights, wealth distribution, poverty, war and peace, refugees etc – and those issues which have emerged far more prominently over these decades – threats to the life of the unborn, euthanasia, challenges



is discovered to have some disability, or the parents feel the timing is not the best. “A child is a human being of immense worth and may never be used for one’s own benefit. So it matters little whether this new life is convenient for you, whether it has features that please you, or whether it fits into your plans and aspirations”

to the family as the fundamental cell of society.

As I noted at the start, these issues are not often addressed by Jesuits. Where they are, they tend to be looked upon as quite distinct from our social justice concerns. This is not to say they do not appear in the Society’s documents under that

heading. GC 33, for instance, seeks “to bring... to the attention of the whole Society” a range of “problems that call for our special concern”. Amongst these problems – spiritual hunger, attacks on human rights, refugees, discrimination, exploitation of women, economic oppression, the needs of the unemployed, the poor, landless peasants, and workers – it includes “public policies and situations which threaten human life for the unborn, the handicapped and the aged” (48). The former problems

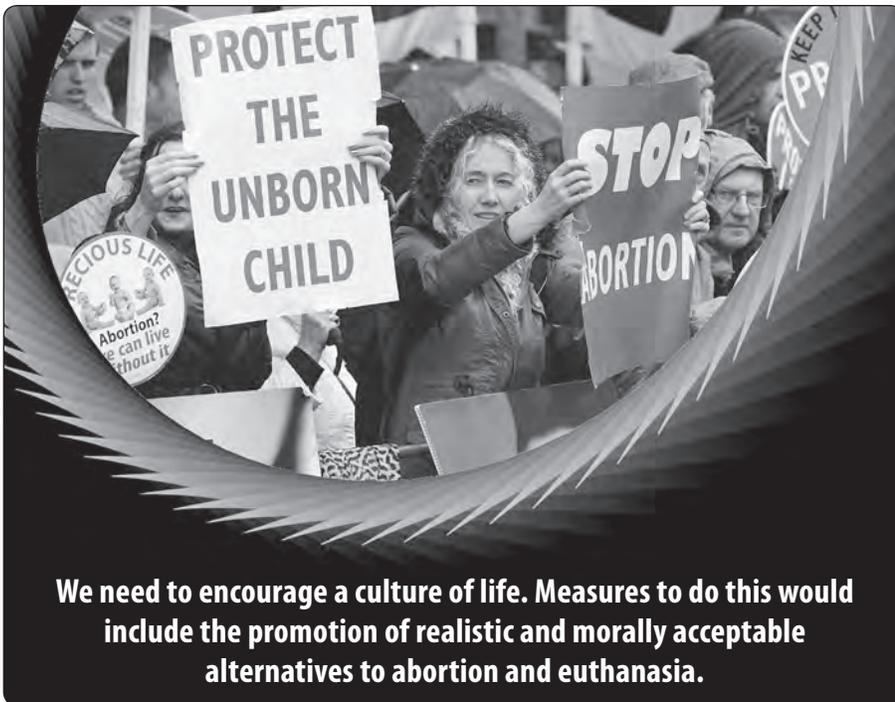
abortion, suicide, and euthanasia; war, terrorism, violence, and capital punishment as ways of resolving issues; the consumption of drugs; turning away from the human drama of hunger, AIDS, and poverty. We need to encourage a culture of life. Measures to do this would include the promotion of realistic and morally acceptable alternatives to abortion and euthanasia; the careful development of the ethical context for medical experimentation and genetic engineering; working to

admittedly, from limited knowledge – what I know of the Australian scene, of other JCAP provinces, and to some extent of the US and Canada. It may be that it is significantly different elsewhere, but I don’t think so.

A quick review of those issues of *Promotio Iustitiae* available online (about 61 of them) suggests there has been little attention to these matters in that journal of the social apostolate. These make no mention of Jesuits in the social apostolate being engaged in areas like abortion or euthanasia in any sustained way, while most of the other areas mentioned in the paragraph from GC 34 above do feature, sometimes repeatedly.

For these reasons, I hope GC 36 will commit the Society to a fuller understanding of what its mission to the service of a faith that promotes justice involves. This is not to say that we need to be engaged in dealing with every possible area of injustice. But it is to say two things. Firstly, at the level of our teaching and writing about Catholic social thought, we are not presenting it authentically if we do not present the same holistic approach that the Church has been presenting for some time in its teaching documents. Otherwise, while we may call it Catholic social teaching, but it is not the full picture and our students and readers will be short-changed. Secondly, at the level of our choice of engagements, how can we discern properly if some injustices rarely enter our purview because we do not even include them under the rubric of social justice issues and so never reflect on them?

Some of the reasons I have heard Jesuits express for not putting an emphasis on life issues are worth considering. One is that it is better to take a seamless robe approach,



**We need to encourage a culture of life. Measures to do this would include the promotion of realistic and morally acceptable alternatives to abortion and euthanasia.**

all find responses in our justice networks, but there is little on these latter ones.

Likewise, GC 34 offers a well-integrated statement. In doing so, it draws on the language of a culture of death and culture of life which was a mainstay of Pope John Paul II’s teaching:

“Human life, a gift of God, has to be respected from its beginning to its natural end. Yet we are increasingly being faced with a culture of death which encourages

divert resources from war and the international traffic in arms towards providing for the needs of the poor; creating possibilities for lives of meaning and commitment instead of anomie and despair.” (3,8)

At the level of key Jesuit documents, therefore, the challenge is present. But somehow this has not taken hold in the justice issues to which we actually commit ourselves, or discuss, or consider part of the justice mandate, or seek to engage in our social institutes. I am speaking,

keeping issues like abortion in close connection with issues like refugees and war. This is precisely what I have been arguing. In my experience, though, the general Jesuit tendency is not to speak of abortion without mentioning other social issues but rather to speak of refugees and war etc with rarely a mention of abortion.

Another concern is that it is a very delicate matter for a group of men to speak on something like abortion that has enormous impact on women. This is a good sensitivity to have, but the problem is not insurmountable. For one thing, we can note that, at the world level, it is precisely female children who are more likely to be aborted because of the preference for male children in world's two most populous countries, China and India. Beyond this, though, there are now various groups who promote an approach which does not pit the needs of women against the life of the child, but is at the same time pro-women and pro-life. Feminists for Life is one such group, as is Project Rachel with its healing ministry for women (and men) affected by abortion.

In the same vein, there is good research which provides a grounding for more helpful approaches to pro-life matters. There is a good deal of evidence about the harmful effects on women of the 'easy solution' of abortion. Research also shows that a high percentage of women who feel coerced into abortion. This may be active coercion by a threatening partner or father. More often it is the passive coercion by which a woman is faced with choices she should not need to make – between keeping the child, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, an education, or having a roof over her head, or retaining her job, or keeping her husband, or feeding her other children. As has

sometimes been said, abortion means the real needs of women have not been met.

Our criteria of the choice of ministries provide good reasons for our involvement in this area:



**It is female children who are more likely to be aborted because of the preference for male children in world's two most populous countries, China and India.**

a. *The more universal good:* the sheer size of the problem - 40 million abortions annually worldwide - points to the universality of the need. This does not include the countless other lives lost because of the abortifacient nature of some contraceptives.

b. *The greater need:* the unborn are invisible and utterly defenceless, their existence known at times only to the mother. Thus they are particularly vulnerable to being abandoned or forgotten. The women involved also often remain invisible either because of social stigma, even where abortion is legal, or because they are told they should be okay after this simple procedure. Hence they cannot readily share stories of coercion, poor treatment or harmful after-effects. Moreover, unlike some other attacks on human life, abortion is legally

sanctioned and indeed proclaimed as a right in many countries.

c. *Our ability to contribute:* While the debates on how to deal with this issue at a social, cultural and political level can be acrimonious, the

Society, with its intellectual formation, skills in social analysis, and readiness to engage in controversy if needed, is well placed to contribute to such debate. Also, we have experience, from other issues with which we have engaged, in bridging the realms of moral theology and public discourse, and in advising legislators on the issues involved in legislating on controverted issues in complex social and political contexts.

My hope, then, is that GC 36 will reclaim for the Society, in its understandings and in its choices, a fuller and more holistic account of all that is involved in justice which our service of faith is meant to promote.

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## POP for three Zones at Kurseong

The Pre-Ordination Programme (POP) at Woodcot, Kurseong from 17 April to 15 May materialized Fr Arrupe's vision for 26 young theologians from three Zones (Northern, Western and Central) and three theologates (JDV, Vidyajyothi and Ranchi RTC) through prayer and reflection. It helped the young Jesuits approaching priesthood to take a significant step towards a life of holiness. Under the outstanding guidance



of Fr. George Beck (DUM) who coordinated the POP and Fr Geoff Meagher (HAZ), who assisted him marvellously, the 26 students of theology had a fruitful and memorable experience of preparing for priesthood. Fr Lawrence, the PCF of Darjeeling Province, was the one who coordinated the POP along with the other PCFs and did everything that was needed.

Explaining the vision and purpose of Fr Arrupe's letter, Fr. Shajumon, Rector, St Joseph North Point School, Darjeeling initiated in us a creative and reflective process. He inspired the scholastics to think like Fr Arrupe and see priesthood as a great gift from God. Fr Sunny Kunnel, the PCF of Calcutta Province, taught the young Jesuits the art of Ignatian discernment. The participants had time to discuss in small groups, trying to evolve concrete solutions to the challenges in their provinces and the entire Society.

Fr Tony Andrade (DEL) took sessions on Psycho-Sexual-Spiritual integration in a dynamic way. Stressing on some of the essential areas of our growth, he stressed that awareness of our emotions and temperament is important, in order to be able to look at our lives in a holistic way. Fr Tony emphasized the need for growing as mature Jesuits. He responded to queries and doubts with many lively examples and helped us learn to channelize our energies for a fruitful celibate life.

Besides enjoying the breaks after every course, the participants also went on a pilgrimage to the Jesuit Novitiate at Manresa, Kalimpong, North Point School, Mountaineering Institute, Namchi in Sikkim and the Nepal border in Mirik to witness the works of Jesuits and to gain knowledge of the local culture and life-style of people.

The 8 day-retreat by Fr George Beck at POP proved to be a time of grace for all the scholastics to gather the fruits of their spiritual experiences of the past three weeks.

The constant accompaniment of Frs George, Geoff and Tom Pullankav who guided the scholastics during the retreat was commendable. We thanked Bro Gabriel Gurung, the minister, and expressed our sincere appreciation for the way he took care of us all. We were all impressed by the Darjeeling province's generosity, love and hospitality. For everyone of the 26 young Scholastics POP - 2016 at Woodcot, Kurseong turned out to be a memorable experience.

- Arun Lucas, SJ

## South Zone's POP in Mysore

This year's POP (Pre-Ordination Programme) for the South Zone was held at Prabodhana, the Pallotine Theologate in Mysore, Karnataka from 17 April to 16 May '16. 21 scholastics from Andhra, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka and Madurai provinces participated in this Arrupe Month Programme.

Various resource persons with their expertise took the scholastics deeper into their inner world to unravel themselves in making a well-discerned choice at this stage of formation when they approached ordination. Fr. Joseph Lobo (KAR) gave the orientation to POP, presenting Fr Arrupe's letter. Fr. Tony Raj (JAM) gave 3 days of Psycho-Sexual-Spiritual Integration course, Bishop Francis Serrao, SJ of Shimoga spoke on 'Jesuit Priesthood Today', Fr N. Casmir Raj (MDU) shared on the topic



'Heroic Leadership', Fr John Bosco (AND) helped the scholastics journey their inner world through Intensive Journal, Mr Clifford D' Souza, gave a lay person's perspective on Priesthood, Sr Genevieve, CSST shared her views on 'Jesuit Priesthood' from the perspective of a religious. Fr. I.M. Joseph (MDU), who was also the resident director, took a session on Interior Freedom. Sharing, coming together, outings, undertaking a personal inner journey were the hallmarks of this year's POP. The zenith of it all was the retreat preached by Fr. Jose Panadan (GUJ).

The coordinator Fr Joseph D'Souza, PCF of Karnataka province, made every effort possible to make this POP a fruitful and memorable one. His meticulous planning and arrangements made the entire programme very successful.

- Lumnesh Swaroop, SJ

BY SOPHIA SCHÄFER

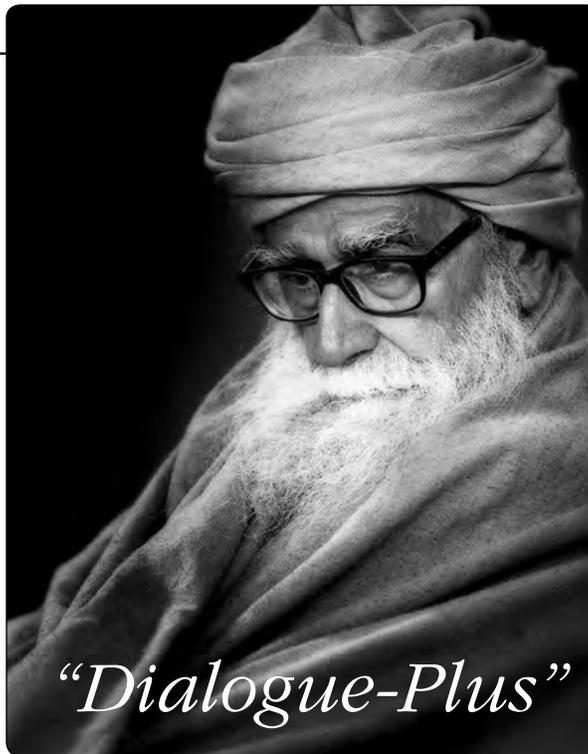
Together with the Jesuit scholar Fr Victor Edwin, who teaches Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi, I met Maulana Wahiduddin Khan twice in March 2016, in New Delhi.

Maulana is a great Islamic scholar who is internationally recognized for his engagement in efforts for peace and interfaith understanding. He has been awarded many peace prizes, including the Padma Bhushan and the National Citizen's Award. A recent book, *The 500 Most Influential Muslims of 2009* by Georgetown University, Washington DC, has named him "Islam's Spiritual Ambassador to the world."

Wahiduddin Khan was born on 1 Jan 1925 and grew up in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh. He was educated in a traditional Islamic seminary, the Madrasatul Islah in Sarai Mir. Afterwards, he gained modern knowledge through self-study. Members of his family were engaged in India's independence struggle. So, the young Wahiduddin found himself exposed to many questions about religion, politics, society and his own future. Highly influenced by Gandhian ideals, he stood for non-violence, peace dialogue and peace. In 1970, he founded the Islamic Centre in New Delhi, and in 2001, the Centre for Peace and Spirituality. He has authored over 200 books. Even at the present age of 91, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is actively engaged in scholarly work, interacting with people with people and engaging with groups working for interfaith and peace efforts.

Maulana invited Fr Victor Edwin and me to his house in New Delhi. As his granddaughters Maria and Sufia, who are graduates in Islamic Studies, led us up the stairs to his living room, I already felt happy and blessed to be welcomed so openly at his home - I, a "stranger", a "foreigner", having grown up in a completely different context and following another religion, too.

I asked the Maulana how he understands interfaith



dialogue. There are three types of dialogue, he replied. The first is debate, that is when someone wants to win by showing or proving his or her theology's superiority. The Maulana says that this actually is no dialogue at all. It even kills the spirit of dialogue and makes people either scream in anger or be silent. The second is the search for unity. This means that you try to unite all religious doctrines by seeking to eliminate their differences. But by this people also deny their own identities and the distinguishing thoughts, understandings and behaviors that characterize their lives and

communities. Nature, traditions and social structures are never uniform and cannot pretend to be, the Maulana says. The third form of dialogue is intellectual partnership. In this case, we learn from and about each other, and even about ourselves by being shown a mirror from another perspective. This, the Maulana says, is the only genuine way of dialogue.

These days, the Maulana says, many Christians are skeptical of Islam and do not listen to its wisdom and see its beauty. Many Muslims, on the other hand, he says, have developed a certain arrogance and are not interested in others anymore. But the Maulana wants to remind us of something that Jesus says: to love our neighbors, and even to love our enemies! Solidarity and harmony in religiously-plural societies are possible if we not only love only people of our own faith communities but also those who do not belong to our religion or subscribe to our way of thinking.

According to the Maulana, Islam seeks to establish peace and bring people together. Yes, some Muslims got lost on the way and began to take to the course of violence. But people should follow the path of peace that Moses, Isaiah, Jesus and Muhammad and all the other prophets have shown: "Those are the ones whom God has guided, so from their guidance take an example." (Quran 6:90) The key is never to be extreme in your religion, but to believe in the goodness and justice of God. Interfaith dialogue brings people together to talk about their lives and become partners, working on this in the spirit of

(continued from p.11)

God, who is there for the entire humanity, even if we may understand God differently. We might learn to see a different face of God's grace in the other's eyes.

How can we do this? The Maulana explains this by invoking something that Jesus teaches us: that man shall not live by *bread alone*. The Maulana says that for him this means that although bread is just baked flour, in the eyes of a believer it can become *more than bread*: we could call it "*bread-plus*". That is, he or she will be able to see the deeper spiritual lesson in everything. When a believer eats food, he will not simply engage in the act of eating. Rather, he would also think about all the many processes in nature that help in the production of food. This would engender profound thankfulness to God for creating so many beneficial things for human beings. In this way, a believer would try to see the spiritual in every material event, causing him to develop God-consciousness. Accordingly, he would exist not only at the physical level but would be nourished at the spiritual level also. This is how a believer converts "*bread*" into "*bread-plus*", or the material into a non-material or spiritual lesson.

By understanding the spiritual character of things, we see things and people who are with us as gifts from God. God nourishes us, makes our environment and life beautiful, gives us love and wisdom, which we cannot produce out of ourselves. Water not only quenches our thirst, it also freshens and cleanses us. In hot weather, a glass of water can cool us down. It becomes "*water-plus*". Likewise, two persons are not only two, but a community, if they come into contact. They become a community, "*people-plus*". The ones, who see the "plus" in life, will flourish.

I was very inspired by a great Muslim scholar sharing his view of Biblical stories and sayings of Jesus, and even asking Father Victor Edwin and me to share our opinions on his camera. *This* was the dialogue we talk about all the time! The Maulana went further and asked Father Edwin to pray for all the Muslims in the room who had come to hear the Maulana speak before they started to offer their *namaz* (prayer).

Did we pray together?

Yes, everybody prayed - to God, the One and Only!

I cannot say exactly what was on other peoples' minds — the other Christians' and the Muslims' — but I'm sure God heard and knows. Many people came to us afterwards and the whole room was filled with conversation, and I realized: Yes, God had brought us together! This was "dialogue-plus"!

*Sophia Schafer is a student of Theology in Germany.*

## Theologians explore South Asian Christology

Twenty-seven South Asian Jesuit theologians met at Ashirvad, Bangalore for the first seminar of the South Asian Jesuit Theologians' Forum on 23-25 April '16. They explored "South Asian Christology" in the three day seminar. P.R. John SJ, professor of Systematic Theology at Vidyajyoti, the convener of the forum, organized this seminar, following the suggestion at the first South Asian Jesuit Theologians' Colloquium, convened by Fr Michael Amaladoss in Delhi, 2014. This seminar explored Indian Christology.

In his paper 'The Cosmic Christ,' Fr Michael Amaladoss reflected on the presence and action of Christ outside the Church by distinguishing the Cosmic Christ from the historical Jesus. Drawing on the biblical texts of Paul and John and their vision of 'God's Plan' for humanity, he pointed out that Paul (by evoking Christ) and John (by pointing to the Word) both transcend the limitations of the human Jesus. Thus, the biblical context offers theological space for theologians to speak about the Cosmic Christ in contrast with the historical Jesus. He noted that theologians could link the people of other religious persuasions to the salvific Word or the Cosmic Christ, who has a universal dimension.

Sebastian Painadath emphasized that the divine reality is dynamic in nature. Sages and mystics of all religions distinguish between God and the Divine. We need both the personal forms of God and the trans-personal awareness of the Divine. Joseph Lobo in his paper: "Resurrection of the body: An absurdity to Asian religio-cultural sensibilities?" dealt with a basic concern: how to harness this potential of the faith in the resurrection of the body for a liberative praxis in a multi-religious context. The Risen Lord, the prototype of the bodily resurrection of all men and women, along with the Holy Spirit, is liberatively present and active among all peoples. P.R. John in his paper: "Spirit Christology: Indian Views" attempted to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit through Indian theological insights. Henry D'Almeida in his paper: "Christ as Jangama: Towards an inter-religious Christological discourse in the context of Lingayata (Virasaiva) tradition in Karnataka," articulated an inter-religious Christology by bringing 'Jangama' (a itinerant preacher who energizes the society with a vision of God) into dialogue with Jesus the teacher. Francis Minj in his paper, "An Adivasi Quest for Jesus Christ" explored what would be the appropriate method for interpreting Jesus in an Adivasi milieu. Raj Irudaya in his paper: "Crossroads of Christology in the Gospels: Towards a confluence of life" argued that the three important strands of Christology in the Gospels, namely, God-centered Christology, Abba-oriented Christology and life-focused Christology lead one to a confluence of a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ. Samuel Simmik shared his experience of Christ in the devastating Nepal earthquake. Victor Edwin, in his paper: "Is Christ a stranger to Muslims? - Constructing a contextual Christology among Muslims" pointed out that it was encouraging to find that within the Islamic traditions there are streams offering alternate paths to explore Jesus in new ways.

Each presentation was followed by a stimulating theological conversation. It was pointed out that our theological process could build upon the work of Indian theologians like Kappan, Rayan, Prabhu, Amal and Painadath. Our Christologies should be locally relevant and globally effective and that the inter-scriptural approach was very important in Indian theology.

- Victor Edwin, SJ

*Excerpts from an interview given by Pope Francis to two French journalists, Guillaume Goubert and Sébastien Maillard in Rome:*

**In your speeches in Europe, you refer to the “roots” of the continent without ever describing them as Christian. Rather, you define “European identity” as “dynamic and multicultural.” In your view, is the expression “Christian roots” inappropriate for Europe?**

We need to speak of roots in the plural because there are so many. In this sense, when I hear talk of the Christian roots of Europe, I sometimes dread the tone, which can seem triumphalistic or even vengeful. It then takes on colonialist overtones. John Paul II, however, spoke about it in a tranquil manner.

Yes, Europe has Christian roots and it is Christianity’s responsibility to water those roots. But this must be done in a spirit of service as in the washing of the feet. Christianity’s duty to Europe is one of service. As Erich Przywara, the great master of Romano Guardini and Hans Urs von Balthasar, teaches us, Christianity’s contribution to a culture is that of Christ in the washing of the feet. In other words, service and the gift of life. It must not become a colonial enterprise.

**On 16 April ‘16, you made a powerful gesture by bringing back some refugees from Lesbos to Rome. However, does Europe have the capacity to take in so many migrants?**

That is a fair and responsible question, because one cannot open the gates wide unreasonably. However, the deeper question is why there are so many migrants now. When I went to Lampedusa three years ago, this phenomenon had already started.

The initial problems are the wars in the Middle East and in Africa as well as the underdevelopment of the African continent, which causes hunger. Behind wars there are arms manufacturers and arms traffickers, while arms can

**“People of all religions should learn to love”**



be justified for defensive purposes. If there is so much unemployment, it is because of a lack of investment capable of providing employment, of which Africa has such a great need.

More generally, this raises the question of a world economic system that has descended into the idolatry of money. The great majority of humanity’s wealth has fallen into the hands of a minority of the population.

A completely free market does not work. Markets in themselves are good but they also require a fulcrum, a third party, or a state to monitor and balance them. In other words, what is needed is a social market economy.

Coming back to the migrant issue, the worst form of welcome is to ‘ghettoize’ them. On the contrary, it’s necessary to integrate them. In Brussels, the terrorists were Belgians, children of migrants, but they grew up in a ghetto. In London, the new mayor (Sadiq Khan, the son of Muslim Pakistanis) took his oath of office in a cathedral and will undoubtedly meet the queen. This illustrates the need for Europe to rediscover its capacity to integrate.

I am thinking here of Pope Gregory the Great (590 – 604), who negotiated with the people known as barbarians, who were subsequently integrated. This integration is all the

more necessary today, as Europe is experiencing the grave problem of a declining birth rate. This is a result of a selfish search for well-being. A demographic emptiness is developing. In France, at least, this trend is less marked because of family-oriented policies.

**The fear of accepting migrants is partly based on a fear of Islam. Do you think this fear this religion sparks in Europe is justified?**

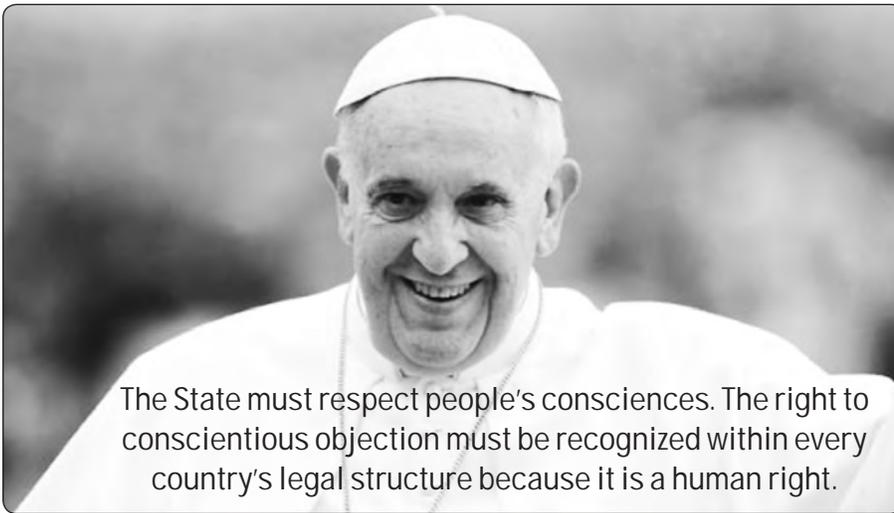
Today, I don’t think that there is a fear of Islam as such but of ISIS and its war of conquest, which is partly drawn from Islam. It is true that the idea of conquest is inherent in the soul of Islam. However, it is also possible to interpret the objective in Matthew’s Gospel, where Jesus sends his disciples to all nations, in terms of the same idea of conquest.

In the face of Islamic terrorism, it would therefore be better to question ourselves about the way an overly Western model of democracy has been exported to countries such as Iraq, where a strong government previously existed. Or in Libya, where a tribal structure exists. We cannot advance without taking these cultures into account. A Libyan said recently, “We used to have one Gaddafi, now we have fifty.”

Peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims is possible. I come from a country where they co-habit on good terms. Muslims come to venerate the Virgin Mary and St George. Similarly, they tell me that for the Jubilee Year Muslims in one African country formed a long queue at the cathedral to enter through the holy door and pray to the Virgin Mary. In Central Africa, before the war, Christians and Muslims used to live together and must learn to do so again. Lebanon also shows that this is possible.

must be free to profess their faith at the heart of their own culture not merely at its margins.

The modest critique that I would address to France in this regard is that it exaggerates separation of religion and State. This arises from a way of considering religions as sub-cultures rather than as fully-fledged cultures in their own right. I fear that this approach, which is understandable as part of the heritage of the Enlightenment, continues to exist. France needs to take a step forward on this issue in order to



The State must respect people's consciences. The right to conscientious objection must be recognized within every country's legal structure because it is a human right.

**The significance of Islam in France today, like the nation's Christian historical foundation, raises recurring questions concerning the place of religion in the public arena. What do you think of a positive form of separation of Church and state?**

States must be secular. States based on the teachings of one religion end badly. That goes against the grain of history. I believe that a version of separation of Church and State, accompanied by a solid law guaranteeing religious freedom offers a framework for going forward. We are all equal as children of God blessed with our personal dignity. However, everyone must have the freedom to externalize his or her own faith. If a Muslim woman wishes to wear a veil, she must be able to do so. Similarly, if a Catholic wishes to wear a cross. People

accept that openness to transcendence is a right for everyone.

**In a secular setting, how should Catholics defend their concerns on societal issues such as euthanasia or same-sex marriage?**

It is up to the Parliament to discuss, argue, explain, reason these issues. That is how a society grows.

However, once a law has been adopted, the State must also respect people's consciences. The right to conscientious objection must be recognized within each legal structure because it is a human right. Therefore government officials too should have this right, because they too are human persons. The State must also take criticism into account. That would be a genuine form of separation of religion and State.

You cannot sweep aside the arguments of Catholics by simply telling them that they "speak like a priest." No, they base themselves on the kind of Christian thinking that France has so remarkably developed.

**What does France mean to you?**

It is the eldest daughter of the Church, but not the most faithful! (*laughs*) However, during the 1950s, they also spoke of "France, the mission country." In that sense, it remains a periphery to be evangelized. However, to be fair to France, the Church there does have a real creative capacity.

France is also a land of great saints, great thinkers such as Jean Guittou, Maurice Blondel, Emmanuel Levinas, who was not Catholic, and Jacques Maritain. I am also thinking of the depth of its literature.

I also appreciate how the French culture is impregnated with Jesuit spirituality, compared to the more ascetic Spanish current. The French current, which began with Pierre Favre, gave it another flavor, while continuing to emphasize discernment of spirits.

There have also been great French spiritual figures such as Louis Lallemand, or Jean-Pierre de Caussade. And the great French theologians who helped the Society of Jesus so much, namely Henri de Lubac and Michel de Certeau. I really like the last two - two Jesuits who are creative.

Overall, that's what fascinates me about France. On one hand, that exaggerated notion of separation of religion and State, the heritage of the French Revolution, and on the other hand, so many great saints.

**Who is your favorite?**

St Therese of Lisieux.

**You have promised to come to France. When might such a trip be possible?**

I recently received an invitation from President François Hollande. The episcopal conference has also invited me. But I don't know when the

trip will take place because next year is an election year in France, and in general, the policy of the Holy See is not to organize such trips during these periods.

Last year a few hypotheses emerged regarding such a trip, including a visit to Paris and its suburbs, to Lourdes and to a city that no pope has yet visited, such as Marseille, which represents an open door to the world.

**As elsewhere, the Church in France is experiencing a serious crisis of priestly vocations. How is it possible to manage today with so few priests?**

Korea provides a historical example. That country was evangelized by missionaries from China who later left. Then, for two hundred years, Korea was evangelized by lay people. It is a land of saints and martyrs that now has a strong Church.

So there is not necessarily a need for priests in order to evangelize. Baptism provides the strength to evangelize. And the Holy Spirit, received at baptism, prompts one to go out, to take the Christian message to their people with courage and patience. On the other hand, the opposite danger for the Church is clericalism. This is a sin committed by two parties, like the tango! The priest wants to clericalize lay people and lay people request to be clericalized because it's easier.

In Buenos Aires, I knew many good priests who, whenever they saw a capable lay person, immediately exclaimed, "Let's make him a deacon!" No, let him remain a lay person.

Clericalism is particularly significant in Latin America. If popular piety is strong, it is precisely because it is the only lay initiative that has not been clericalized. This is not understood by the clergy.

**On April 1, you received Bishop Bernard Fellay, superior-general of the Priestly Fraternity of St Pius X. Is the re-integration of the Lefebvrist into the Church again under consideration?**

In Buenos Aires, I often spoke with them. They greeted me, asked me on their knees for a blessing. They say they are Catholic. They love the Church.

Bishop Fellay is a man with whom one can dialogue. That is not the case for other elements who are a little

Kasper, prior to an Extraordinary Synod in October the same year which was followed by a year of reflection and an Ordinary Synod last year.

I think that we all came out of the various processes different from the way that we entered. Including me. In the post-synodal exhortation *Amoris*



strange, such as Bishop Williamson or others who have been radicalized. Leaving this aside, I believe, as I said in Argentina, that they are Catholics on the way to full communion.

During this year of mercy, I felt that I needed to authorize their confessors to pardon the sin of abortion. They thanked me for this gesture. Previously, Benedict XVI, whom they greatly respect, had liberalized the use of the Tridentine rite mass. So good dialogue and good work are taking place.

**Would you be ready to grant them the status of a personal prelate?**

That would be a possible solution but beforehand it will be necessary to establish a fundamental agreement with them. The Second Vatican Council has its value. We will advance slowly and patiently.

**You have already convoked two Synods on the family. In your view, has this long process changed the Church?**

This process was started by the consistory held in February 2014, where it was introduced by Cardinal

*Laetitia*, published this April, I sought to respect the Synod to the maximum. You won't find canonical prescriptions there about what one may or may not do.

It is a serene, peaceful reflection on the beauty of love, how to educate the children, to prepare for marriage... It emphasizes responsibilities that could be developed by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in the form of guidelines.

Beyond this process, we need to think about genuine synodality, or at least the meaning of Catholic synodality. The bishops are *cum Petro, sub Petro* (with Peter and under Peter). This differs from Orthodox synodality or that of the Greek Catholic Churches, where the Patriarch only counts as a single voice.

The Second Vatican Council set out an ideal of synodal and episcopal communion. This still needs to be developed, including at the parish level, with respect to what is required. There are parishes that still do not have a pastoral council, nor a financial council, even though these are obligations under canon law. Synodality is relevant also at this level. ■

Courtesy: <http://www.la-croix.com>

## New education policy discussed

Jesuit Educators' Meet, organized jointly by JCERT, SEC and St. Joseph's College Hr. Sec. School, on 11 June '16 at St. Joseph's College, Trichy called for a transparently discussed and evolved education policy for the country. It insisted that this policy should take into consideration the views of all the stakeholders, namely educationists, educators, parents, student etc and it should be a collective



venture. 250 selected teachers from all the ten Jesuit schools in Tamil Nadu and a few teachers and administrators from Trichy participated in this first ever one day seminar.

Fr. Sebastia L. Raj, MDU Provincial, in his inaugural address, stressed that change is essential. Stagnation is the beginning of death. He urged that we all need to participate in the evolution of the education policy. The evolving education policy should respect the constitution and its values, all religions, cultures and the basic nature of our society which is pluralistic. It should never pave the way for ideological imposition and hegemonic mind set. It should aim to revamp educational administration at all levels and promote diverse and critical thinking among the students.

Mr. S. Prabakaran, Deputy commissioner of Police, Crime and Traffic, Trichy, asserted that only scientifically proved aspects and historically true facts should find place in the textbooks. Education policy should aim to ensure equality, equity and quality for all in this country.

Feudalistic and communalistic thoughts and ideas should never be part of the syllabus. Education should never be made a commercial commodity and a profit making venture. Educational policy should respect the multilingual, multicultural and multireligious reality of India.

Resolutions adopted at the end of the seminar called upon the union government to finalize the draft education policy only after eliciting the views of all the stakeholders, educational institutions, teachers, student and parents' organization. It should be the responsibility of the Government to provide free education at least up to the higher secondary level. There should be no question of privatizing government and aided higher educational institutions including colleges and universities.



Foreign direct investment would make education a market commodity and this should not be allowed. Education should remain a secular activity. **- John Kennedy, SJ**

## Colloquium for Jesuits in Northern Zone Schools

During the PCEs' meeting held at Darjeeling in November 2015, the Northern Zone decided to have a colloquium for the Jesuits involved in the School Apostolate at Patna. The Core group of Fr Norbert Menezes, PCE of Patna and Fr John Ravi PCE of Delhi and Fr Sebastian James, the North Zone Co-coordinator, got on to work on this Colloquium, called 'Scholastic Retreat.' It was held on 25-28 April at Navjyoti Niketan, Patna.

As Jesuits working in schools get practically no time to update themselves, this meet was educative and informative. We were reminded of the important aspects of our Jesuit legacy. We had a chance to consider: - saffronisation of education and the challenges it presents - Supreme Court judgments related to Minority Educational Institutions - administrative, legal and financial matters - equipping our students with knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that empower them to act for the welfare of all - the call for an "integrated life where a Jesuit's life is integrated with his ministry of education.

The get together proved to be a form for Jesuits in schools to engage in meaningful conversations on a variety of issues related to Secondary Education. We also discussed responding to the mandate of POSA, Fr. George Pattery, who has called for a "movement of Jesuit educators from administration to animation, secondly, educate our children in freedom from hunger and fundamentalism, and thirdly, enabling our young men and women to discover the inner spirit and seekers of God."

Fr Norbert handled many sessions on Jesuit education and he arranged for resource persons, Mr. William Wood who spoke on Financial Management, Fr. K.M. Joseph on legal matters, Fr John Ravi on Child abuse and Sexual Harassment in the Work Place and Fr George Nedu on the Characteristics of Jesuit Education. **- Sebastian James, SJ**

BY STAN SWAMY, SJ

During the recent years three waves of migration have taken place in the Adivasi-dominant States of Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Bengal.

**The First Wave:** This is the migration of young Adivasi women to metropolitan cities. The reason is that there is nothing in the house or village to occupy these women in a profitable and meaningful way. After the mono-crop paddy is harvested in their tiny plots of land they find it will last only for a few months. So instead of sitting at home idling and starving, they feel it is better to go to a town or city and work as house-keepers in urban middle-class families. They are not fully aware of the

**The Third Wave:** This is the recent exodus of Adivasi youth to the Southern States as casual/contract labour. Thousands of them are in the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu (mostly in construction work in cities) and Kerala (in cities as well as in farms and plantations). They go there either through contacts with persons who are already there or they are taken in batches by contractors/middle-men. It is a strange story of the poor enabling the rich to live more comfortably.

How can we explain this new phenomenon of thousands of Adivasi youth from central Indian States going to south India? There are two main reasons:

(i) *Deepening poverty*: while the Indian economy is said to be growing at the fastest rate, poverty is deepening in the Adivasi belt of central India. Being

This people's resistance has been enhanced by Maoist/Naxal presence and very many Adivasi youth have joined these forces. Therefore state repression is increasing to the extent that a small state like Jharkhand has about 6000 men and women in its prisons accused as Maoists/Naxals. Any young man or woman in naxal-affected areas can be labeled a Maoist/Naxal and can be thrown into jails. At the same time, the laws which are in favour of the Adivasi/Moolvasi, such as The Panchayats (extension to Scheduled Areas) 1996, The Forest Rights of Scheduled Castes and other traditional forest dwellers Act, 2006, are not implemented. So the principle seems to be "starve them, shoot them and finish them"! This precarious situation makes lot of these young men want to get away from this situation of insecurity at least for a while and try and



## Three Waves of Tribal Immigration



risks and dangers involved. They get in touch with some middle-men/women and take off often without even informing and getting the consent of their parents. They land up in metros like Delhi or Mumbai, completely at the disposal of middlemen or placement-agencies. They have no say on their employers, type of work, wages, living conditions etc. Their number is estimated to be around 300,000 to 400,000.

**The Second Wave:** What I will call the second wave of tribal migration is the seasonal migration of whole families to northern states. Annually June to December is the monsoon-fed agricultural season. As the food produced in this season is insufficient to feed the family for the whole year and there is no possibility of a second crop because of lack of irrigation, hundreds of Jharkhandi families leave their hearths and homes temporarily during January to May. Only some elderly members are left at home to attend to the cattle. The government continues to ignore this annual tragedy.

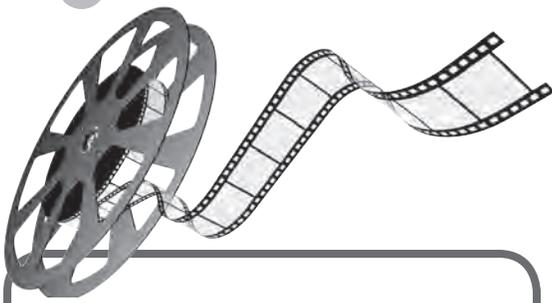
blessed by nature with rich mineral wealth has now become a curse to them. The Indian State, controlled and directed by the Corporate Sector, has decided to excavate the minerals at all costs. The protective Constitutional provisions, laws, judicial verdicts meant to protect the Adivasis have been thrown to the winds. A meagre cash compensation for their land is thrown at them and they are forced to vacate their hearths and homes. Hence the younger generation looks elsewhere to survive, and the southern States seem to offer limited chances in terms of casual/contract labour.

(ii) *State repression*: The Adivasi People are not taking this exploitative situation lying down. Resistance movements against the unjust, illegal, forcible acquisition of their *jal, jangal, jamin* have found an echo among people at large and some umbrella organizations have come up, which have played a significant role in turning away most companies empty-handed. This includes industrial giants like Mittal, Vedanta, Posco.

earn something for the family. This is the reason why so many of them have gone to the South like a wave.

In the words of noted historian, Ramachandra Guha, "The Constitution of independent India advocates equality of opportunity, where no one would be neglected. These hopes were to be falsified. For it is the adivasis who have gained least and lost most from six decades of electoral democracy. In terms of access to education, healthcare and dignified employment, they are even worse off than the Dalits. Meanwhile, millions of adivasis have been thrown out of their homes and forests to make way for dams, factories and mining projects intended for the producers and consumers of urban India. Thus the "exploitation and dispossession" have continued, to be answered by a fresh round of "rebellions and disorder". It is surely no accident that the greatest gains made by the Maoists in the past decade have been in the tribal districts of central and eastern India." ■

*Fr Stan Swamy, SJ (JAM) is the Assitant Director of Bagaicha, Ranchi, Jharkhand.*



## Film on Ignatius

*Ignacio de Loyola*

A film by Paolo Dy, Cathy Azanza

Starring Andreas Muñoz, Javier Godino, Julio Perillán...



A special screening of the new film on Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, was held at the Filmoteca Vaticana in Vatican City on 14 June '16. An ambitious project by Jesuit Communications Foundation in the Philippines, *Ignacio de Loyola* is set to be released in cinemas in the Philippines on 27 July. An international release is still being planned.

According to the film's Art Director, Philippine Jesuit Fr Rene Javellana, the film was conceived as a response to the lack of contemporary material on St Ignatius Loyola. The last feature on the saint was a black and white Spanish language film in the 1940s.

Intended primarily for youth struggling to make crucial life decisions, the film shows how the ambitious Iñigo Lopez de Loyola struggles to make sense of his life after the injury sustained at the Battle of Pamplona shatters his dream of a distinguished military career. Iñigo eventually realises that there is a larger spiritual struggle worthy of his dreams and efforts, and emerges from his convalescence determined to know what God wanted of him.

## Shouldering to success



From the tiny village of Paroria in Bihar's Samastipur district, comes this incredible story of the bond between two brothers who together fought extreme poverty and disability to crack the IITJEE (Advanced) exam this year. Krishna (now 19) was crippled with polio when he was just one year old. He could not move around or go to school because his family was so poor they could not even afford braces or crutches for him.

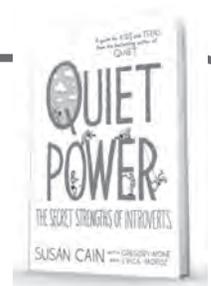
When Krishna's brother Basant, born a year later, grew up and became of school-going age, he decided to carry his brother on his back to school everyday. The bond between the brothers grew stronger as they joined a senior secondary school 10 km away from the village. Their father bought a bicycle and Basant would take Krishna to school on it. Both were doing well in their studies and decided to try taking the IIT entrance exam. They persuaded their father to send them to Kota, 1400 km away, for coaching classes. At Kota as well, Basant would carry Krishna to the coaching classes on his shoulders. This summer Krishna secured the 38th All India Rank in OBC disabled category, and Basant got the 3675 rank in OBC category. The brothers now hope that they will be able to join the same IIT, as it will be very difficult for Krishna to manage on his own.

Courtesy: [www.thebetterindia.com](http://www.thebetterindia.com)

## For Introverts

The monumental best seller *Quiet* has been recast in a new edition that empowers introverted kids and teens.

Susan Cain sparked a worldwide conversation when she published *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*. The original book focused on the workplace, and Susan realized that a version for and about kids was also badly needed. This book is all about kids' world - school, extra curricular, family life, and friendship. You'll read about actual kids who have tackled the challenges of not being extroverted and who have made a mark in their own quiet way. There are tips at the end of each chapter and a guide for parents and teachers at the end of the book.



### **Quiet Power: The Secret Strengths of Introverts**

By Susan Cain & Gregory Mone

Published by Dial Books

Pages: 288; Price: Rs.1315/-

# Green Sisters

## U.S. nuns are pioneering the green movement

BY JESSICA MESMAN GRIFFITH

Catholic sisters have always responded to the pressing need of the historical moment, whether for hospitals, orphanages, and schools, or for peace, justice, and civil rights. These religious women -accustomed to working on the fringes for unpopular causes - have been quietly leading the charge for environmental sustainability.

The “Green Sisters” are various Catholic religious orders that have integrated Catholicism with environmentalism. Some are contemplatives who run retreat centers for prayer and re-engagement with nature, while others are activists who travel the world, teaching and ministering to those suffering the effects of climate change. As the Sisters of Earth -their informal network- they come together for international conferences to share how different regions have been impacted by environmental degradation and discuss how they can work with indigenous cultures to seek solutions.

The Green Sisters have been doing this work for 20 years. Far from fading into obscurity, shuttering their mother houses, or turning off their lights, the Green Sisters have gone outside, planted community gardens, and installed solar panels. While the vocational crisis is all too real- the average age of vowed religious increases every year - the Sisters of Earth have found new energy and purpose in the environmental movement, and many of their communities are thriving, brought together with shared environmental and religious commitments.

The Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) community in Monroe, Michigan is one such group of women religious. In better times, the sisters ran a college and several high schools in southern Michigan. But by the late 1990s they had sold much of their property, and their Motherhouse, a 376,000-square-foot behemoth, required either a complete overhaul or demolition. Their situation was one all too familiar for many American Catholic religious. However, the community reacted not by selling their land or closing the building but by becoming pioneers of eco-renovation.

Selling the land and razing the house to create a smaller, cheaper, more manageable home for an aging population seemed like the most practical choice for the congregation. But while this might have been the easier choice, the sisters eventually decided it wasn't the best decision for their future - or for the future of the community they served. They began to look for a more comprehensive solution, one that would not merely serve their aging members but would also benefit the local community and restore and protect the health of the land for future generations.

After two years of meetings, research, and discernment, the IHM sisters decided that renovation, though initially more expensive, was more ecologically responsible. Many of their projects, like the installation of a geothermal heating-and-cooling system and recycled water (gray water) lines with natural purification via constructed wetlands, were the first of their kind in the area.

It wasn't cheap and it wasn't easy; in addition to the financial cost,



the sisters encountered skepticism from the city and their neighbors. Ultimately, their determination to reinvent themselves transformed both their community and the city outside their walls. “We changed how the city does things,” Ryan says. The IHM campus now hosts an organic community garden, where locals tend their own plots and learn about healthy, sustainable eating. La-Z-Boy, Inc., which purchased 120 acres of IHM land, agreed to construct a green-certified building with a geothermal system and to protect the nearby oak woods. Neighboring Sterling State Park has since planted indigenous prairie grasses, and some of the local residences have installed gray water systems for lawn watering.

The sisters have become sustainability educators and are leading efforts in the area to go green. The Motherhouse is an eco-learning center, where the public can go to learn about geothermal heating and cooling, gray water systems, even lighting efficiency and how to create a more uplifting environment with access to nature, natural light, and natural and recycled products.

### The earth & the poor

Their renovations and creation of an educational center immersed within the wider community required the IHM sisters to rethink how they lived both their mission and their spirituality. They often faced criticism within the church, as they redefined what it means to live out a concern for the poor. “We were called nature worshippers, tree huggers, told we'd lost our way,” says Ryan. “But we see our commitments as a key component of our vocation - the transformation of society through education, seeking

social justice.” The sisters began to see a commitment to the care of the earth as intrinsically connected to the care of the poor.

Far from infusing Catholicism with a tree-hugging worship of the earth, the sisters apply traditional Catholic social teaching to what they perceive as the most pressing crisis of our time. “We see the protection of the earth as inseparable from the protection of the poor,” says Ryan. Going green is just another way to live out the scripture that has always informed their mission - to bring “glad tidings to the poor” (Luke 4:18).

Passionist priest who wrote extensively on ecology and history. He referred to himself as an “earth scholar” and believed that understanding the earth was essential to understanding ourselves as humans.

Sister MacGillis galvanized the women religious she taught, many of whom were seeking new ways to live out their vocations, but Catholic leadership questioned her orthodoxy. She, like the IHM sisters, came under fire for her ideas about God’s presence in creation and her belief that understanding the earth can help us understand our relationship with God. Pope Francis

sisters is that Francis’ urgent (and official) call to environmental action is firmly rooted in the language and spirituality of the Catholic mystical tradition that has so inspired these women religious.

“When I first read *Laudato Si’* through, I sat and wept,” Siemen says. She wrote in a reflection for the *Global Sisters Report*, “This is a breakthrough moment for people who are working to advance legal recognition of nature’s rights to exist and flourish.”

**Spreading the news**

This misunderstanding about a vocation to care for the planet is why



**Far from fading into obscurity, the Green Sisters have gone outside, planted community gardens, and installed solar panels.**

The IHM sisters may have been criticized for their understanding of who exactly is meant by “the poor,” but they’re not alone in their beliefs. The social justice implications of the ecological crisis are a persistent theme of *Laudato Si’*. Ryan echoes Pope Francis when she emphasizes that “the poor suffer inordinately from the problems we have created by treating the earth as a commodity for our disposal.”

**A legacy of eco-Catholicism**

Miriam MacGillis is a Dominican sister and director of one of world’s first eco-learning centers, Genesis Farm, in Blairstown, New Jersey. She also created one of the country’s first community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs in 1988. Thomas Berry, who inspired MacGillis, was a

argues that to recognize the divine in nature does not signal a drift toward worshipping the earth, but is rather a proper understanding of cosmology and authentic Christianity. Such an understanding compels us as Catholics to protect, rather than dominate, the natural world.

Berry, MacGillis, and Pope Francis were all influenced by the work of Jesuit scientist and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who believed evolution is not only a physical and scientific process but also a spiritual progress toward union with God. Teilhard’s ideas once made him a controversial figure in the church, but both Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI wrote approvingly of Teilhard’s work.

One of *Laudato Si’*’s most striking features for Siemen and other green

Dominican Sister Caroline Sullivan of Sinsinawa, Wisconsin has made it her mission to invite people back to a spiritual relationship with the land. She says, “We’ve lost our connection to nature,” pointing out that most of us have little to no experience of growing our own food or caring for our own land. Instead we spend almost all our time indoors, and “the earth no longer feels like home.” This makes it easy to ignore our responsibility for its care and keeping, she says, but it also damages our spiritual health. “The experience of nature is one of the ways we come to know our maker and hear his voice,” says Sullivan. ■

*Courtesy: (excerpts from an article, originally titled ‘Organic Habits,’ in the April 2016 issue of U.S. Catholic.*

BY JOYEETA MAJUMDAR



The sun that set behind the tall sky-scrapers would capture her attention every day without fail. Not a day went by when she would not stare straight at that magnificent star and feel completely negligible in front of it's larger-than-life soul. Not a day went by when she was not aware of the fact that, like everything in her life, she was absolutely un-important. This is pretty much what she felt every time she stared at the sun. Inconsequential. Small. Unnecessary. Un-important.

She was a city girl. Born and bred in the modern and mobile, yet cultured and serene city of Kolkata. She was a city girl who had been a part of the best of everything that this city offered. She was a city girl who had moved amongst the elite circles, attended the raves parties, worn the best of brands, ate at the best of places and belonged to the 'coolest groups' and had very little reason to complain. But, every morning when she, a girl of 18 years, looked at the sun she felt small, tiny, fragile and absolutely pathetic.

There was nothing wrong with her life. Yet, she couldn't place a finger on what exactly was not right. Even when she wrote it reflected what she felt. It reflected that somehow she was incomplete and un-important:

*Having known what I know/ Having seen what I've seen/ Having felt everything I'm supposed to/ I have questions, quite a few./ What do I live for?/ What's the purpose of it all./ Why do I feel nothing - no emotions, no call?/ What do I live for?/ What's the purpose it all?/ The air, the water the wind/ All in all - what's the use of the glorious sun.*

Walking down the streets after college she looked at how every person was in a rush - how everyone seemed to have a motive in life- how everything seemed to have a reason to exist. But it didn't make her feel any better. It made her feel even more lost - lost among a crowd of more than thousands. All a part of some random rat race, of which she was a part too. Yet, not fully. She was a part of it. Under compulsion. Compelled to do everything. Get up. Attend college. Go through the regulars. Exams. Watch the elections. Vote. Dress up. Do everything. Do everything the

# The rising sun

way one does. She did what she was told. She did it all. Half-heartedly.

And in the end, she felt pure and plain despair. She desired to live, but she thought the desire shall never be fulfilled.

On the other hand, every evening a very thin, fragile looking lady came to her house. They called her the maid. With her came her daughter who would be dressed in clothes that were worn out because they were all donated. She had her hair oiled and tightly tied. She had black eyes lined thickly with kajal. Not that she was a sight but she definitely stood out. What made her different was the cheerfulness of her

and stared straight at the sun - a burning orange. The sun with all its strength, glow, fire, set ablaze lighting the whole wide world made her feel small. Yet she felt warm. She could connect with the sun. She could connect with its warmth. She felt gratified that the rays touched her every day. She felt grateful for her existence. She felt grateful for the sun. So compelled by impulse she took out a piece of paper and wrote:

*'Having known what I know/ Having seen what I've seen/ Having etched my names on walls and stones/ Having felt the cool air touch my face/ Having known what*



appearance, the glow of her smile and most importantly the love she had for her life.

She attended the government-aided school which had more than her dedication. It had her love. When she came home, she would help out her mother with few of the houses. She loved accompanying her for the sake of watching the many benefits that the rich possessed. The television. The air conditioner. The designer food. The designer porcelain plates. The fairy tale clothes and the constant chatter on cellphones - things she dreamed of. However, what was funny was the fact that every day she went through her daily routine with enthusiasm. Her early rise. Her tattered clothes. The songs on the radio. The footpath to school. The stream of water from the taps. The melody of birds. The ring of the bell. The feel of paper. The taste of *daal*. It looked as if everyday offered her more than what it gave her the previous day.

Just today, when she got up in the morning she walked out of her house

*men do and their ways/ Having loved to live this life/ I'm happy as I am./ I'm happy to live, to breathe, to strive/ I'm happy for the love, the joy and all the fun./ I'm happy for the air, the breeze and overall - I'm happy for the sun.'*

That evening when she went to the grand house, the paper fell to the floor from her split pocket.

When the little Miss of the house picked up the chit she read what was a very different take on life. She read what her opposite believed. She read what the girl without the benefits had to say. What she read gave birth to a new outlook in her being. She stared at the sun the next day - not with a feeling of incompleteness. But with a new feeling- a feeling of gratitude. She hoped to look at the sun the same way, everyday. She hoped to smile and live life happily and find a meaning in her living. ■

*Ms Joyeeta Majumdar is a student of English Honours, Loreto College, Kolkata.*

## Jesuits facilitate Open Letter that urges Australia to raise age of criminal responsibility

A group of prominent legal, human rights and social services organisations has urged Australia's Attorneys-Generals to increase the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12.

The open letter, facilitated by Jesuit Social Services (JSS) and signed by organisations including Australian Council of Social Service, Amnesty International, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Oxfam Australia, has been released alongside a discussion paper, 'Too Much Too Young: Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility to 12.'

JSS Acting CEO, Sally Parnell, said in *The Age*, "The minimum age of criminal responsibility across all Australian jurisdictions is 10, despite extensive scientific evidence the brains of children under 12 are not adequately developed for them to be criminally responsible, and often don't adequately develop until they are 15."

Australia's minimum age is lower than countries including Canada, Japan, Germany, France and China. The United Nations has ruled that age 12 is the minimum for jurisdictions to hold children criminally responsible. This is currently breached by every Australian state and territory.

Andrew Jackomos, Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, says Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children comprise about 60 per cent of Australia's youth detention population.

"Our Koori kids come into contact with the justice system younger and return more quickly. We must raise the age of criminal responsibility and reinvest our prison dollars in innovative community-led solutions that build the resilience of our Aboriginal children and their families and keep them connected to kin, culture and each other," says Jackomos.

Parnell says that while the number of 10- and 11-year-old children involved in the justice system is small – less than 2 per cent of children under 18 in custody across Australia in 2013 to 2014 – it is a particularly vulnerable group.

"Often if children have serious behavioural issues it is an indicator there are complex problems - like family violence or sexual abuse – and they need protection, not punishment. Jesuit Social Services' 2013 report, 'Thinking Outside' found that more than three quarters of children between 10 and 12 years old who had youth justice orders or had experienced remand in 2010 were known to child protection," she says.

The discussion paper includes recommended reforms including further investments into pre-plea diversion programs and specialist Children's Courts and a framework for diversion – steering children away from the justice system and towards positive connections with education, family and the community – to be legislated in all jurisdictions.

- JSS, Australia

## Being part of building Timor-Leste

"How did I end up in Timor-Leste for the second half of my Regency working in design and construction? "One thing leads to the other" is probably the best way of putting it. I was trained as an architect and had worked for a number of years in the field prior to entering the Novitiate in 2009. The idea of joining the Society hoping to be able to do what I can as an architect was rather attractive. I am still very much passionate about architecture, but now being a Jesuit for six years, it doesn't take the forefront of my life.



Nevertheless, I recently mentioned to one of my long-time friends who is also an architect, that way back when we graduated from architectural school, neither of us would have ever imagined that we would be doing what we are now. God works in mysterious ways.

My normal working day is actually taken up with much emailing, meetings, marking architectural drawings, writing summaries of meeting discussions, and more sending and replying to emails. On another day I would go to visit construction sites. Being a Regent and tasked with a coordinating or project management role is rather an interesting combination. On one hand, I am a Jesuit in formation, and on the other, I work as professional in the field of architecture. Being a representative of the Society to work with the architects, engineers, consultants, and construction companies puts me in a whole different dynamic and gives me many responsibilities.

At the moment, the Jesuit Region of Timor-Leste has four building projects in various stages of the planning and design process, and one under construction. These works aren't without challenges and learning opportunities, with which I am still coming into terms. Each building work has different functional and spatial requirements, stakeholders with different ideas, different site conditions, etc. Being new to Timor-Leste meant getting familiar with and accepting different ways of doing things here despite some of the frustrations that come along with them."

- Andy Nguyen, SJ,  
an Australian regent in Timor Leste

BY ASTRID LOBO GAJIWALA

# A man for others becomes an Indian citizen on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday

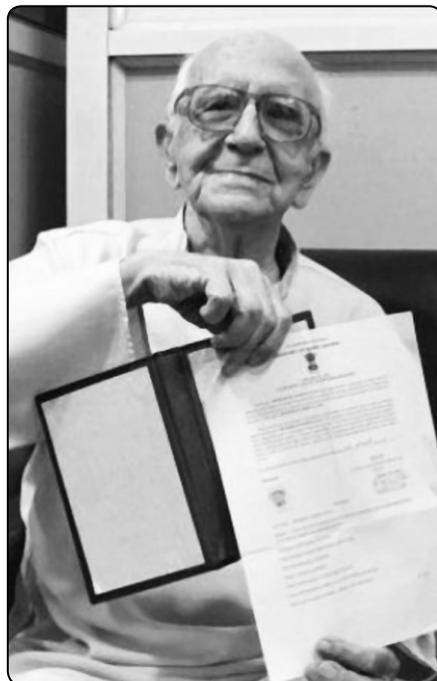
It is not possible to meet Fr Fred Sopena, SJ and come away untouched. I can remember so clearly the first time our paths crossed. It was somewhere in the late 1980's. I was Secretary of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council and we were having a meeting with Bishop Bosco Penha to introduce Small Christian Communities in the archdiocese. After the bishop's introductory comments, this frail priest in a cotton kurta stands up and gently says, "If these communities are going to include people of all faiths, I will support them. If they are only for Christians I am not interested". There was total silence, and in that simple assertion the boundaries of our Christian ghettos were opened to include Basic Human Communities.

From that moment Fr Sopena and I became friends. I cannot remember the details of our relationship but I remember introducing him to my mother, a generous woman, when he wanted funds for his projects in Raigad. He became a frequent visitor after that, bringing cheer to a widow grieving for a son lost in a tragic accident. But what I appreciated most was his refusal to take the donations she would press upon him. "When I want, I will ask," he would tell her. "Right now I don't need anything."

His capacity to motivate and inspire is phenomenal. Every time I have visited him in Vinayalaya there have been young visitors from across the seas. Last year he introduced me to a young woman from Latin America. I suggested she meet my children as she seemed to be about the same age, and they could perhaps show her around the city. But she refused. All

she wanted was sit at Sopena's feet, much like Mary of the gospels.

For Gussi Frederick Sopena India is home. He left Barcelona 68 years ago and has never looked back. "I was here during the country's first Republic Day when the Constitution



was promulgated," he says. "India is my country and all Indians are my brothers and sisters". But his Spanish brothers and sisters too still remain a part of him. A couple of years ago when my husband and I visited Barcelona we met them, and once again I could see the miracles that the charisma of this man could bring about. His family has opened a Trust in his name, and I was moved by their total involvement in organizing events to collect funds for his first love – the 'kathkaris' of Raigad.

On 21 April '16, this year, at the age of 90, Fr Sopena's long-cherished dream of becoming an Indian citizen was fulfilled. It was the culmination of a 38-year-long struggle, and the key person who helped make it happen was Pen resident Vaishali Patil, who knows "Baba for the last 40 years".

"When did you first meet him?" I asked her. "What do you think of him?" "What do the people of Raigad think of him?" "What motivated you to take up the cause of his citizenship?" Her answers were humbling and revealing. Through her love story reproduced below, emerges a man whose Christianity is lived, not preached, and a priest who is defined by a humility that is rare to find amidst the clericalism of today.

**Dr Vaishali Patil**, Social Activist, Raigad, Maharashtra, responds in an interview with **Astrid Lobo Gajiwala**:

"Pitaji, to which organization do you belong?" I asked. He replied, "Society of Jesus". I immediately asked him again, "Can I join you"? This was the first memorable conversation I had with Fr Sopena, exactly 24 years ago. Yes, I wanted to be a Jesuit, not knowing what it really meant. Perhaps it was his dedication and passion for the *kathkaris* that made me want to be like him. I belong to the traditional Patil community of Khandesh and had never heard or seen missionaries before. When I learnt that Fr Sopena came to India at the age of 22 and had spent his life serving the marginalized community of my State, I wanted to

be like him, a Jesuit, not knowing that women are not allowed to be Jesuits or that being born a Hindu was another disqualifying factor.

I had just completed my college and wanted to work with the tribals. Just about that time Fr Sopena too was exploring the possibility of starting an organization to work among the tribals of Raigad district. His efforts were directed to bringing the resources that the Church has to the doorsteps of the *Kathkaris*. This was our point of convergence, our common interest - the tribals. This is how I started collaborating and working with Fr. Sopena in Raigad district. Together with two other women we started laying the foundation for what is known today as "Janhit Vikas", an organization based in Tara, Panvel. My job was to support, create and develop good will for the new organization. Gradually Sisters and Fathers were invited to work in the various *talukas* of Raigad district. This was no doubt a missionary initiative, but it was aimed solely at improving the quality of life of the *kathkaris* and not proselytizing. I have been a witness to this and the fact that I continue to be a Hindu is sufficient proof. The priests and nuns belonging to different congregations built their own structures within which to work and many of them registered as NGOs to work for this purpose. I too, along with my husband Raj, formed "Ankur Trust," which is actively working for the last 25 years among the tribals.

Some 27 years ago while Sopena was riding his old scooter on the Mumbai-Goa Highway he met with a very serious accident. An electric wire lying on the road cut through his leg and there he was lying on the road unconscious. Luckily for him, a priest-friend passing that way saw him and picked him up immediately and got him admitted in Sion Hospital. Sopena

survived the ordeal but his leg had to be amputated. Later he was fitted with a Jaipur foot. Often he used to be troubled by blisters and pain in the leg but that did not stop him from visiting *kathkarwadis*, most of which are situated on the mountain top. I have seen him climbing mountains with a determination that I have seldom seen even in younger people. His actions, commitment and generosity were a great inspiration for me and I used to often wonder, from where did this old man get his energy and strength to do what he was doing?

Sopena went beyond caste, class and religion to collaborate with and serve humanity. I never found him to limit or restrict his social contacts to the Catholic community. He endeared himself to all and the *kathkaris* used to call him *Sopenababa* lovingly. I recollect how Muslims from Barapada used to come to him for guidance. Renowned freedom fighter and founder of Yusuf Maheraly Centre, Dr. G.G. Parikh, was a great friend of Sopena.

One extraordinary characteristic he had was the ability to listen. He used to listen to the working staff in Tara with such intensity and sincerity that Mama the gardener, used to talk to Sopena about Dnyaneshwari and Dasbodh. *Pitaji*, as the rest of us would call him had great admiration for the thousands of *varkaris* from the villages that would participate in the pilgrimage from Dindi to Alandi and Pandharpur. I cannot forget how people from different religions and castes used to come to Tara to visit and wish him on the occasion of Christmas.

He was an avid reader and had familiarized himself with Maharashtrian Saints and would often quote from their lives. The Constitution of India was his bible. His belief in justice, equality and

brotherhood was as unshakeable as the mountains. He used to quote from Gandhiji's life often and used to be visibly pained when riots occurred.

After 2000 he was transferred. He must have been 74 at that time but irrespective of whether he was there or not in Raigad, he continued keeping in touch with the various organizations and congregations and kept on prodding and encouraging them to continue working for the *kathkaris* in the face of all difficulties. The one thing that I always asked myself was, if Pitaji can work so untiringly at his age how much more should I?

After his transfer though I kept in contact with him it was not so often as when he was in Raigad. Sopena is still my inspiration and I owe a lot of what I am to him. Unknowingly he has influenced, moulded and shaped me into the kind of human being I am. Perhaps it is this bond that made me take up his cause for Indian Citizenship against all adversity. The day he got his citizenship I could not sleep for days with sheer joy for him.

Later I became busy with the fight against Ambani in Raigad. The project was the proposed SEZ. The organization of the small farmers was so powerful that the government had to conduct a referendum. 99% of the farmers said "No" to SEZ and demanded a SAZ (Special Agricultural Zone). Fr Sopena kept himself updated of all my activities particularly my involvement in Jaitapur and our anti nuclear movement. When I met him during this time, he once said "Vaishu, I am a great fan of yours". I felt great and humbled. I realized then that the greatest tribute I can pay this great person is to involve myself more deeply in the issues and struggles of the common people. ■

# Jesuit's day out in jail

helps him experience the tragic joke of our judicial system

BY JOSEPH PULICKAL, SJ

I am Fr. Joseph Pulickal, at present stationed at Muzaffarpur, N. Bihar. From 2006 to 2009, I was the parish priest, Secretary, Ara Catholic High School and Middle School and also the Superior of the local Jesuit community. Ara is a big town 70 miles to the west of Patna on the main railway line to Delhi. The schools and the property belong to Buxar Diocese. It was in the 1940's that the Patna Jesuits bought this big plot of land and started educational work and established a Christian community. The High School is aided by the Bihar Board and the best School in that part of the state. The Jesuits have been in charge of the place from the very beginning. The vast tract of land supports the hostel we run for boys who come from the many parishes of the diocese. The history of the place tells us that some plots of the land at sometime- even before Independence- were exchanged with the people of the neighborhood in order to make the whole land contiguous. We suspected that since it is a prime plot of land on the highway some people might have an eye on certain parts of the land.

on 30 August 2006, we sent our tractor to plough the farthest part of our land to prepare it for cultivation. I was standing on the main road. One man objected to our ploughing the land and told me it belonged to him. There was an argument. I spotted two policemen on patrol and asked them to stand nearby in case there was any trouble. Meanwhile, the driver of our

tractor was attacked by his men and was chased away. They threatened me not to plough. So I went back home and took the tractor away.

After a week or so, our lawyer informed me that there was a case of armed looting of standing crop against me and against the two policemen including the local SHO, who was not even present there. This was to threaten the police not to protect us. The case has been going on ever since. The man who filed the case died after a year. I was transferred from Ara in 2009 June to Patna and again to Muzaffarpur in 2012.

On 5 December 2014 - more than 8 years after the false case had been filed - all of a sudden I was called to appear in the court in Ara. The lawyer informed me that I had missed the previous date. I handed over all my medical reports to the lawyer, hoping they would make the judge to be kind to me. But it was not to be. The judge ordered an exemplary punishment of 24 hours to be spent in Ara Central Jail. I had left our Ara community after a light breakfast at 8 am. When the verdict was pronounced it was 3.30 pm.

In criminal cases, the accused is made to stand in the dock. The judge never talks to the person in the dock. I was hoping he would look up at me and at my medical records. But he never looked up and refused to listen to any pleading by my lawyer not to be harsh. Immediately I was hand-cuffed and taken down from the dock. I saw Fr Pius Osta, the present superior of Ara Community, following



me. I asked him to get a blanket, some food and a bottle of water. He left immediately to fetch them.

The room where the accused are kept before being taken to

jail looked like an animal cage which had at least 30 people in it. The police officer-in charge allowed me to sit next to him. All the others had to stand in the cage. He asked who I am and said, "But how come *you* are here?" I explained to him why. Meanwhile, Fr Pius returned to give me the things I had asked for.

The hardest thing was the pain of being hand-cuffed and led in public for such a simple 'offence' was very difficult to face. While being led through the crowd, Fr Pius was walking beside me..

At 5.30 pm, the van left for jail and I saw Fr. Pius standing there and waving to me. I felt two drops of tears on my cheeks. We reached the jail gate within 30 minutes. The new ones were thoroughly searched at the gate. The hand-cuffs were removed.

The jail was full of inmates, nearly 1,500 of them. They were strolling before being locked up in their respective wards for the night. As we were led in, a large number of them surrounded us, the new ones, to find out who we were. I told them my identity. The surprise response was, "But *you*.....how is that you got involved in this?" The guards brought us to Gandhi ward and left us there.

The Gandhi ward looked at least a hundred years old. I asked someone where my place was. He said that I must

find a place for myself. We were not less than 50 in that 30 by 15 feet small hall. The only open space I could find was at the entrance. People coming in and going out were constantly walking over me.

It was 5 December and very cold. Since I lay down at the entrance, I was getting the full blow of the cold winter wind. I folded my legs and arms to keep myself warm. I must have looked like a stray dog sleeping curled up on a garbage heap.

I asked the man sitting next to me where the toilet was. He didn't show any interest. Then I asked another man. He said there wasn't any. Again I inquired what people did if there is a need at night after the grill was closed. He pointed to the corner and said, "There." Since I did not see anything 'there', I asked him again, "Where?" Then he told me there is an open hole in the corner which can be used as a toilet.

A whistle blew at 6 pm. Someone was calling out the name of each inmate to make sure everyone was in. When he was satisfied with the count, the grill was locked from outside. We were 47 in all.

Angry and upset, I had decided not to eat anything. At around 9 pm I went near the 'hole' to urinate. The place was dark. And I could see nothing clearly. It looked like an open pool of excreta. A terrible stink emanated from it. I stood as far away from the hole as possible so that I would not slip and fall.

After sometime, I heard someone from the other end of the ward calling out to the man next to me asking if 'Bhaisaahab' has eaten something. When he was told that I had not eaten anything, he sent some food for me, telling me not to go to bed on an empty stomach. I was not interested. I kept my head covered.

This was the only night in my whole life when I did not sleep even for two minutes. At 6 am the grill opened and all were out happily. People started

collecting buckets to have a bath and to use in the toilet. Nearly all of us took bath at the two hand pumps. At 7 am I saw people rushing with plates. It was breakfast time. I had no plate, no cup. When people saw this, they brought a plate, a bowl for vegetables and a steel cup for tea. We were given as many chappattis as we wanted, a bowl of cooked gram and a cup of tea.

After a refreshing bath I was putting my wet clothes for drying on the line, when the man who showed a great concern about my going to sleep without supper, came up to me and asked my name and why I was in jail. I explained to him my case, that I am a Christian priest from Catholic High School. Then what he said took me by surprise. He said, "I too am a priest." His name was Hare Ram Pandey. This was a familiar name in Ara area. I had heard that name before. I said, "Yes, you have the same name as that notorious man who is alleged to have killed Brahmeshwar Mukhiya, the head of Ranveer Sena last year." The Sena had been accused of several massacres of Dalits in the 80's and 90's in Central Bihar. The Sena was a vigilante group claiming to protect the interests of the Bhumihar Brahmins. The Bhumihars, who make up only 5.5% of Bihar's population, are the most powerful and ruthless group of landlords. They are more powerful than Brahmins (4.5%) and Rajputs (6.5%) both economically and politically. The conflict arose because of the awakening among Dalits who traditionally worked their fields, but lately got educated and had begun to get organized and question the landlord's power over them.

Then what Pandey said was more shocking. He said, "I am he." I did not know whether I should continue the conversation. I was afraid someone could be watching. But he was very friendly and respectful. We talked about our religious beliefs. He asked me when I was converted. I said I was not converted. He said, "But your ancestors had surely been Hindus,

weren't they?" I said probably they were. He asked me to sit while he did puja. After 30 minutes, I moved away and he continued his puja.

After puja at 10.30 he came to me and said, "Masterji, you will be leaving us this evening. You have not eaten anything from yesterday. I want to have lunch with you today. Please don't refuse my invitation. Lunch will be ready by 12.30. It's being arranged especially for you."

By 12.30, lunch was ready and I was called in and made to sit in a prominent place next to him. They served me puri, patalkisabzi with paneer, malpua, and to cap it all, a bowl of creamy kheer with cashew and kismis.

I talked with several inmates who told me in hushed voices, "Pandeyji is a very good man. He helps poor people. He has set free from jail several inmates who had been here for years without anybody to help." Pandeyji himself told me, "I have been here for 9 months. Up to now I have got 27 persons released from jail by employing my own lawyer." After talking with several inmates it became clear to me that a large number of them had been implicated in false cases.

Restlessly I waited to be released. The usual time for release is after 5 pm. At 5, a policeman came and called out the names of four of us to be released on that day. Quickly I picked up my blanket and walked out without saying anything to anyone. I thanked the man who slept next to me, who offered food at night and Pandeyji for the great lunch and the interest he took in me. By 6 pm, I was made to sign on a register and a huge gate opened to let us out. I was wondering how to reach home, when I saw Fr Pius standing in the dark under a neem tree waiting for me.

That one day's experience was memorable yet painful in many ways. I keep thinking of people who languish in our jails without anyone to help. ■

# “Just seeing him restores one’s hope”

BY JOHN DEAR

**F**r Daniel Berrigan, SJ, the renowned anti-war activist, award-winning poet, author and Jesuit priest, who inspired religious opposition to the Vietnam war and later the U.S. nuclear weapons industry, died on 30 April '16 at age 94, just a week shy of his 95th birthday.

He died of natural causes at the Jesuit infirmary at Murray-Weigel Hall in the Bronx, New York. I had visited him just last week. He has long been in declining health.

Dan Berrigan published over 50 books of poetry, essays, journals and scripture commentaries, as well as an award winning play, *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, in his remarkable life, but he was most known for burning draft files with homemade napalm along with his brother Philip and eight others on 17 May 1968, in Catonsville, Maryland, igniting widespread national protest against the Vietnam war, including increased opposition from religious communities. He was the first U.S. priest ever arrested in protest of war, at the national mobilization against the Vietnam war at the Pentagon in October, 1967. He was arrested hundreds of times since then in protests against war and nuclear weapons. He spent two years of his life in prison, and was repeatedly nominated for the Nobel peace prize.

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Daniel Berrigan was born on 09 May 1921 in Virginia, Minnesota, the fifth of six boys to Thomas and Frieda Berrigan. His family subsequently moved to Syracuse, New York, where the boys grew up attending Catholic

grade schools. After high school, Berrigan applied to the Society of Jesus. He entered the Jesuit novitiate in August, 1939.

Berrigan was ordained a priest on 21 June 1952 in Boston. In 1953, he traveled to France for his tertianship. There, his worldview expanded as he met the French “worker priests.” He returned to teach at Brooklyn Prep until 1957, when he moved on to LeMoyne College, in Syracuse, New York, where he taught New Testament until 1962. There he founded “International House,” an intentional community of activist students who seek to live in solidarity with the third world poor, a project that continues till today.

In 1957, Berrigan published his first book of poetry, *Time Without Number*. The book won the Lamont Poetry Award and was nominated for the National Book Award. After that first book, Berrigan began publishing one or two books of poetry and prose each year for the rest of his life.

Denied permission to accompany his younger brother Philip, a Josephite priest, on a Freedom Ride through the South, Berrigan went to Paris on sabbatical in 1963, and then on to Czechoslovakia, Hungary and South Africa. On his return, he began to speak out against U.S. military involvement in Vietnam and co-founded the Catholic Peace Fellowship. In 1964, along with his brother Philip, A.J. Muste, Jim Forest and other peacemakers, he attended a retreat hosted by Thomas Merton at the Abbey of Gethsemani. That retreat marked a turning point for Merton and the Berrigans as they committed themselves to write and speak out against war and nuclear weapons, and advocate Christian peacemaking.

## Daniel Berrigan



1921 - 2016

Merton recorded his meeting with Berrigan in the early 1960s in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystand*, calling Berrigan “an altogether winning and warm intelligence and a man who, I think, has more than anyone I have ever met the true wide-ranging and simple heart of the Jesuit: zeal, compassion, understanding and uninhibited religious freedom. Just seeing him restores one’s hope in the church.”

In 1965, he began a grueling weekly speaking schedule across the country that continued until about ten years ago. In November, 1965, a young Catholic Worker named Roger LaPorte immolated himself in front of the United Nations. After speaking at a private liturgy for LaPorte, Berrigan was ordered to leave the country immediately by his Jesuit superiors. Berrigan began a six month journey throughout Latin America. His expulsion caused a national stir throughout the media, and Berrigan returned to New York. On 22 Oct 1967, Berrigan was arrested for the first time with hundreds of students protesting the war at the Pentagon. On 17 May 1968, along with his brother Philip and eight others, Berrigan burned 300 A-1 draft files in Catonsville, Maryland, in a protest against the Vietnam war. Their action led to hundreds of similar demonstrations. The Catonsville Nine

Protest was followed extensively around the world, in large part because of the shock of two Catholic priests facing prison for a peace protest.

In his 1969 bestseller, *No Bars to Manhood*, Berrigan wrote: "We have assumed the name of peacemakers, but we have been, by and large, unwilling to pay any significant price. And because we want the peace with half a heart and half a life and will, the war, of course, continues, because the waging of war, by its nature, is total — but the waging of peace, by our own cowardice, is partial...There is no peace because there are no peacemakers."

Back at Cornell, Berrigan wrote the best-selling play, *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, which later opened in New York and Los Angeles, and became a film under the direction of actor Gregory Peck. The play has been performed hundreds of times around the world. When Berrigan and his codefendants were to report to prison to begin their sentences in April 1970, both Berrigans went "underground" instead of turning themselves in. For five months, Daniel Berrigan traveled through the Northeast, speaking to the media, writing articles against the war, and occasionally appearing in public, much to the anger and frustration of J. Edgar Hoover and the F.B.I., which eventually tracked him down and arrested him on 11 Aug 1970. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Berrigan attracted widespread media attention, was on the cover of *Time* magazine, and became the focus of intense national debate not only about the war, but how people of faith should oppose the war. He consistently called for the Church to abolish its just war theory and return to the nonviolence of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel.

In 1972, the U.S. filed indictments against the Berrigans and other activists charging them with threatening to kidnap Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. The long drawn-out trial and resulted in a mistrial and equivalent

acquittal. Afterwards, Berrigan spent six months in Paris living and studying with Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, collaborating on a book of conversations about peace, called *The Raft is not the Shore*.

Dan was my greatest friend and teacher, for over 35 years. We traveled the nation and the world together; went to jail together; and I edited five of his books. But all along I considered him one of the most important religious

## Dan's 10 commandments

- 1) Call on Jesus when all else fails. Call on Him when all else succeeds (except that never happens).
- 2) Don't be afraid to be afraid or appalled to be appalled. How do you think the trees feel these days, or the whales, or, for that matter, most humans?
- 3) Keep your soul to yourself. Soul is a possession worth paying for, they're growing rarer. Learn from monks, they have secrets worth knowing.
- 4) About practically everything in the world, there's nothing you can do. This is Socratic wisdom. However, about a few things you can do something. Do it, with a good heart.
- 5) On a long drive, there's bound to be a dull stretch or two. Don't go anywhere with someone who expects you to be interesting all the time. And don't be hard on your fellow travelers. Try to smile after a coffee stop.
- 6) Practically no one has the stomach to love you, if you don't love yourself. They just endure. So do you.
- 7) About healing: The gospels tell us that this was Jesus' speciality and he was heard to say: "Take up your couch and walk!"
- 8) When traveling on an airplane, watch the movie, but don't use the earphones. Then you'll be able to see what's going on, but not understand what's happening, and so you'll feel right at home, little different than you do on the ground.
- 9) Know that sometimes the only writing material you have is your own blood.
- 10) Start with the impossible. Proceed calmly towards the improbable. No worry, there are at least five exits.

In 1973, after teaching at Union Theological Seminary and Fordham University, Berrigan joined the New York West Side Jesuit Community, where he lived with some 30 other Jesuits for the rest of his life. In 1985, filmmaker Roland Joffe invited Berrigan to Paraguay, Argentina and Colombia to serve as advisor to the film, *The Mission*. He also had a small part, alongside Robert DeNiro, Jeremy Irons and Liam Neeson. Berrigan published an account about the making of the film, the Jesuit missions in Latin America of 1770s, and their relevance to contemporary efforts against war today, in his book, *The Mission*. In 1988, he published his autobiography, *To Dwell In Peace*.

figures of the last century, right alongside with Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day and his brother Philip. Dan and Phil inspired millions of people around the world to speak out against war and work for peace, and helped turn the Catholic church back to its Gospel roots of peace and nonviolence. I consider him not just a legendary peace activist but one of the greatest saints and prophets of modern times. Thank you, Dan. May we all take heart from your astonishing peacemaking life, and carry on the work to abolish war, poverty and nuclear weapons.

Courtesy: [www.fatherjohndear.org](http://www.fatherjohndear.org)

Fr John Dear is a well-known American Catholic priest, peace activist, writer, speaker and a former Jesuit.

**ALPHONSUS D'SOUZA, SJ**  
(CCU) 1939 - 2016



Bishop Alphonsus D'Souza, SJ of Raigunj Diocese passed away due to a massive heart attack at the Bishop's House, Raigunj, West Bengal on 30 April '16. He was 77 and was ailing for a long time. He was the second Bishop of Raigunj Diocese, succeeding Bishop Leo Tigga, SJ. He was born on 04 July 1939 in Mudubelle in Karnataka. There is a large family of 13 children – 9 boys and 4 girls. Out of the 13 siblings 4 boys became priests and two of them became bishops and 2 girls became Nuns. He joined the Jesuit Novitiate at Hazaribah in 1957. After doing his post graduation at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, he was sent to Austria for his Theology and was ordained a priest there in July 1971. He made his final profession in April 1977. He was first a professor and later the Rector of the Regional Seminary at Morning Star College, Barrackpore. After his term was over as Rector, he was appointed the Provincial of Kolkata. Before he completed his term, he was made the Bishop of Raigunj diocese. When he got the news he rushed to the chapel and prayed with tears running down his cheeks, asking for strength to accept the responsibility. As a good Jesuit he obeyed and was ordained a Bishop on 17 May 1987. He had to struggle very hard to bring up the Diocese and succeeded with the cooperation of his clergy and the faithful. He built several new churches and mission stations, schools and convents in his territory. With the generous help from his numerous friends in Austria he built up the Diocese. He was a real shepherd who loved his people, especially the poor. He was quite happy in their company. He welcomed visitors and friends. In July 2015, Fr. Jeyaraj Veluswamy, SJ, the Provincial of Kolkata Province and I went to Raigunj to wish him on his birthday. Towards the end of his life, he found it hard to move about. When he attained the prescribed age of 75, he sent his resignation. Before he got a reply from Rome, his Master from above called him. He bade farewell to us all on 30 April 2016. May God grant eternal rest to his soul. His funeral Mass was celebrated on 3 May, 2016 at St Joseph's Cathedral at 9.30 a.m. attended by a large number of Bishops, including his brother, Archbishop Albert D'Souza of Agra, Priests, Religious and laity. He was laid to rest inside the Cathedral which was built during his reign. May the good Jesuit bishop rest in peace!  
- **Thomas Carlo, SJ**

**ERIC J.X. DA SILVA, SJ**  
(GOA) 1927 - 2016



'Jack of all trades' is how many describe Bro Eric. He had no formal training, yet he handled a variety of offices in the Society. He did the jobs of an educationist, an accountant, a retreat preacher and a technical man during his 60 odd years in the Society. He handled library work, was Boarding Director, Minister, involved in Non-Formal Education of village drop-outs, teacher of Candidates, school teacher, worked in the school office, was in charge of the farm, in charge of the infirmary, assisted in giving retreats, taught catechism, preached in village chapels, was Director of the Non-Formal Technical Training Institute, was one of the founding members of St Xavier's, Kolhapur and spent the final years of his life in the Family Prayer Apostolate at Loyola Hall, Miramar. Eric was born in Nairobi. After passing his matriculation at St. Paul's, Belgaum in 1947, he joined the Society at Vinayalaya, Andheri. Looking over the variety of jobs he handled, what stands out is the fact of a man who was always at hand for emergency situations and helped keep the infrastructure running, thus being a great boon to Provincials. This called for strong faith in God and great obedience and availability. Death came to Eric slowly, like a candle that flickers away burning itself, giving whatever light it can. As he was "not feeling well" for some weeks, he was admitted to Vintage Hospital, for observation and was sent back to Loyola Hall after a few days, but was slowly declining due to 'age-related illness'. He expired in the early hours of 28 April '16, a few months short of 89.  
- **Gregory Naik, SJ**

**RAJU YAGAPPAR, SJ**  
(MDU) 1942 - 2016



After he celebrated his Golden Jubilee in the Society in 2012 Fr Fr Raju Yagappar, whom everyone called Y.Raju, suffered a mild stroke. Later he had to be hospitalized twice. After his second stint in the hospital he came home to the Jesuit residence at AAC, Karumathur, on 30 May '16. But when he tried to get down from the car, he was not able even to stand without support. He wanted to go to his room in the first floor, but, seeing his condition, Fr Jayaseelan, Minister, told him to occupy the room in the ground floor, and he readily accepted. On 01 June, his 75th birthday, after the Mass we gathered in his room to sing, 'Happy Birthday!' while he cut the cake. On 03 June, feeling unwell, he wanted to be taken to the Hanna Joseph Hospital where his pulse rapidly declined and around 11.30 pm Fr Raju passed away quietly. Fr Raju was born in 1942 in Pulikanmai and was the first one from that village to join the Society in 1962. He was ordained a priest in 1977. He served as the Hostel Warden and a Parish Priest before he went to the North and Northeast where he worked for nearly 20 years as a teacher and a pastor. Returning to the province in 2003 he served at Beshi and then our estates. In 2011 he went to AAC, Karumathur where he taught English. He took that task very seriously and his room was full of books and notes on English grammar. He wrote two books on the subject and had material ready for another. Those who know him well say that it was the famous Tony de Mello who freed him from many inhibitions. Jokes about his uninhibited speech abound. He was a free, bold and jovial person, although he didn't seem to have many friends and mostly kept to himself. Fr Sebastião L Raj, MDU Provincial, was the chief celebrant at the funeral Mass at St Mary's the next day and several Jesuits, priests and Sisters attended. Fr Xavier Vedam, former Principal and Raju's friend, in his homily, referred to Fr Y Raju's frank and bold comments on life. Fr K.Amal, Superior, thanked the Minister, Fr Jeyaseelan and the co-workers for looking after Raju for the past three years with selfless dedication. May the soul of Fr Y Raju rest in peace!  
- **A.G. Leonard, SJ**

# Lessons for Life

## I've learned from Central African Republic and Cameroon

BY MICHAEL PANIMAYA RAJ, SJ

### Give generously

African continent suffers a lot. People of quite a few African countries face terrible realities. Yet I have been astonished by the people's readiness to give, to donate. During the Offertory at Mass, there are long lines of people giving from whatever they have. They never forget to share their meals, however a little they may have. I have learnt that generosity has nothing to do with how much you have. It has to do with the spirit.

### Love simply

When I came here it was I who was afraid of them, as I didn't know them. But they were never afraid of me. From little children till the aged mothers, they simply love us, care for us. Their abounding love reaffirms that humanity that seems externally different is after all one. I have learnt that we are all siblings born in different places.

### Be true to your roots

Western colonisers have plundered and some Corporates are still plundering the rich resources of Africa with no remorse... But the African people are rediscovering their roots and cultures. Naturally creative, their artistic expressions are always life enhancing. Always earthly and pragmatic, they think walking carefully on this earth is more important than walking on the moon.

### Respect women

Traditionally women here are given a prominent place. Unlike India, here it is the bridegroom who has to give a dowry to the bride's family. A woman is buried after the fourth day of her death, whereas men are buried on the second day. Because the woman has spent more of her time in making a home, a tribe. Women here do all kinds of work for their families. They sell vegetables or fruits, carry their children on their back and their basket on their head.

Sch Michael Panimaya Raj SJ, (MDU), has just completed his Regency at the JRS-West Africa Centre in Cameroon among the refugees from Central Africa Republic.



Frequently women are the breadwinners, responsible for the family.

### Value the family

I have seen in many villages that the grandparents are revered. Their presence is seen to be essential for the young ones to learn life. The fathers and the mothers exemplify virtues. The children begin to build their world of love in an ambience of loving relations in a family. Sometimes they bury the dead in front of the houses. They think death is an extension of life and so even the dead elders are always part of the loving family. The culture of 'homes for the aged' and 'orphaned children' is alien to them.

### Don't lose hope

Thousands in Africa are forced to leave their homes and flee because of war or famine. Since home is so important to them, having to leave home is like dying. Refugees who are forced to flee leave half their lives behind. And yet they cope. As I lived through the war in Central African Republic I once saw a group of five people. An elderly woman with her granddaughter, a woman with a baby tied to her back, and another man carrying a suit case on his head... They didn't know where they could go, but they



kept walking. It is to help such people that the JRS works in such difficult places. I feel happy to be part of its mission to provide hope to people facing horrendous tragedies.

### Spurn war

War is, of course, hazardous, but the aftermath of war is more hazardous. If you want to see how the cruel realities force even good people to give up their values and be ready to do anything just to survive, you should come to Africa. After a serious crisis the only zoo in the capital city of an African country was emptied, as the people had nothing else to eat except those animals. Boys forced to live on the streets are sexually abused by rebels. You wonder how some men could be so cruel to their fellow humans. That is the effect of war and deprivation. It brutalises them.

# GREEN COVER



## AADI Gramotsav – 2016, Attapady

Attapady was a tropical forest paradise in the Western Ghats of North Kerala. Densely covered by huge tropical trees the place was home for abundant wild animals - elephants and tigers, monkeys and birds, and a scattering of Adivasis who lived in harmony and lived on the bounty of the exuberant forests. This was till some 60-80years ago. After that, the influx of people from the plains to grab the virgin forests of Attapadi and plunder her wealth for “development” violated the pristine way of life of all creation there.

The Kerala Jesuits got involved in the development of Attapadi Adivasis. They set up the Attapady Adivasi Development Initiatives (AADI) in 1998. They realized that the Adivasi community lived a holistic life – integrating their life style with their habitat - their culture, religion, livelihood, relationships, hunting/agriculture, ‘education’, health etc... AADI tried to support their development, incorporating all that could be preserved and incorporated from their traditional way of life.

Gramotsav helps the Adivasis to learn about their space in India today, and ‘Aattampattam’ celebrates their cultural exuberance. The two-day AADI Gramotsav-2016 began with the ‘Moopan’ (Village Elder) performing ‘Gothrapooja’ - a spiritual beginning.

First day had a seminar on two topics: 1) PESA - Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 and its implications for Attapady Adivasis 2) the effects of Alcoholism. AADI’s scientific study on alcoholism was presented and well appreciated by all. Second day was fun and celebrations. We honored the Moopans, and four Adivasi boys who secured full A+ in all the subjects in the SSLC exam. Adivasi song competition, Elocution in Adivasi language, painting competition and Aattampattam were some of the highlights.

Our Gramotsavis a four-year old Adivasi ‘alternative festival’. Instead of the commercial, competitive, exhibitivite, exploitative, distractive and sometimes violent jamborees, our Gramotsav is grounded in Adivasi culture, ethos and spirituality. It is a celebration of their life in the bosom of Mother Earth who brought them to existence and nurtured them with her abundance. Pope Francis in his *Laudato Si* invites us to share the celebration with all God’s Creation. The AADI Gramotsav highlights the Adivasi way to live in harmony with all our “Brothers and Sisters” in God’s Creation. It is an invitation to seek, find and live the esthetic knowledge and creative wisdom of the beauty of our Mother Earth.

- P.S. Antony, SJ



# MOMENTS



"Never, no, never did Nature say one thing  
and Wisdom say another."

- *Edmund Burke*