

JIVAN

News and Views of Jesuits in India

May-June 2015



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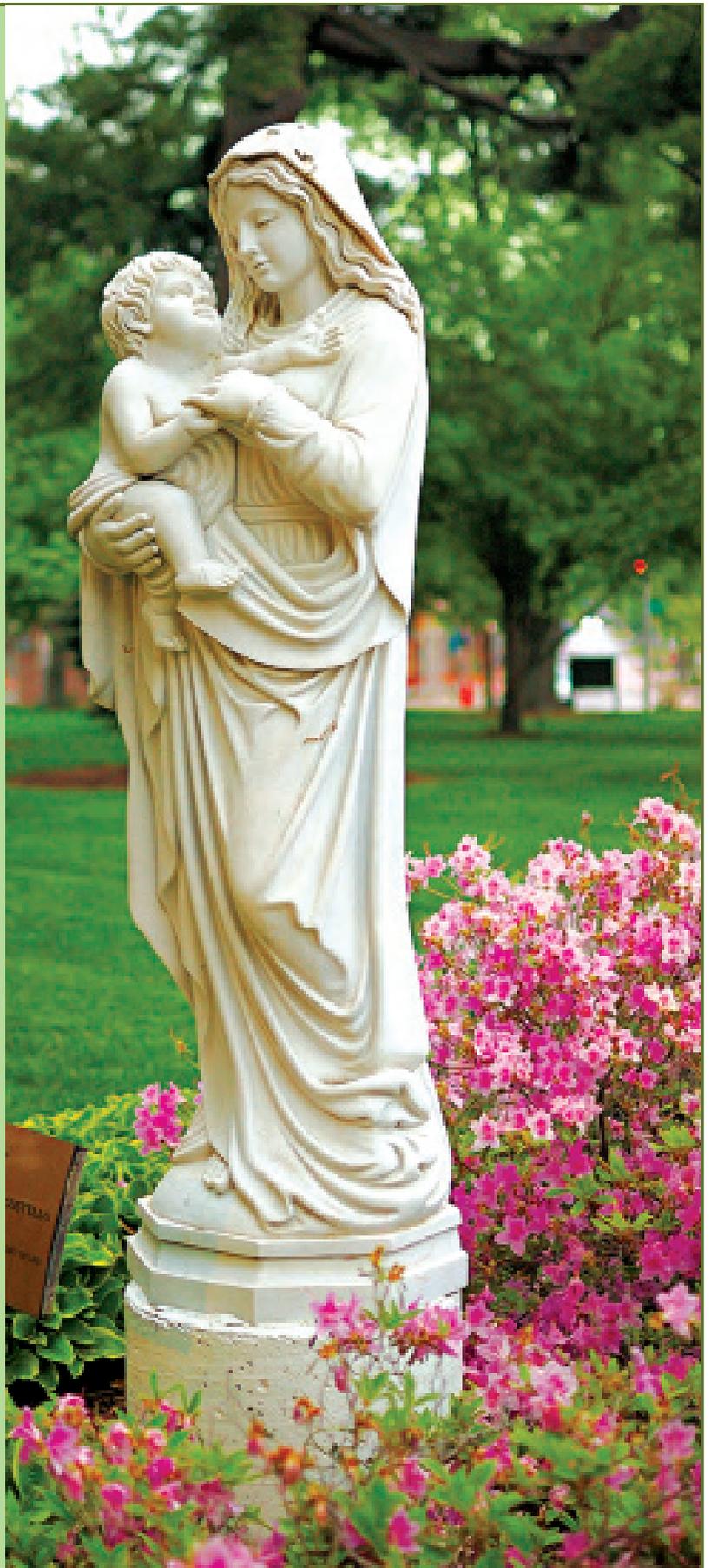
Healthcare
to Nepal villages

The May Magnificat

BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

*May is Mary's month, and I
Muse at that and wonder why:
Her feasts follow reason,
Dated due to season-
Candlemas, Lady Day:
But the Lady Month, May,
Why fasten that upon her,
With a feasting in her honor?
Ask of her, the mighty mother:
Her reply puts this other
Question: What is Spring?
Growth in every thing-
All things rising, all things sizing
Mary sees, sympathizing
With that world of good,
Nature's motherhood.
Well but there was more than this:
Spring's universal bliss
Much, had much to say
To offering Mary May.*

Courtesy: <http://campus.udayton.edu>



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This is something that has never happened before. But, thankfully, I am not the only one affected. From what I hear quite a few, among Jesuits and others, seem to have caught it. I seem to want to read anything that is out there on an individual. The individual is someone whom James Martin, SJ, the well-known American Jesuit writer, talks about in his interview (*see p.11 - 13*). He answers the question why the world media seem to be so taken up with a 78-year-old Jesuit, elected the Pope two years ago.

So when I saw recently in the internet an article titled, '5 Things I Learned from Meeting the Pope' I felt I had to read it. The author is Jared Brock, a Christian - not a Catholic - who wanted to end his prayer-pilgrimage across the world with meeting Pope Francis. He lists the five lessons he learnt from Pope Francis after he and his wife, Michelle, spent a "few hours in the Vatican with Pope Francis" that "were exciting, brilliant, and humbling."

As I think these lessons will be useful to all of us, and especially to all leaders - bishops, provincials, superiors and heads of institutions, let me share what Brock calls "five of those life lessons I learned from Pope Francis."

1. *Be willing to say yes.* The pope's personal aide told me that he receives over 40,000 faxes per year. He could have easily said no to my request, but he didn't. I asked why he said yes, and he explained that he cared about the work I was doing, and that he always tries to stay in touch with "real people" from the outside world. It reminded me to be always willing to meet new people - to get outside my comfort zone and cultivate real relationships.

2. *Check your confidence.* The pope was very friendly, and he maintained steady eye contact. You got the sense that he was both steadfast and comfortable, despite us being strangers who spoke a different language. But you could tell that his demeanor wasn't self-confidence - it was an assurance won by decades of placing his confidence in God.

3. *Stay humble in your calling.* As a gift, the pope gave me a rosary in a small red box. The lid was stamped with the papal insignia. The motto he picked read, "Lowly but chosen." It reminded me that I'm not better than anyone else and that I

need to stay humble no matter what God calls me to do.

4. *Don't be flashy.* We ate lunch in the cafeteria, and it wasn't fancy. If anything, it was decidedly 1990s. The food was okay - not bad, not brilliant. It reminded me of the Proverb, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." Even if we do receive wealth in this world, we should see it as an opportunity for stewardship and use it to help others.

5. *Recognize your need for help.* Twice during our conversation, the pope asked me to pray for him. It was so inspirational to see the spiritual leader of a billion-person faith realizing his deep need for a power higher than himself. It reminded me that I, too, need to rely on God instead of myself." (www.faithstreet.com)

It is not easy to be a leader today. Even very good people find it extremely hard to bear the burdens a leader has to shoulder today. Leaders have their headaches, as they have to worry and work, wracking their brains to find solutions for problems created by people without values, ethics or abilities. They have also heartaches, as they become the objects of resentment and hostility, and so harsh criticism and even slander. It is lonely at the top, as they say.

But since they aspire to be, or at least, accept to be leaders, they will have to find ways to keep all these headaches and heartaches at bay and make sure that these do not affect the way they interact with people. They will have to be careful how they deal with everyone they meet. And they have to meet so many.

In spite of all these hassles Pope Francis seems to make a lasting impression on people he meets. Jared Brock writes that these lessons will stay with him all his life. That is a remarkable achievement, isn't it?

Maya Angelou, the perceptive American poet who died last year, said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

What might help all leaders to emulate Francis is to remember they are 'lowly but chosen', or the other way around: 'chosen, yes, but lowly.' - **M.A.J.A.**



The Challenges before GC 36

BY MICHAEL AMALADOSS, SJ

GC and Vatican II:

The Society of Jesus has had five general congregations (31-35) in about less than 50 years and we are now getting ready for the 6th (36). This period coincides, more or less, with the time of and after the Second Vatican Council. In this context, the Council can teach us a lesson. Great theologians like Hans Kung have written about the need of a Third Vatican Council. My reaction to such a proposal is that such a Council would be premature, since we have not yet absorbed the Second and it has not brought about any radical transformation in the Church. The Church seems to be becoming less significant to most Christians in the 'post-Christian' world of Euro-America. The recent Popes have been speaking about the need for a re-evangelization. The great

GC 32 and 34

GC 32 took up the challenge of the Council to renew religious life to meet the challenges of the 20th-21st centuries. Like some other Congregations we did not touch our Constitutions. But its implications for today were spelt out in its decrees both with regard to our mission and our way of life. With regard to mission, a 'faith that does justice' became our slogan. Fr Arrupe wanted an evaluation of all our apostolates. In spite of his charismatic personality, tensions between Jesuits who wanted to promote justice understood in terms of a 'Marxist' approach and analysis and others who favoured more traditional methods of assisting the poor surfaced in the Society and even divided it in places. The desire on the part of many to abolish 'degrees' in the Society also met resistance. Fr Arrupe, personally, and the Society paid for these tensions through events that I need not go into.

GC 34, coming after this period, re-envisioned mission as a three-fold dialogue of the gospel with the poor, the cultures and the religions. GCs 32 and 34 between them have produced a comprehensive list of documents covering every aspect of the Society's life and mission. Besides the general decrees on our mission and our identity, there were decrees on most of our apostolates, including the parish ministry and ecology, the three vows and even a much appreciated and welcome decree on women. CG 35 insisted on inter-provincial collaboration and brought out a felicitous phrase: "a fire that kindles other fires". Geographic and apostolic areas that require our concern as a priority were listed both by CG 34 and 35.

GC 34 went on to list 8 ways in which we can show our solidarity with women. But when I look around our country I do not see anything happening.



pushes of the Council for inculturation (Constitutions on the Liturgy and on the Church in the Modern World), for interreligious dialogue (Documents on the Other Religions and on Religious Freedom), for the primacy of the People of God and collegiality (Constitution on the Church) still remain unfulfilled. Some even speak of a push back. The Council has to be rediscovered and implemented. Something similar, though not fully, can be said about our General Congregations.

As we prepare for GC 36, the question to ask ourselves is "Do we need new documents and orientations?" Should we rather look back on the last 40 years (GC 32-36), see how the directions have been implemented, evaluate and make a course correction, if necessary? It is true that the globalizing world is changing rapidly. But the basic sinful tendencies that St Ignatius pointed out in the contemplation on the Two Standards – love for riches and honours and pride – have not changed. Capitalism has not disappeared, but socialism as an organized force has. The poor are still with us, perhaps more of them and in new forms like refugees, internally displaced people and migrants. While violent revolutionary agitations have disappeared pointing to the importance of non-violent peoples' movements, violence in general has increased, involving also religion. Pope Francis speaks of an undeclared third world war that is going on in many forms and in many places, but networked in unseen ways. Peace is nowhere in sight!

What should we do then? I would like to offer a few reflections. I would limit my remarks to the Indian situation (of the Church and the Society) with which I am more familiar, though keeping in mind the global scene.

An Integral View of Mission

The option for the poor and for the promotion of justice as a way of living our faith proposed by GC 32 was widely welcomed both by the Jesuits and by many others – religious, ecclesiastics and people - in the Church. But there were differences in the way

in the driving seat. We have to change people’s minds and value systems: the way they look at other people, at the role of wealth in the community, at the manner of building community by removing various economic, social and political inequalities. Economics pursues profit and politics hunts for power. Only cultural and religious change can transform people’s minds, their value systems and attitudes. This was the approach of the three-fold dialogue of the gospel with the poor, the cultures and the religions proposed

our mission has not yet been understood and interiorized by us and has not transformed our ministries. We do a lot of work for the poor. Our educational institutions, result- oriented, help the poor to succeed in the job market. Our pastoral ministry is directed to bring people to the sacraments. Our spiritual ministry is directed to the elite, mostly to heal their psychological problems. Personal and social transformation is not our conscious goal. I wonder how many of us, Jesuits, are transformed in this way. Fr. Arrupe had said:

In a multi-religious country like India where Christians are in a minority of 2.3% we have to work also with members of other religions. Maybe, we should abandon the term ‘laity’ and speak simply of ‘people’!



that it was understood. I think that the predominant understanding was that of the then dominant theology of liberation which based itself on a Marxist analysis of society and proposed a confrontational class struggle. The Jesuits were not alone in this. Everybody agreed that it is not enough to cater to the needs of the poor, but that the structures that make people poor have to be changed. The revolutionary model, not excluding necessary violence, was the most visible in the field. Non-violent methods, using people’s power, had been used by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela in the political sphere. No one had pioneered a similar effort in the economic and social spheres. What people ignored was that it was not enough to attempt to change the political structures, putting the leaders of the proletariat

by the FABC and picked up by GC 34. Decree 2 of GC 34 said:

The aim of our mission (the service of faith) and its integrating principle (faith directed towards 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. (15)... If our faith is directed towards God and his justice in the world, this justice cannot be achieved without, at the same time, attending to the cultural dimensions of social life and the way in which a particular culture defines itself with regard to religious transcendence. (18)

Transforming Society

I suggest that this integral vision of

It is a fact that we can hardly serve the poor if we do not have real contact with them and enough actual experience of their life. Still, it is equally true, for that very goal of promoting justice and serving the poor, we need to collaborate with other people besides the poor. We must have contact with those who exert influence on social structures or who have the power to bring about social change. (*A Letter on the Intellectual Apostolate*, Dec. 25, 1976.) According to St. Ignatius, we must give preference to people and places capable of multiplying our work for others. He gives these examples: “princes and rulers, magistrates and administrators of justice, people who are outstanding in literature

or authority.” My question is: who are these multipliers, these influential people, these “magistrates and princes” of today? Are they, for example, politicians, trade union leaders, youth leaders, influential thinkers, scientists affecting the course of history, those who control the mass media? (*Final Address to the Congregation of Procurators, Oct. 5, 1978, No.12*)

While reaching out to the poor what have we done or doing to transform culture and society? How are we reaching out to those who can lead such transformation? Inculturation, promoted by the Second Vatican Council, understood narrowly as indigenization, has been successfully controlled and even blocked by the central authority in the Church in areas like the Liturgy, though we have enjoyed some freedom and initiative in the promotion of Indian Christian spirituality and theology. Our socio-cultural life has been inculturated thanks to De Nobili. Inter-religious dialogue has been seen more as a means of proclamation of the gospel than as

the area of Evangelization either. Pope Francis has said that we should focus on attraction rather than on proselytism. The only area in which some initiative has been shown is the area of the option for the poor and the struggle for justice. So, can we say that, after GCs 32 and 34, we are not really involved in mission in an integral sense? While we do try to reach out to the poor we do nothing to transform society in any meaningful way, dialoguing with cultures and religions and reaching out to change-makers in society.

Missionary Transformation

How efficiently we accomplish our mission depends on how good we are as missionaries. How prepared are we for our mission collectively and individually? I am convinced that we do not lack talent. We are also proud to say that we are still having many vocations and we are the biggest Assistancy in the Society. Our educational institutions and our social centres are competently run. But beyond this what is our influence? Are we more busy with maintenance than mission? Are we focused on multiplying institutions rather than making them

Concretizing our Focus: Ecology

I think that CG 36 should refrain from formulating new documents and orientations and focus on the proper implementation of the orientations given by CGs 32-35. There are, however, a few areas that we need to sharpen and operationalize. I shall mention three.

The first is ecology. Of course, everyone is talking about it these days. The Society itself has a new Secretariat partly focusing on this. Many people, especially in the First World, seem to be interested in the preservation and protection of creation in view of improving the quality of life. This is certainly necessary. But I think that we should also see it as a question of justice. It is often said, for instance, that 20% of the humans in the world consume 80% of its resources. In such a situation it may happen that the 20% seek to control the consumption of the remaining 80%, impoverishing them further in order to promote the quality of their own lives. Such an approach may drive their policy orientations governing production, consumption and

The Society has done much better than the Church in living global diversity. This should be further encouraged so that we do not become victims of globalizing uniformity and superficiality.



collaboration in the promotion of the Kingdom of God. But not much is being done to promote dialogue either by the Church or by the Society in India, apart from a few individuals here and there. There are no substantial initiatives in

agents of socio-cultural change? Are our institutions becoming more minority institutions than mission institutions? How appropriate is our formation to prepare Jesuits to meet the challenges of mission as spelt out by CGs 32-35?

trade of consumer goods. Under these circumstances, ecology becomes an issue of justice and becomes very much a part of the Society's commitment to the defense of the poor and the promotion of justice in the world.

Prioritizing the People, especially the Women

The second issue is our relation to the People, often called the Laity. First of all, we must realize that the Church is primarily the People of God at whose service there are ministers and these include also the apostolic religious. Pope Francis has been emphasizing this. Our perspective then must be our collaborating with the People than their collaborating with us. If we put ourselves at the centre, then the need for collaboration will come from our reducing numbers. But if our focus is on the People then we will be at their service in their task of building the Kingdom of God as a community of freedom, fellowship and justice. Our

would be the ideal of democracy which is centred on the people. This would be a particular challenge for us. Strengthening our contact with our Alumni would be one way. Our aim should not merely be to get them to help us in our institutions, but also to help them to assume their responsibility in the civic sphere. The Alumni network can be a source of strength and support for any concerted action in the public arena. Let us recall the plea of Arrupe which I have quoted above. This can be an appropriate topic for reflection and action in view of developing new apostolic ventures or in reshaping existing ones. Obviously we must pay particular attention to the youth.

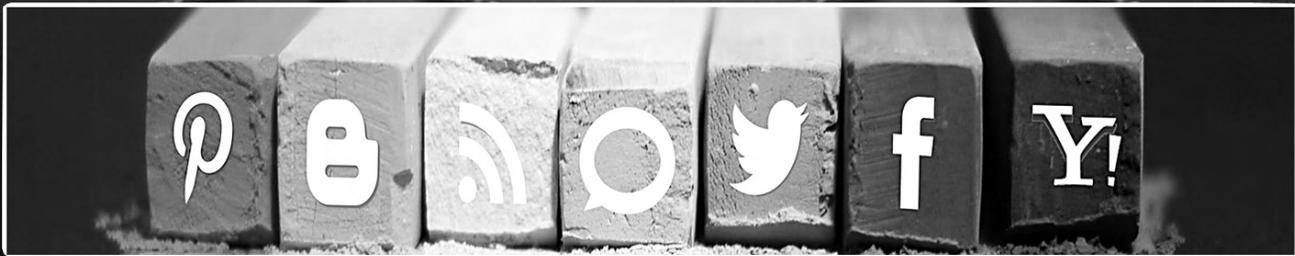
50% of the People are women. GC

how much the mentality and attitudes of men and also of women need to be changed. Once again we do not need any new orientations and directives, but directives for implementation.

Personal and Community Transformation

Thirdly, GC 36 can also be an occasion to insist on a renewal of our charism as religious. We celebrated the second centenary of the Society's restoration this year. We will be in the midst of a special year of Consecrated Life when the General Congregation will be meeting. The Pope has asked the Religious to 'wake up the world'. He has specifically addressed us a couple of times recently. A brief exhortation for personal and community renewal

GC should recall to the Jesuits the importance of the digital and social media today.



interest in them will not be merely in meeting their spiritual and sacramental needs, but in encouraging their life and work in the world. Can many of our educational and social institutions be run equally, if not more, efficiently by the People? If we think that they are not ready, have we failed in preparing and empowering them? The AICUF is nearly dead. The 'Christian Life Community' (CLC) may be suggested as a means of training the People. It is not very active in India. Besides, in a multi-religious country like India where the Christians are in a minority of 2.3% we have to work also with members of other religions. Maybe, we should abandon the term 'laity' and speak simply of 'people'!

The basis for such collaboration

36 could attend to Jesuits relating to and collaboration with women in view of mission. When GC 34 published its decree on Women it was widely welcomed, especially by women. The Congregation called us to move away from clericalism and to appreciate women's contribution to our ministry, to listen to them and to align ourselves in solidarity with them. GC 34 went on to list 8 ways in which we can show this solidarity. (13) But when I look around our country I do not see anything happening, except for the fact that many of our higher educational institutions have become co-educational and also have many women on the staff. We should know how much women in India need to be liberated from a variety of traditional practices and

of ourselves as Religious by the GC may be appropriate. The Pope has insisted on the *prophetic charism* of the Religious. Our option for the poor and for justice at GC 32 had a prophetic ring and impact, especially among other Religious. What are the 'peripheries' towards which the Pope is asking us to go? Popes St. John Paul VI, Benedict XVI and Francis have been asking us to be at the 'frontiers'. These frontiers are intellectual, missionary and also the 'peripheries' – the poor, the marginalized.

The Pope has also been stressing repeatedly the need for *discernment*, which means looking at our context and listening to God. We do not operate on the basis of general principles or ideologies that are universally and

ever valid. We are called to heed the promptings of the Spirit in particular situations. But how much of real discernment is practiced among us today? Pope Francis has also spoken of *bravery* and more repeatedly of *humility*. Addressing the Jesuits on the feast of St Ignatius in 2013 he even mentioned the 'shame' of *not measuring up* to the centre and model of our lives, namely *Jesus*. He insists on *joy and communion in community*. We could also usefully meditate on the *15 diseases* which he listed when he spoke of to the members of the Vatican curia. Fr Adolfo Nicolas, our General, has often insisted on the need for *depth* in the face of the globalization of superficiality and mediocrity. GC 36 could therefore inspire us by refocusing on our religious charism and identity in view of our mission in the 21st century.

In order to change, not merely structures, but people (including ourselves) and humanize them from being mechanized consumers we need to *promote spirituality*. We, religious, are supposed to be, not only prophets, but mystics. Ignatian mysticism is, of course, service oriented, finding God in all things and peoples. Do we have this *mystic eye*? It is not enough to promote sacramental and popular religious practices. Adolfo Nicolas often speaks of depth in an atmosphere of the globalization of superficiality. We have the tools of Ignatian spirituality with us. We are still struggling to start a national centre of Ignatian spirituality. Our retreat centres are mostly used by other religious. Do we have something suited to life in the modern world to propose to them? We had Tony De Mello. There are persons like Sebastian Painadath, who seek to integrate Christian and Indian spiritualities. Where are the other experts? What and how can we contribute from the spiritual riches of our country?

Inter-Provincial Collaboration

Already GC 34 spoke of inter-provincial and supra-provincial cooperation. GC 35 had reiterated it.

We can say that, unlike the Church at the moment which Pope Francis is trying to decentralize, the Society is more collegial and aware and respectful of diversity, in spite of our monarchical framework of authority. Various structures and programmes of collaboration have also been launched. GC 36 needs to encourage further such movement and provide more precise guidelines, if necessary.

Pluralism

There has been some concern, expressed on the occasion of the recent Congregations, about the demographic shift that is taking place in the Society with the Jesuits from the Third World, especially Asia and Africa, becoming more numerous. GC 36 could be an occasion when this change is accepted positively and celebrated. Pluralism in reflections, orientations, ministries and methods will have to be accepted. The Jesuits in the Third World have to be open to their cultures and their futures. So they should not be expected to follow in the footsteps of those of the First World. Analysis of situations, identification of problems, proposal of solutions and discernment for action will also have to be pluralistic, depending on the context.

Our international collaboration would be more like harmony with an interplay of melodies as in counterpoint than single melodies sung in unison as in Gregorian music. The Society in the Third World will have to be recognized as different in its many contexts and cultures and encouraged and empowered in appropriate ways. As of now, the younger Jesuits from the Third World may not have been trained sufficiently in important areas like spirituality and theology that contribute to our apostolate. We should also keep in mind the rich Indian (Asian) cultural and spiritual identity. We hear often of projects of collaboration at the global level. But if we start looking for Jesuits from the Third World specially trained in these areas to participate in them we will be

looking in vain. In India, for instance, though we have about 4000 Jesuits we have no one who is specialized in the Institute, in the Spiritual Exercises. People who reflect seriously and write on mission and religious life are not many. Our scholars, including theologians, are not productive. In India, for instance, after GC32 inculturation was promoted by programmes of formation that were contextualized in local languages and cultures. But now there seems to be a 'going back', scholastics being sent for basic philosophical and theological formation abroad, as if there is only one philosophical and theological system in the world. A number of regional theologates that were creating and promoting contextual theologies are closing down. The spirit in which they were founded is ignored. Perhaps GC 36 can set up structures through which such contextualized and inculturated formation will be systematically promoted. The 'world' of the Church still remains Euro-centric. Pope Francis is trying to change that. The Society has done much better than the Church in living global diversity. This should be further encouraged so that we do not become victims of globalizing uniformity and superficiality.

Media: My final suggestion is that the GC should recall to the Jesuits the importance of the digital and social media today. The Jesuits in the Third World may be a little behind in the use of such media in the service of mission, in spite of the technical advantages that Asians seems to have in the area. The GC could also be an occasion for setting up international networks of such media. I am sure that the service of professional people – young ones with imagination and creativity – can be used for our own missionary goals focused on the Kingdom of God to which all are invited. ■

Fr Michael Amaladoss, SJ, a former General Assistant, is now Director, Institute of Dialogue with Cultures and Religions, Loyola, Chennai. He can be contacted at: michamal@gmail.com

BY ANTONY PUTHUMATTATHIL, SJ

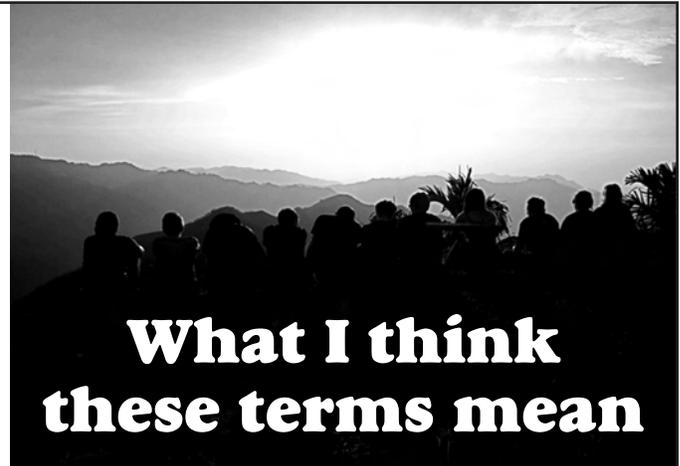
This is an attempt to share with the readers of *Jivan* the way I have come to understand - through prayer and reflection - some of the traditional terms that we use so often. Let me share this as I hope it will be of some use to others.

Charism & Spirituality: A *charism* is God's gratuitous gift to a sincere devotee; it is a deeply enlightening and transforming God-experience received by an individual. Eventually, it is shared by his followers for the service of faith: to promote God's love, justice and peace in the world.

From a charism derives a *spirituality*, a way of life, an *institute*, a *vision* and *mission*. Revisiting the charism along with a deeper understanding of the *context* provides renewal, relevance and dynamism to institutional structures. This is '*creative fidelity*,' necessary for any spirituality, way of life, and institute to continue to be relevant.

The essence of Ignatian spirituality, as summarized, in a word, by late Fr M. Dellard, is *devotion*. According to him, it is both an enduring experience of God's revelation and human response to the same. Ignatius experienced God working ceaselessly as He loves, justifies, and glorifies humans and the entire universe; and hence, his response to God is a loving reverence and surrender. This is devotion. For Ignatius, the world, and all that are in it, manifest God's love; hence, the world is essentially sacramental (symbolic of God's love). Ignatius arrived at such an understanding of God, the world and himself by carefully observing his interior movements while he encountered God's revelation in the Incarnate Crucified Risen Son (ICRS), God's Word (love/ wisdom) made flesh (Jn 1:14).

Jesus & Kingdom of God: Jesus reinterpreted the Torah to come to a renewed understanding of God based on his experience of God as Abba, a loving father (Mt 3:13-17; 17:1-8; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:32-46). This made him challenge the Jewish image of God as a 'righteous judge.' This not only brought him stiff opposition, but also rejection and death (Lk 4:16-30). Jesus invited all kinds of people to enter into the Kingdom of God, an ongoing process of conversion already and primarily manifest in himself. He said, "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the good news" (Mk 1:15) of God's unconditional love, peace, security and safety. The word '*repent*' means an active response from humans to believe in God's love and so let go and let God



What I think these terms mean

rule (reign) his/her life and thus to enter into the Kingdom experience.

This is an invitation to enter into an ongoing and genuine experience of *conversion*; it enables one not only to shed one's prejudices and defense mechanisms but also to qualitatively transform his behavior patterns, relationships and structures.

Kingdom community & the least: This is an experience of a new heaven and a new earth, which would eventually result in a *Kingdom community* that lives out counter-cultural values as in the Acts of the Apostles 4:32-35. Such a community is founded on Jesus' love commandment: love of God (a deeper God-experience, interiority and solitude) and a deeper love for one's neighbors, all those in need (a deeper Man-concern, a more just and loving interpersonal relationships) (Lk 25: 25-41; Mk 12:28-34; Mt 22:34-40). A sincere and conscious practice of this commandment must enable a community to have a *preferential option for the least*, deprived and less favored. Such a community would practice a discerning love that will be the basis of all laws (1 Jn 4:7-16).

Ignatian Charism & Jesuit Spirituality: Ignatius realized his charism by a careful analysis of his interior movements - consolations and desolations. He undertook this pursuit as he personally encountered the ICRS and relentlessly followed him. A Jesuit, by making the Spiritual Exercises (SE), shares in the same charism as he enters into a continuous process of personal conversion. This involves experiencing God as Abba and surrendering oneself to be molded by His love to become more loving, just, compassionate, and understanding in his relationships.

Fr Antony Puthumattathil, SJ, works at Bagaicha, a centre for social apostolate of the central zone provinces, in Ranchi.

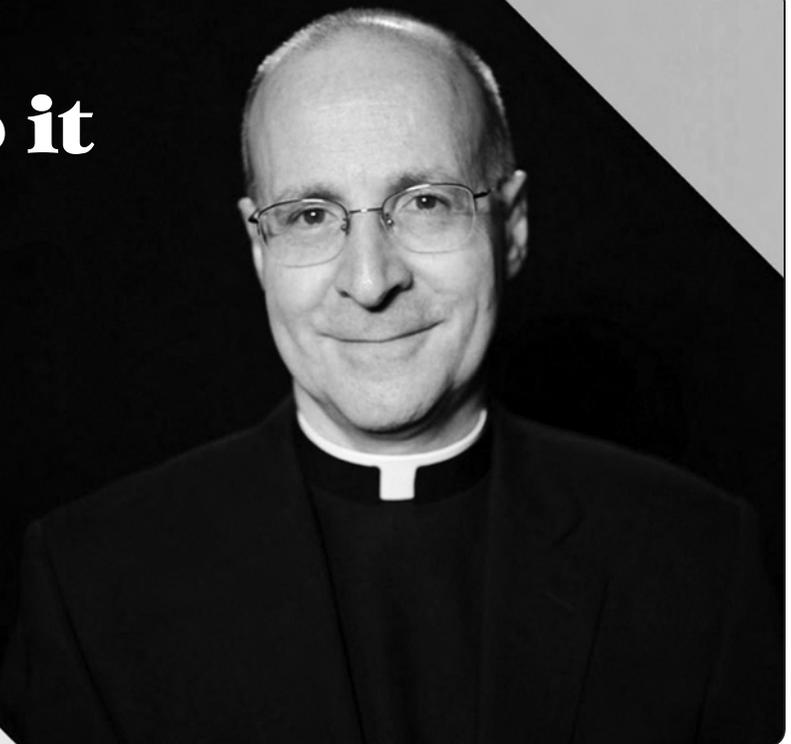
James Martin, SJ, Editor at large of the Jesuit magazine *America*, is a prolific writer and has given several commencement speeches in various Universities in the U.S. He addressed recently the faculty, staff and students of Santa Clara University, California and shared his personal experiences in the Holy Land. Martin's famous books include the bestsellers: *My Life with the Saints* (2006), *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* (2014), *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* (2010). His deep love for the universal Society prompted him to grant an exclusive interview to Jivan and open his heart to John Rose, SJ, our Jivan Correspondent in California, U.S.:

For my university studies, I went to the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. I did that mainly because my family was not terribly wealthy, and so I knew that I needed to earn a living after graduation. Plus, I wasn't exactly sure what else to do! After graduation, I took a job at General Electric Co. in New York City, working in finance and accounting, and later moved with GE to Connecticut, a few miles north of New York City. After a few years, it dawned me that I was in the wrong place. Business is a real vocation for many people, including many of my friends, but it wasn't for me. It just wasn't a good "fit." Gradually I started to ask myself the question that I should have asked years before: What did I want to do? And who did I want to become?

One night, I turned on the television and saw a documentary about the American Trappist monk and writer Thomas Merton. The

**“Yes, I’d do it
all over
again!”**

**Interview with
James Martin, SJ**



Would you like to share the story of your vocation to the Jesuits? What attracted you to join this ‘least Society’?

Unlike many other American Jesuits, I knew absolutely nothing about the Society of Jesus when I was growing up. And I also wasn't raised in a very religious family. We were Catholics, of course, but we never went to daily Mass, never said the Rosary together, and almost never talked about God in our house. The only times we said grace at meals, in fact, was at Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving. Also, I didn't attend any Catholic schools as a boy or a young adult.

documentary was so interesting that it prompted me to track down and read his book, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, which moved me to think about the priesthood and religious life. Of course, as I said, I knew no priests and no religious, but the life he described in his book—religious life—seem so beautiful, certainly more beautiful than the life I was leading. Eventually, I asked my parish priest about becoming a priest. And he said—in words I remember today—“You should talk to the local diocesan vocation office. And you might as well talk to the Jesuits at Fairfield University.” Fairfield was just a few miles away from where I was living.

As soon as I met my first Jesuit I knew that this was what I wanted. The vocation director seemed so down-to-earth and friendly and normal. At the beginning, Jesuits appealed to me more for what they *did*: that is, you could be a priest or a brother as well as a teacher, as well as a spiritual director, as well as a social worker, as well as a scholar, and so on. In time, I

realized that the Jesuit vocation is more about who you are than what you do. But I felt at home with them. It took me two years to find the grace to make the decision to leave my job, but once I did, I realized it was the best decision ever made. And I still think that.

Your book – *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* – is so popular in the U.S. Could you share with *Jivan* readers who Jesus is for you?

Whenever I hear that question I am reminded of something that Pedro Arrupe, SJ, once said. He was asked “Who is Jesus for you?” And he said, “For me, Jesus is everything!”

That’s true for me too: Jesus Christ is the center of my life. He is the reason I do everything that I do. But I think I understand how the question is meant. For me, I think of Jesus in two main ways: as friend and as liberator. Friend, of course, comes to the mind of probably every Jesuit when he thinks about Jesus, and the image is present in the Spiritual Exercises (as when we are told to speak with him familiarly “as one friend speaks to another.”) That’s perhaps the primary way in which I relate to Jesus in prayer: as my friend, and as a friend who is a very good listener!

Liberator is also a very important image for me. Jesus is the one who invites us to let go of anything that keeps us unfree, who encourages us to discard our “disordered attachments,” and who moves us into greater openness, wholeness and freedom. I often think of this in terms of the healing miracles, for example, Jesus healing the Gerasene demoniac: he is healing the man of something that has kept him bound. As he does for us in so many ways. So the image of “Christ the Liberator” is a powerful one.

What are the ways the Spiritual Exercises helped you grow in the love of Jesus?

That’s quite difficult to put into words! Perhaps it’s best to say that

the Spiritual Exercises, as well as the general way of praying “composition of place” or “Ignatian contemplation,” has helped me to encounter Jesus in the most profound way possible. Through some very intense experiences of placing myself in the Gospel passages in prayer, I feel that I’ve met Jesus one-on-one. I’ve heard his voice. I have felt his call. So, as all Jesuits know, encountering him in the Exercises is almost like encountering him as if you were in first-century Palestine. The most intense experiences of Christ in my life have come either through the Exercises, on my annual retreats or in praying in the manner suggested by Ignatius in the Exercises. As I said, it’s very hard to put into words!

How is the “Jesus of history” important to Jesuits?

Knowing as much as we can about the “Jesus of history,” that is, the man who walked the earth in first-century Palestine is essential. Of course it’s equally important to encounter the “Christ of faith,” the one who has truly risen and is alive through the Spirit. But the real-life man, who lived an actual human life in a particular place, must be explored. Books and articles the focus simply on the Christ of faith may tempt us to deny the fact that Jesus was fully human. He experienced all the same things we do—except sin of course. That means he had a body like yours and mine, he got tired, he got sick. He felt human emotions, like joy and anger. He was fully human in all ways.

Studying the Jesus of history—looking at sociological studies about his times, understanding Jewish religious practices and customs in the first century, and even looking at what archeological finds can tell us—helps us know as much as we can about his life in first-century Galilee and Judea. And this is crucial. If we don’t know much about what life was like in those times, how can we hope to understand him better? Take the Parable of the Talents.

If you know that a “talent” was a huge sum of money at the time—equivalent to 15 years of daily wages!—you’ll have a better understanding of the parable and, therefore, of what Jesus was trying to say. Understanding his historical life and times helps us understand him. And why would we not want to understand him as best we can?

As a media person, could you tell us why media are giving so much attention to Pope Francis?

The media is captivated by Pope Francis. There are, I would suggest, a number of reasons for this.

First, the Pope is authentic and transparent. This is not to say that previous popes were not authentic or transparent, but there is an authenticity and transparency in Francis that many people find especially attractive. In the United States we have the expression “What you see is what you get.” There seems to be almost no artifice around him.

Second, members of the media are quite taken by his simplicity. His moving out of the Apostolic Palace, his not wearing the red shoes of his predecessors, his driving around Vatican City in a small car: these are gestures that telegraph a simple lifestyle. (As befits a Jesuit, by the way!)

Third, Pope Francis also has a great common touch. Some of the most meaningful gestures of his papacy have been his embrace of people, for example, the man with a severe skin condition in St. Peter’s Square. And, by the way, those gestures are supremely visual, which means it translates well into visual images on television and the web, which makes the media’s job easier.

Finally, at least in the West, the media tends to be more comfortable with change, and the pope is seen, rightly or wrongly, as an agent of change. I always hasten to remind the media that he has not changed doctrine one bit. Let me say that I hope that Catholics are happy that the media likes

him. After all, we've been complaining that media doesn't like us, so this is a step in the right direction. And the media influences how others see him, and see the church, and see God. So this is all to the good.

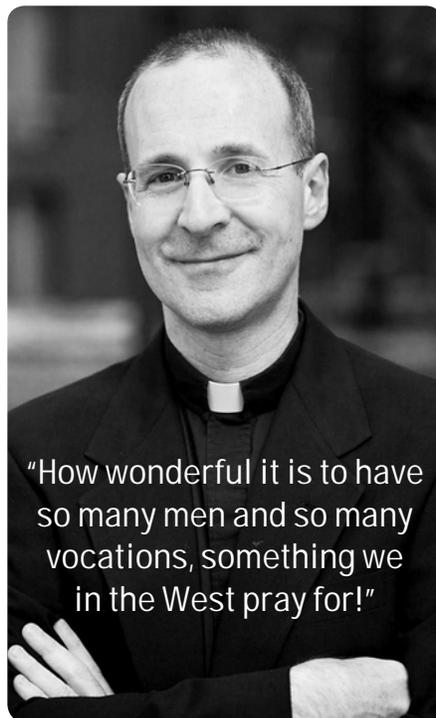
Is it true that even Methodists, Presbyterians and other Protestant groups are so fond of him?

It is an amazing phenomenon. Even atheists say to me, "I love this Pope!" They are probably responding to the same things the media is responding to: his authenticity and transparency; his simplicity; his common touch; and the sense that he is open to change. But there's something deeper going on. I think he is a very holy person. And holiness is naturally attractive. Holiness attracts us to God. And so this is one way that God is at work, one way that God draws us to God. Holiness is attractive, it attracts us to the holy man or woman, and then we are invited into a deeper relationship with God. So that lies behind some of the fondness and appeal. It's one way that God works.

Some professors at Santa Clara University call Pope Francis 'an Ignatian hybrid.' Any comments on that?

That's an interesting comment. Perhaps they mean that he is a kind of hybrid of Franciscan sensibility (with his love of the poor and his taking the name of St. Francis of Assisi) and his well-known Jesuit background. Surely I see a lot of the Ignatian spirit in him. He is, I would say, a "Man of the Exercises." Very free. Free enough to hew to the traditions but also to let go of some of the nonessentials. So, for example, as I mentioned, he has moved out of the Apostolic Palace, doesn't wear the red shoes, and, more deeply, is approaching the question of synods in the church in a new way. He also governs like a Jesuit. All Jesuits know that his "G-9" group—the nine cardinals

who advise him—is very much like the consultants for a Jesuit province. Finally, the way he speaks about prayer very much like a Jesuit. "Imagine," he said at his first Easter Mass, what it would be like with the women at the tomb. Very Ignatian! He's inviting



us to use Ignatian contemplation, and imagine the scene for ourselves, rather than telling us what we should think about a particular Scripture scene. And a hybrid: A Franciscan name and a Jesuit spirituality.

When there is so much violence in the world, what should be the priorities of the Jesuits?

Well of course, I'm not Father General, so I don't have the authority to say what Jesuits should and shouldn't be doing! But, as GC 32, reminded us, "reconciliation with God demands reconciliation with one another." So we should be reconciled and reconcilers.

I have so much admiration for my Jesuit brothers who work in places that are in desperate need of reconciliation: for example, in war-torn areas, or with refugees and displaced persons. (I think

for example of my friend Prem Kumar, SJ, and his work with the Jesuit Refugee Service in Afghanistan, which led to his eight-month captivity.) These are places where many others dare not work. These places, which cry out for reconciliation, are those "margins" where we are called to minister.

Hindus believe in rebirth. If you were to be reborn, would you like to be a Jesuit again?

What a great question! Yes I would do it all over again. I used to think that I'd like to have entered at a younger age, but now I'm glad that I had some experiences in "the world" before entrance—working in a full-time job, earning a living, those kinds of things. It may help me to understand people's struggles better. But if I could be anything other than an editor-at-large at America, a job that I love, I would be a New Testament scholar. But yes, a Jesuit in this life and in any life!

What would you like to say to the Asian Jesuits?

First of all what I would say to any Jesuit: I'm grateful for your own unique vocations. When I look around and see the varied types of work that my Jesuit brothers do—teaching, writing, pastoral work, social ministries, spiritual direction, administration, and on and on, I am always moved with gratitude that God has called so many talented and wonderful men to the Society. So I am moved by my brothers' commitments to Christ, and delighted by their service to the church and the People of God. But to my brother Jesuits in Asia I would say, in particular, how wonderful it is to have so many men and so many vocations, something we in the West pray for! It is surely a sign that the Holy Spirit is powerfully at work in your part of the world. Then I would say, "Please pray for me!" ■

Nepal Jesuits take healthcare to remote villages

Nibedita (name changed to protect identity), a hostel student in a school run by CST Fathers in Narayanghat, Nepal, was feeling ill and noticed a small gland in her neck. The health care personnel in mobile health care clinic run by Jesuits and CST Fathers realized that all was not well and she was immediately taken to the nearby Health Centre from where she was referred to the Bharatpur District Hospital in Nepal. The doctor in the District hospital investigated the case and confirmed that she was suffering from cancer and it was in an advanced stage. The doctor referred the case to BP Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital, Chitwan in Nepal. The mobile health care centre run by Jesuits in



collaboration with CST Fathers decided to help her both financially and logistically. Her treatment started from 13 Jan 2013. Staff members and students of Navodaya gave her special attention and prayed for her recovery. As a result of radiotherapy her voice and hearing power were affected. She was not expected to survive the summer. By the grace of Jesus, on 24 Nov 2013 after the second endoscope, doctors certified her as cancer free. Now she lives a normal life in the school and moves around with a smiling face.

This is one of the many lives saved by the timely intervention, and financial and administrative support given by the Jesuit mobile clinic ministry which was started 2 decades ago. Mobile Clinic run by the Nepal Jesuit Society (NJS) was started in order to serve the sick, poor and needy of the interior villages in Nepal. This initiative was started thanks to the generosity of one man, Mr Christopher Fussner. Through this the Nepal Jesuits are trying to reach out to the remote interiors of Nepal from east to west. More than half of Nepal's population of 29 million live in remote villages often cut off from medical care. The seven medical teams of the NJS Mobile Clinic run in collaboration with five other religious congregations cover more than 50 villages in 13 districts, and have treated 100,454 patients in the last one year, at a cost of about Rs 1.4 crores. It started as a single clinic in Kathmandu and has now expanded to cover rural areas from Eastern to Western Nepal. Maheshpur in Eastern Nepal (in collaboration with Daughters of the Cross, Dharan (Eastern Nepal) and Surukhet (Mid- Western Nepal) with Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Palpa (West Nepal) and Kathmandu with Sisters of Charity of Capitanio and Gerosa, Pokara (Western Nepal) with Sisters of the Holy Spirit and Narayanghat (Central) with CST Fathers.

Each clinic is provided with a vehicle, driver and a few community health workers and a nurse sister in charge. The staff work 6 days week, visiting different villages in their area. Each day, at least 50 patients are attended to by each team and some days the number goes beyond 100. The teams visit remote villages where there is no healthcare available. The locals and nearby villagers are happy and extend their support to the teams.

- Bobby Joseph, SJ

St Xavier's organizes 'Global Earth Summit' in Kolkata

Global Earth Summit IV, organized by St Xavier's College, Kolkata, was a joint initiative of the Jesuit Fathers to discuss and combat water problems and promote wholesome-sustainable development. The Summit was inaugurated on the morning of 27 July 2015 at Dhyana Ashram, Kolkata. It was attended by both national and international ecologists, Jesuits and students, all with the common aim of deciphering the persistent water crisis.

Eminent personalities like Dr. Atiq Rahman, the Chief Guest, Climate Research Scientist, Executive Director of BCAS, Fr Jose Ignacio Gracia, SJ, the GIAN ecology coordinator at the Jesuit European Social Centre, Bruxelles, Belgium, Pedro Walpole, SJ, Coordinator, Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific on Reconciliation with Creation and Fr Jeyaraj Veluswami, SJ, Provincial Superior, Calcutta Province, were there.

The Summit was a 3-day Conference-cum-Bio-tour, where students and Jesuits had a chance to 'debate, discuss and deduct' so as to understand the prevailing water crisis. A dynamic speaker in his field of expertise, Dr. Atiq Rahman illustrated the scenario in Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries where their unrelenting efforts have led to the development of the concept of disaster preparedness, social mobilization and disaster risk



management. Fr Pedro illuminated the world at risk, seeking ways to collaborate across different regions in disaster risk reduction that demand a wider range of coordination beyond disaster relief. Explaining the stark reality of this highly calculative and corporate world, Fr Xavier Savarimuthu SJ, Convenor, Global Earth Summit, and GIAN Ecology Coordinator for Conference of South Asia, revealed that the industry is 'ecologically destructive,' highlighting the global phenomenon of corporatization of fresh drinking water.

The summit was rendered even more impactful, as we proceeded for our field visit to the East Kolkata Wetlands called the Rajarhat Eco Park, under the hospitality of Mr Firhad Bobby Hakim, Minister in charge, Municipal Affairs & Urban Development, of the State government of West Bengal and Mr Debashish Sen, Principal Secretary, Urban Development, Government of West Bengal. In order to preserve and nurture the character and well-being of this region, we have the East Kolkata Wetlands, the world's largest waste-water-fed aqua system with a plethora of flora and fauna native to this region. On the second day of the summit, we were spectators of the ruinous impacts of the 'Aila' which struck the mangrove lands of Sunderbans, causing huge destruction.

This bio-tour gave us a unique perspective of disaster mitigation bringing us an inch closer to reality, throwing light on the horrendous threats posed by erratic climate changes and global warming. On the third day Mr Rajendra Singh, Magsaysay Award Winner, Water Man, who has tried to revive over 11 rivers in several districts of Rajasthan, was with us.

- Saswati Banerjee

BY JOSEPH LOBO, SJ

The word 'excellence' stirs every human heart. But we need to clarify what it is and what it is for. 'Excellence' primarily refers to quality and not quantity. Yet one could mistake quantity for quality. The number of students who seek admission in our institutions, year after year, can make us presume that we run 'excellent' institutions.

Even when 'excellence' refers to the superior quality of someone or something, it need not always be Ignatian.

apostolate? Are we all in agreement with the goal? Have we adequately personalized such a goal? Does the goal continue to inspire us? etc. Adequate responses to these questions put us in touch with the Ignatian understanding of excellence. Therefore in order to be Ignatian any education, any service will have certain non-negotiable characteristics.

Non-negotiable concerns:

1. There is no meaningful living on this planet without committing oneself to the cause of *justice*; and there is no genuine commitment to justice outside the framework of *faith*. (GC 32)

type of higher education? Why are you doing it in this way? ... (GC 35). In short, the Jesuit higher education has to be a 'higher education with a difference', a higher education with a real concern for humanity; a higher education that refuses to be reduced to a system that produces mere human raw material for the market.

5. A meaningful *collaboration* with all those who are inspired to make an integrally positive difference in the lives of our people through higher education is central to our mission today (GC 35)

Hence the excellence of Jesuit higher education depends not merely

Not just excellence - but Ignatian excellence

Non-negotiables for Jesuit Higher Education

So what we have to strive for is excellence in terms of *relevance*. This is truly Ignatian excellence. The concept of 'relevance' makes education a means towards a goal. Indeed 'relevance' is the measure of being close to such a goal.

Jesuits have an age-old adage in Latin: *age quod agis* (do what you are doing). It means doing something with total commitment. The question of relevance demands a change in this adage. It can no more be a mere *age quod agis*. It should be *age quod agendum est* (do wholeheartedly what actually needs to be done). Discovering what actually needs to be done demands an ongoing process of discernment, an intense listening to the socio-political, religious and cultural realities around us, a good capacity for analysis, creativity, pioneering spirit and, above all, a fine clarity of our vision and goal.

The key questions therefore are: What is the goal of our educational

2. A depth level *dialogue* between our spirituality, social realities, cultures, religions and ideologies is essential for genuine human progress. (GC 34)

3. Sent to the *frontiers*, where many others cannot or find it difficult to be, we aim at becoming fires that kindle other fires (GC 35). Paradoxically, frontiers become our home. But for that to happen, creativity and a pioneering spirit that promote a humane world need to be the key for our engagement with the world today.

4. A special *concern for the poor* and the marginalized in all that we do makes our faith in the Divine genuine; for, we can't be companions of Jesus without being companions of the poor (Kolvenbach). When we do this, we will be confronted by questions from the people, because of the differences in the way we deal with higher education. We will face questions such as: who are you? Why are you carrying on this

on its quality as such, which is needed, but more importantly, on what type of values it would impart; what degree of commitment to fellow humans, especially the poor, it would foster and the quality of our lives and that of our collaborators and students it will promote.

Our General, Fr Adolfo Nicolas has articulated some of these non-negotiable characteristics of Jesuit education whose goal is Ignatian excellence in his recent address to the Jesuits and their collaborators in higher education in Mexico. He speaks about the need for promoting *depth of thought and imagination* in the educational process. His suggestion comes as a response to what he calls the 'globalization of superficiality' – a phenomenon that refers to the shallowness of thought, knowledge and life itself, produced by the misuse of the current media technology, where without a proper

analysis and rigorous study habits one can build one's own knowledge system with the click of a mouse. A mere accumulation of information attained by such means can never be called real knowledge and much less wisdom. Shabby and superficial research could result from a cut-and-paste method. It is against such possibilities that he

to the stark realities of our society today in the economic, political, cultural and religious realms, and correlating the experience gained thereby with the content and methods of higher education is the only way to groom organic intellectuals (to borrow a term from Antonio Gramsci), who are experientially intellectual and are

of millions of our brothers and sisters only worsens year by year. It would be naïve to think that these two facts are unrelated. It is precisely here that the goal of Jesuit excellence strives towards a relevant response. One of the very crucial functions of higher education anywhere is the creation of knowledge related to various fields. But Jesuit higher education, according to the mind of St. Ignatius, can never be satisfied with the mere production of new knowledge. It further enquires into the purpose of such knowledge, consequences of such knowledge to life here on earth, the type of beneficiaries of such knowledge, the kind of benefits gained by this knowledge and finally how all these could be means of integral welfare for all. In this vision the class of intelligentsia that higher education produces cannot be a class lost in the pursuit of its own self-interests, nor can the knowledge it produces be knowledge for its own sake.



advocates the promotion of a *depth of thought and imagination* where the entire person is involved in an in-depth learning process. It is here that “the student is taken beyond the excellence of a mere professional training to become a well-educated whole person of solidarity with the rest of humanity”, sharing and responding to its real concerns.

Creative imagination and rigorous *critical analysis* are important means for reaching the Ignatian ideal of excellence. Some of the most problematic situations can be responded to only through such means. Creativity is an “active, dynamic process of finding responses to real questions, finding alternatives to an unhappy world.” But in many places attempts for finding alternatives are given up by submitting oneself meekly to the dominant trends, no matter how dehumanizing these may be. Critical analysis becomes an essential tool for directing such creativity toward finding such alternatives. A constant exposure

committed to bringing about a change irrespective of their professions. Critical analysis and a creative imagination together will give our work the Ignatian excellence.

Consequences: Pursuing and promoting Ignatian excellence would demand from us conviction, commitment and a readiness to bear the consequences.

And so we could perhaps miss the top ranking positions to the extent that Jesuit vision and purpose of higher education differs from that of the agencies and the media that come up with these rankings, which many a time are influenced by merely market demands. But we would have done a great service to humanity in the long run. And that is more important than being in the limelight merely for the sake of self-enhancement.

While we witness today a mushrooming of institutions of higher education all over the world, the plight

Universal collaboration: In a globalized world and in the face of globalised challenges we need global responses and solutions. The Ignatian *magis* or excellence provides the needed basis for a universal collaboration among Jesuit institutions of higher education and also with others. It is in and through such collaboration that we need to discover today ways and means to address global issues that affect the lives of our people.

Let me summarize by noting that Ignatian sense of excellence can never be delinked from its goal of an integral emancipation of humanity. Accordingly, the areas of study and research in our higher education can widely vary; but their quality can never be compromised; their rigour, depth, creativity and critical nature can never be sacrificed. And yet a constant focus on the ultimate purpose of what they are offering to the students alone is what will ensure they pursue Ignatian excellence. ■

Fr Joseph Lobo, SJ, is the Director of Regional Theology Extension Centre, Anekal, Karnataka.

BY CINDY WOODEN

From Easter to Pentecost - and especially during the Marian month of May - Catholics recite the "Regina Coeli" prayer "with the emotion of children who are happy because their mother is happy" that Jesus has risen from the dead, Pope Francis said.

Although his devotion to the Mother of God is profound, it is simple in many ways: Mary is a mother to every believer; Jesus would not leave his followers orphans.

While his connection to Mary clearly is a matter of heart and mind, it is also physical. Whenever Pope Francis passes a statue or icon of Mary, he kisses it or allows his hand to rest tenderly upon it.

Honoring the Mother of God, of course, is a solid part of Catholic tradition and a mainstay in the devotion and teaching of the popes. St. John Paul II's motto, "Totus Tuus" ("All yours"), and the large M on his coat of arms were just the most graphic elements of a devotion that led to a whole body of teaching about Mary, her role in Catholics' faith life and the importance of praying the rosary.

Pope Francis would not have an argument with any of St. John Paul's Marian piety or discourse.

But there are differences.

"The sense of Pope Francis' devotion to Mary is a little more personal, more intimate" than St. John Paul's was, said Redemptorist Father Sabatino Majorano, a professor at Rome's Alphonsianum Institute. Pope Francis expresses "that feeling that exists between a son and his mother, where I think Pope John Paul's was more that of a subject and his queen."

The difference, he believes, comes from their roots: Pope Francis' Latin roots -- not just in Argentina, but also from his Italian family -- and St. John Paul's Slavic, Polish culture.

Retired Pope Benedict XVI spoke and wrote less about Mary than his predecessor and successor, but one now-solid Marian custom began in his pontificate: Whether or not it is a Marian feast day, a statue of Mary is placed prominently near the altar at papal liturgies.

Pope Francis' habit of touching images of Mary is a typical Latin American gesture, one Father Majorano said he saw repeated thousands of times at Brazil's Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida, which is staffed by his brother Redemptorists. "The tactile experience is part of praying. It's a spirituality that takes flesh, becomes concrete; it is not just an idea or a theory." At Mass and other formal liturgical services, Pope Francis uses incense to bless the Marian images. He notices the images and often comments on them.

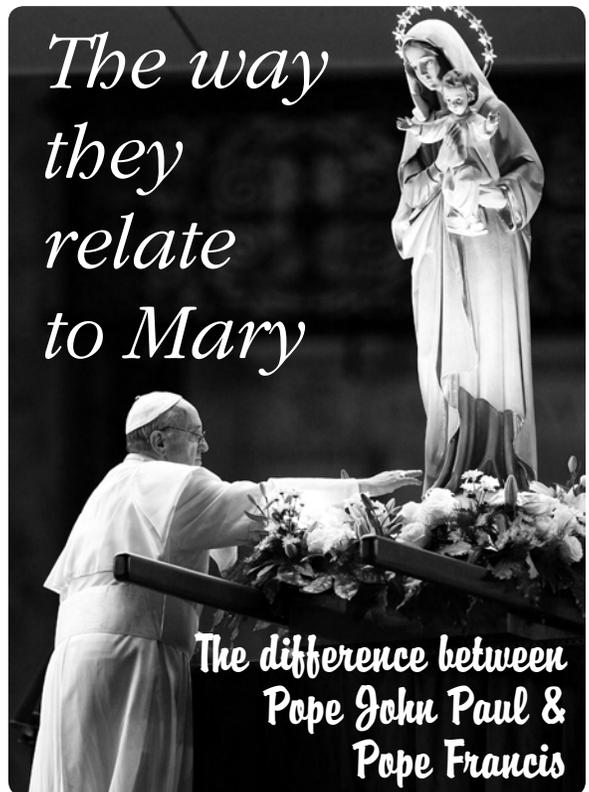
In Caserta, Italy, last July, Pope Francis celebrated the feast of St. Anne, Mary's mother. A locally loved statue of St. Anne holding the hand of her little girl, Mary, was placed to the side of the altar.

In his homily, the pope said, "When I was using the incense, I noticed something very beautiful: The statue of St. Anne does not have a crown, but her daughter Mary is crowned. St. Anne is the woman who prepared her daughter to become queen, to become queen of heaven and earth. This woman did a great job."

Visiting Naples in March, Pope Francis told priests, nuns and seminarians that one way to make sure Jesus is the center of their lives is to ask "his mother to take you to him. A priest, a brother, a nun who does not love Mary, who does not pray to her -- I would even say one who does not recite the rosary -- well, if you don't love the mother, the mother will not give you the Son."

In the same talk, the pope spoke again about how he recently read "The Glories of Mary," a hefty book written in 1750 by St. Alphonsus Liguori. "In this book, I like reading the stories about Mary that are behind each chapter; in them you see how Mary always leads us to Jesus."

*The way
they
relate
to Mary*



*The difference between
Pope John Paul &
Pope Francis*

Father Majorano, an expert in the writings of St. Alphonsus, said he and his confreres were not surprised to hear Pope Francis praising the 265-year-old work of their founder.

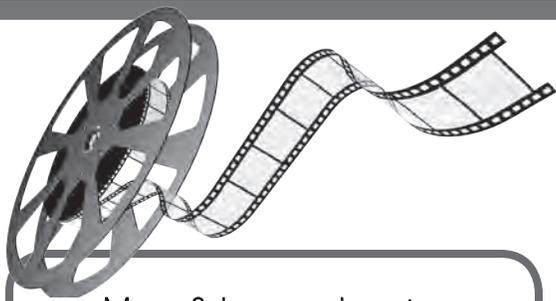
The style St. Alphonsus uses to speak of Mary reflects the Latin culture he and the pope share -- "warm, written with the heart more than the head, although it is intelligent," Father Majorano said. "In general, St. Alphonsus in his books shows a great knowledge of patristic works and other church writers -- he cites them continually -- but this work on Mary is written more with the heart."

The two focal points of St. Alphonsus' life, he said, were "the crucifix as an expression of God's love -- not his justice -- and Mary. They were the two realities that motivated his preaching and what he proposed in his missions."

St. Alphonsus focused on Mary's role as the "Queen of Mercy," the Redemptorist said. "The basic characteristic he emphasizes is that Mary is God's welcomer; that is, when we are afraid to approach God because of our sins, she welcomes us and helps us turn to him. So, her mercy is acceptance and her mercy is her ability to intercede for us and her mercy is to always anticipate our needs, like she did at the wedding at Cana."

In his official proclamation of the 2015-2016 Year of Mercy, Pope Francis wrote, "Mary attests that the mercy of the son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception. Let us address her in the words of the 'Salve Regina,' ('Hail Holy Queen') a prayer ever ancient and new, so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes toward us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her son Jesus."

- CNS

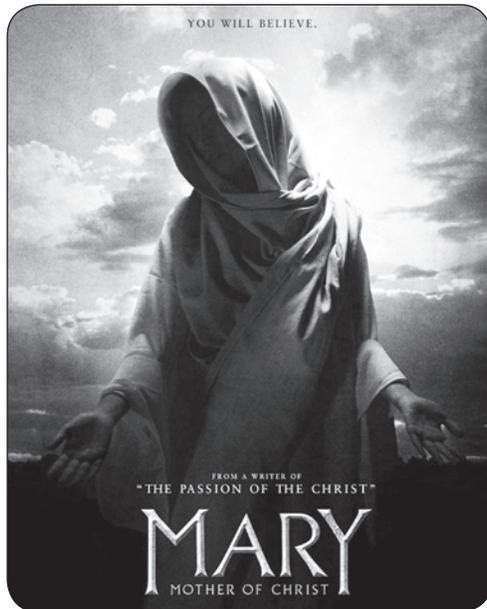


Mary & her soul mate

Mary

A film by Alistair Grierson

Starring Odeya Rush, Ben Kingsley, Julia Ormond, Jay Willick



The film, based on the New Testament, is a linear ticking clock, high action drama, faith based, youth based bio pic. Under the reign of terror of Herod the Great and against all odds they survive as young parents in one of the most treacherous times in history. It is a part of Mary, Joseph and Jesus' life that has not been shown on the big screen before. It is Mary's story from her youth to her struggles as a young mother caring for her child, Jesus up to the age of 12 years. The film lets the viewer peer into Mary's life at ages 13, 15, 19 and 27. As the New Testament leaves Joseph's age to interpretation, the writers have chosen to keep this a youth-based project and Joseph, depicted at ages 16, 21 and 29, is Mary's childhood companion and confidante, a true soul mate, who undertakes willingly his role as protector and guide for Mary and their child.

Women build a road



Colonypara is just another nondescript village in the Sundarbans region of South 24 Paragana district in West Bengal. Until a few years back, this small, remote hamlet was completely cut off from the outside world. Being surrounded by a network of tidal rivers, the narrow, unpaved lanes here get inundated, forcing those who dare to venture out to brace themselves for a long hike through squishy, soft muddy pathways. Getting to the main road was truly a tough call and so everyone was resigned to living a life of confinement. Fortunately for everyone though, those dark days are well in the past now. It is the hard work, enterprise and the able leadership of local women, spread across 15 riverine villages in the area, that has made all the difference. In 2010, World Vision, an international humanitarian organisation, started work in the region and motivated the women in the community to take the initiative of building roads. With planning and assistance from World Vision, the community took complete charge of the project. The women made the 15-foot-wide bylanes in two stages. At first, a layer of flat bricks was laid down on the muddy surface and fixed with sand, made of brick particles and clay. After this dried out, a second layer of bricks was affixed on top to provide strength and smoothen the surface. The women are in-charge of the maintenance and repair.

Source: www.thebetterindia.com

Within the next 10 seconds

Do you sometimes feel as if your faith has gone flat? Does your spiritual life feel listless and boring? Perhaps you've unconsciously drifted toward what Clare De Graaf calls *beige* Christianity. You go to church, attend a Bible study, and even volunteer, but there's no spark anymore--no joy in your spiritual walk. You may not understand what is happening to your faith, but you do know that you long for something more. If you want to break out of this spiritual cage and begin living the adventure Jesus intends for you, the place to begin again is living by The 10-Second Rule: Just do the next thing you're reasonably certain Jesus wants you to do (and do it within the next ten seconds before you change your mind!). The Rule is like a spiritual defibrillator! Just a few chapters in, you'll begin to experience the excitement of making yourself available to God 24-7, and impacting the lives of everyone around you, even total strangers.



The 10-Second Rule:

Following Jesus Made Simple

By Clare De Graaf

Published by Howard Books

Pages: 240, Rs. 1088

BY VIRGINIA SALDANHA

Women's empowerment

What can Jesuits do?

In a recent judgment concerning 'eve-teasing' a Delhi Court stated, "Women have been objectified in a negative manner by society instead of according to the sensitivity they deserve. Patriarchal society has shaped the thinking of males which can't be justified but it still, unfortunately prevails. Gender sensitization is the need of the hour as women have not been given their fair share of respect".

Women have internalized their inferior status. Socialization, even in the Catholic Church, conveys a male bias. Scripture has been used to belittle women. The exclusion of women from decision-making is tied to ordained priesthood, making women subservient in all Church ministry. It conveys women are worth less. Patriarchal socialization tells girls to be feminine to fit the role of care-givers, while it tells boys that they have to be masculine to fit the role of a strong leader, protector, decision-maker and violence is okay to help him make a point if he so chooses.

Women are given a docile, obedient, passive, gentle image of Mary to emulate, which only serves to make them more vulnerable to violence. Roles are assigned to men that automatically place women in a secondary or 'complimentary' role. This is widely promoted in Church teaching and has resulted in much injustice to women in Church and society, leading directly or indirectly to violence which can be mental, emotional and physical.

Hence, we need to move to a socialization that develops all in a holistic way, promotes equality and avoids stereotyping by gender. While this is a long-term solution, in the short term we need gender sensitization for those already conditioned by patriarchal social constructs which not only affect women but all vulnerable people and the environment.

My experience of working with Catholic women over the past 25 years has shown that overt or covert violence in the family is fairly extensive. More recently we have had women speaking up about their experiences of sexual abuse by clergy in the Church. Breaking the silence around violence is a form of empowerment for women - it validates their experience of pain and is an important first step towards healing, justice and change. Structures and policies should be put in place to deal with and prevent violence to women in Church institutions.

The CBCI brought out a Gender Policy in 2010. The Policy pivots on Gen.1:27, "God created both man and woman in the image and likeness of God." It states, "This inter-personal communion mirrors the divine communion making it both a call and a task. Thus improvements in women's status will require not only an analysis of the relations between men and women and the empowerment of women, but also the concurrence and cooperation of men."

But a recent survey conducted by Streevani, Pune on the impact of this document in the Church in India revealed that only 16% of 1000 parish councilors, drawn from 99 dioceses from all over India, had read the document; 44% had not even heard of it; while 40% had only heard about it. This is where Jesuits can come in with their vast resources and institutions to actively promote the empowerment of women.

Sustained awareness programmes are needed at every level to create gender sensitivity and change in attitudes. Workshops in educational institutions aimed at inculcating gender sensitivity should be compulsory for every student. The celebration of



Women's day on 8 March; Day against Violence to Women on 25 November; and the Day of the Girl Child on 8 September should not be a one-day token appreciation of girls and women. Jesuits should organize workshops to create awareness on the burning issues like violence against women, need for political participation of women, need for the inclusion of women in decision making, laws that protect women and their effective implementation, impact of environmental degradation and poverty on women etc. A workshop for parents of students, in parishes or schools, is equally important. These programmes can be conducted not only in educational institutions but also in parishes.

Pope Francis has repeatedly called for greater inclusion of women in Church life, asserting that women should be given more pastoral responsibilities and that there should be more women theologians. The Church needs to listen to the perspectives of women theologians. Women in the Church struggle for empowerment because they lack resources, space and ecclesial support. If the Jesuits commit themselves to partner with women in the process of their empowerment they will have achieved much in keeping with Jesus' vision for women. ■

Ms Virginia Saldanha is currently involved in promoting gender awareness online at the Catherine of Siena Virtual College.

Jesuit schools in Micronesia damaged by Super Typhoon



With sustained winds of 160 mph, Super Typhoon Maysak struck the Pacific region just before Easter, causing severe damage throughout Micronesia. Maysak struck the island of Chuuk on 29 March '15, bringing down communications system from the island, and hit the island of Yap on 31 March.

Jesuits from the USA Northeast Province, the Province of Indonesia, members of the Jesuit Volunteer Corp and residents of Micronesia staff the two schools that suffered losses. Xavier High School is the home to 186 students from around Micronesia and is the only boarding school among the USA Northeast Province schools.

A response plan is developing and a relief fund is being created for Xavier High School on the island of Chuuk. Fr Robert Pecoraro SJ, director of the school, reports that the damage sustained was major. Preliminary estimates range between \$50,000 and \$100,000. There is a large number of downed trees, as well as wind and water damage to classrooms, the computer room, chapel, the student center, and study hall, as well as the faculty residence. Students, faculty and staff were all reported safe, though classes

were cancelled for the full week, which included a previously scheduled Easter break.

The Jesuits, students, parents, and staff at Xavier worked to clear debris from buses, water tanks, damaged residence areas and other parts of the school. Food and supplies were being brought in by boat from surrounding islands. Xavier Principal, Martin Carl, said that many Xavier campus workers lost their homes entirely and pointed out the sustained need for prayers.

Fr Bob Pecoraro SJ, director of Xavier, said, "While there is much work to do, we have not forgotten God's presence in this holiest of weeks and will hold Holy Week services for the school and residents of Sapuk in our chapel. We are aware always of God's presence with us." The Xavier Board which spans the globe has been mobilized to respond and is actively working for the relief efforts at Xavier, as well as the greater Chuuk community. Board Chair Rodney Jacob stated that "it is clear to the Board that our mission and responsibility is not only to Xavier but to the local community of Sapuk and the great community of Chuuk in which we live."

On 31 March Maysak passed just north of Yap. Fr Michael Corcoran SJ,

director and principal reported, "We prepared as best we could – covering windows with plywood and tying down all the roofs. In the end, there was only minor damage – a few upturned trees on campus and part of the roof on the new chapel was torn off."

For more than 70 years, American Jesuits have served the people of Micronesia. Xavier High School and Yap Catholic High School were founded by Jesuits from the former New York Province. The mission of Xavier High School is to educate students to be competent, conscientious, and compassionate leaders whose lives are guided by the Christian call of service. Yap Catholic High School seeks to develop the minds, hearts, souls, and characters of students in their pursuit



of becoming women and men for others.

Xavier is located atop Mabuchi, in the village of Sapuk, in a former Japanese communication centre used during WW II. Committed to academic excellence, last year Xavier produced four Gates scholars, the first recipient of the Ushiba Scholarship to Sophia University in Japan, and an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. - www.sjapc.net

Choose your mother wisely!



BY RON ROLHEISER, OMI

There's an old adage that offers a wise counsel, even as it leaves us powerless to heed its advice: Pick your parents wisely!

Easier said than done; but the adage holds. We're not fully our own persons. We're

also products of our parents who don't give us only our physical DNA, but, in complex confluence of how they are inside their own persons and how they relate to us and to the world, also profoundly help shape our person and our character. As adults, it can be both freeing and emotionally-crippling to reflect upon exactly what we really inherited from our parents. They shape us.

I have this in the back of my mind today, Mother's Day, as I reflect upon my own mother and the DNA that I inherited from

her. She died forty-three years ago but she left a lot of herself here, with my siblings, with me. What did she give me, beyond some of my bodily features?

What she gave me didn't happen in a vacuum. She raised a large family, with the help of a very supportive husband, my dad, and, while they had a marriage made in heaven, they had to spend most of it chronically strapped for money, time, and energy. The demands on her were always somewhat beyond that for which she had adequate resources. But, somehow, she always managed, always managed to make do, always found a way to stretch everything, including her time and energy, to feed, cloth, and properly mother us.

She frequently didn't have the time, energy, or heroic patience to provide us with the individual affection and warmth that a child so desperately desires and needs, even though she was a naturally warm and kind-hearted person. The pressure of so many needs could wear her idealism and attention pretty thin at times. And so she wasn't a Hollywood mom, always perfectly dressed and perfectly affectionate; but she gave us the most important thing that a home is really asked to give, safety and security. The one need in a child that trumps all others is the need to feel safe and secure.

My mother was often torn in so many directions that she couldn't give us her full attention and warm affection, but she did provide us with what we needed most of all, safety and security. She gave us a house and

a home that was always steady and robustly sane – often times, loudly so. Inside that ambience we were always safe. Nobody could have given me a greater gift or greater riches in my youth.

As adults, it can be both freeing and emotionally-crippling to reflect upon exactly what we really inherited from our parents. They shape us.

Moreover, inside all that busyness, scrambling to provide, and the conscriptive attention deficit disorder that she had chronically to deal with she taught us something else of importance, namely, that you don't have to wait until everything is perfect, until all your bills are paid, your health is perfect, you have the right leisure time, and there are no large headaches waiting for you tomorrow, in order to celebrate and enjoy a moment. She knew how to celebrate the temporary. Every feast-day, birthday, or Sunday was an occasion for a special meal and a special celebration no matter whatever might be putting a damper on life. And, perhaps most important of all, my mother was largely responsible for giving me faith, though, in this, she had my dad as an equal partner; however she, more than anyone else, pushed me to be open to hear the call to priesthood.

Anthropologists who study initiation rites in various cultures tell us that the initiatory process needed to move someone from being a child to an adult needs to instill four salient truths: Your life is not your own. Life is hard. You will die. Your life is not about you.

The culture and church out of which she came had already indelibly etched those truths into her. For her generation, especially if you were poor and lived in a rural area, life was naturally hard and mortality rates were high. Lots of people died young. And the ethos of her generation held that family, church, neighbor, and country could ask you for your life, and your duty was to give it over, without whining or self-pity. It was selfish to think first of yourself. She had inhaled that ethos and then she etched it into us, particularly the truth about your life as not being about you. The other facts, that life was hard and that you were going to die, were left to speak for themselves; but, from the time you graduated from toys to school, the message was clear: Your life is not your own. Your life is not about you. Anthropologists might well study my mother's initiatory vision and tactics.

No mother is perfect, and neither was mine. She had her faults and I carry many of those too, along with the better things she gave me. But, reflecting on my mother, I have only good feelings and warm gratitude. I chose my mother wisely! ■

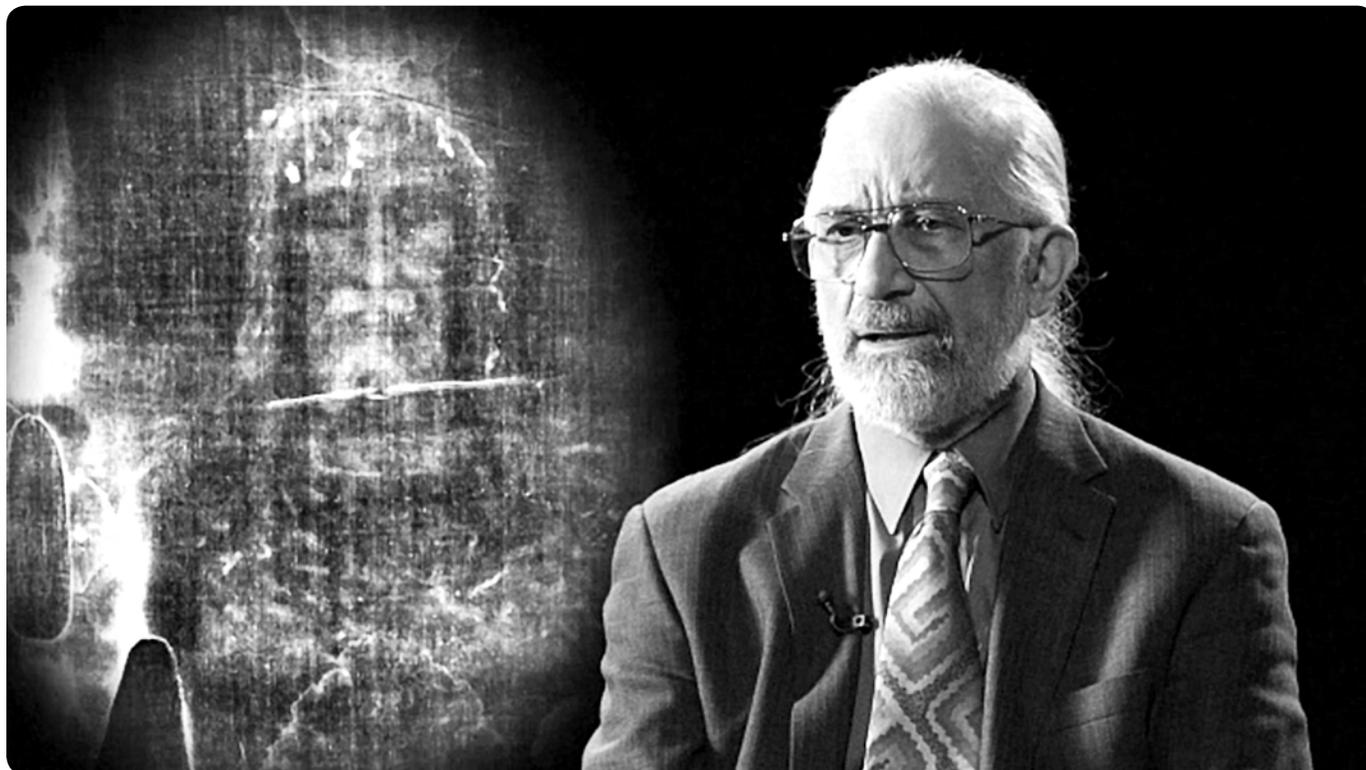
Courtesy: www.ronrolheiser.com

Please note:

This issue is a combined holiday issue, dated May-June '15.
The next issue will appear in July '15.

Nothing like the Shroud in the whole world,

*says the Jewish photographer, who has become
one of the world's leading experts on the Shroud*



BY JIM GRAVES

This June, Pope Francis will be making a pilgrimage to Turin, Italy, home of the famous Shroud of Turin, which many believe is the 2,000-year-old burial cloth of Jesus Christ. The pope's June 21-22 visit will include time venerating the Shroud at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist. The papal visit will take advantage of April 19-June 24 exposition of the Shroud, which was last displayed in public in 2010.

The Shroud, kept in Turin since 1578, is a 14.5' by 3.5' linen cloth bearing the image of the front and back of a man who has been scourged and crucified. **Barrie Schwartz** is one of the world's leading experts on the Shroud. In

1978, Schwartz, a technical photographer, was invited to participate in the first ever in-depth scientific examination of the cloth, known as the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STRUP). A non-practicing Jew at the time, he reluctantly agreed to be part of STRUP, fully expecting the team to prove that the Shroud was a painted image from the Middle Ages. But after many years of study and reflection he came to believe in its authenticity.

Troubled by frequent inaccurate media reports on the subject, in 1996 Schwartz launched a website to share the true story of the Shroud and scientific research that had been performed on it. Two decades later he still makes Shroud presentations in the media and to a variety of groups, including seminarians in Rome.

Here are excerpts from the interview that Schwartz recently gave to Catholic World Report (CWR):

What are some of the most compelling arguments that the Shroud is authentic?

Thirty-seven years ago, when I went to Italy with STRUP to examine the Shroud, I assumed it was a fake, some sort of medieval painting. But after 10 minutes studying it, I knew it was not a painting. As a professional photographer, I was looking for brush strokes. But there was no paint and no brush strokes.

For 17 years I refused to accept that the Shroud was authentic. The last

argument holding me back was related to the blood. The blood on the Shroud is reddish, but blood on a cloth, even after just a few hours, should turn brown or black. I had a conversation with Alan Adler, a blood chemist, on the phone and I shared my reservation. He got upset and asked, "Didn't you read my paper?"

He had found a high content of bilirubin on the Shroud, which explains why the blood on the Shroud is red. When a man is beaten and has had no water, he can go into shock and the liver starts pumping out bilirubin. It makes the blood stay red forever. It was the last piece of the puzzle for me. I had nothing left to complain about. Sometimes I wonder why I hadn't asked Alan Adler that question 17 years before, but I guess I wasn't ready for the answer back then.

Although this was the final evidence that convinced me, it is no one particular piece of evidence that proves the Shroud is authentic. The entirety of evidence indicates that it is.

One of my favorite testimonials as to the authenticity of the Shroud actually came from my Jewish mother. She was originally from Poland, and had only a high school education. She heard one of my lectures, and afterwards we were driving home. She was quiet for a long time - you have to worry when a Jewish mother is quiet - so I asked her, "Mom, what did you think?" She said, "Barrie, of course it's authentic. They wouldn't have kept it for 2,000 years if it wasn't."

Now that was an excellent point. According to Jewish law, a blood-soaked shroud would have had to have been kept in the grave. To remove it, in fact, you would have been putting yourself at risk because you were violating the law.

The most plausible explanation to me for the Shroud, both because of the science and my own personal background as a Jew, is that it was the cloth that was used to wrap Jesus' body.

What are some of the common falsehoods about the Shroud?

It would take hours to compose such a list. There seems to be a constant cacophony of nonsense being put out about the Shroud. One involves a medieval artist creating it by using three different photographic exposures and his own urine; I call that the "Shroud of Urine" theory. Now why would someone go to all that trouble when they simply could have painted an image?

The Shroud is a complex object, and a six-page article or 44-minute documentary - which must be entertaining - can't do it justice. That's why I created www.shroud.com so that people can review all the data and come to their own conclusion based on the facts.

What does the Shroud tell us about the physical sufferings of Christ?

It is literally a document of the Passion and the torture Jesus suffered. His face was severely beaten, and was particularly swollen around the eyes. I'm a fan of professional boxing; the facial image on the Shroud reminds me of a boxer who's just lost a match.

The man has been severely scourged. Not only do we observe the wounds on the back, but the thongs wrapped around the body and hit the front as well. Forensically speaking, the image on the Shroud is more accurate than common depictions we see in art.

He has a spear wound on his side. His legs are not broken, as was typically the case with men who are crucified. His head and scalp are covered in wounds. Again, in art, we often see the Crown of Thorns depicted as a small circle resembling laurel leaves around Christ's head. But that is not realistic. The soldiers actually took a thorn bush and smashed it down on his head.

We see the back of one hand, which indicates that the nails were driven not through the center of the

palm, but an inch closer to the wrist. For a Roman soldier crucifying 20 or more people at a time, that makes sense. It's the perfect place to drive a nail that will hold, and then you can move on to your next victim.

Regarding the feet, it's impossible for us to judge if a single nail held both feet, or if nails were driven in each one. We have the actual remains of two crucifixion victims, and two nails were used in their feet.

Was he stretched out on the cross so that his arms were dislocated? And, had part of his beard been plucked out?

The forensic evidence tells us that he could have been stretched so that his arms were dislocated. And, we do observe a V-notch in his beard, indicating that it could have been plucked.

In the end, the forensic evidence indicates that the Gospel account is an accurate depiction of what happened during the Passion of Christ.

Some people have seen many other things in the Shroud, such as Roman coins covering Christ's eyes.

Oh, yes. People see coins, flowers, and all kinds of other things that may or may not be there. Regarding the coins, on our STRUP team we had a NASA imaging scientist - a good Catholic, in fact - who indicated that the weave of the linen was too coarse to pick up the inscription of a coin. What we're certain of is that we see an image of a man, and isn't that what is important?

From your study of the Shroud, what kind of physical description of Christ can you offer us?

He was a well-built man; what we might describe as buff today. He had a strong upper body, a deep chest and good-sized shoulders. This makes sense, as he was a carpenter. At that time you'd have to go out and fell a tree,

cut it up and carve it, all things which would require a lot of physical strength.

Regarding his height, it's hard to tell. There is no defined edge of the image. It just fades out. The cloth, too, can be affected by humidity and stretched. That said, our best guess is 5'10" or 5'11". So, he'd be a taller man for the time, but not so tall that the Gospel writers made note of it. In fact, we have the remains of Jewish men from the era that were over six feet.

Did he have a ponytail?

It certainly looks like it. Orthodox Jews of the period wore their hair long.

What can you tell us of the cloth itself?

It was a high-quality cloth that a man of high stature would have owned. It was probably made in Syria, and brought to Jerusalem on the back of a camel. Since it was imported, it would have been expensive. This is consistent with the Gospel account, which indicated that Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy man. He probably owned it and had been planning to use it for himself.

Before my own Jewish father died he planned out his entire funeral. It's reasonable to believe that Joseph of Arimathea did the same. When Christ died he gave him his own shroud, planning to buy another one for himself at some later date.

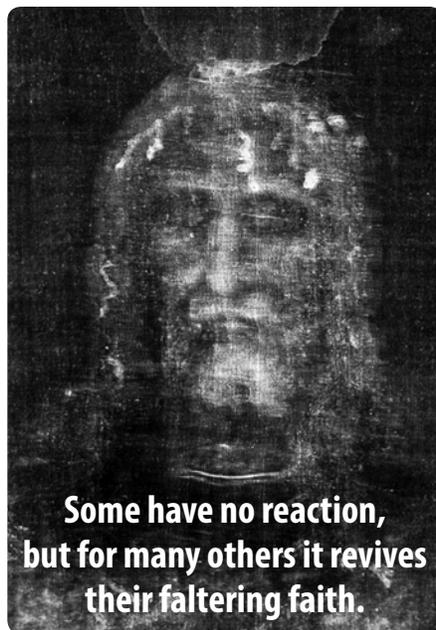
Your website just celebrated its 19th anniversary.

Yes. In 1995, I was talking to a friend, and he said, "You know that Shroud thing you've been studying? It was a painting by Leonardo da Vinci." I asked him where he got that information. He said, "My wife and I were at the grocery store, and we saw it in a tabloid at the check-out."

Now Leonardo da Vinci was a pretty good artist, but we have documentation about the Shroud dating

back 100 years before he was born. No one is that good! I remember writing myself a note: "Consider building a website." I did, and I've been overseeing and adding to it ever since.

I realized long ago what a great



privilege it was to be in that room in Italy with STRUP in 1978. But with that privilege came a responsibility. As I tell my audiences, I wasn't in that room for me, but for you. I don't know why God picked me to be there, but what better witness than a skeptic? I had no emotional attachment to or interest in the subject at the time.

What happened during your time with STRUP in 1978?

We arrived a week early with 80 crates of equipment, which was seized for five days by Italian customs. We had a limited time to implement a 67-page test plan, and as we had lost five days of preparation, we weren't certain we could run all of our tests.

The Catholic Church itself had very little involvement. The Church, in fact, didn't own the Shroud at the time. King Umberto, Duke of Savoy, the former ruling family of Italy, whose family had owned the Shroud for six centuries, gave permission for us to

study it. The Church in Turin was merely the custodian of the artifact.

We initially asked for 96 hours to study it, but we were allowed to see it for about 120 hours. We were there to collect data, not draw conclusions. We were there to answer one simple question: how was the image formed? In the next three years we produced papers that were submitted to peer-reviewed journals. In the end, we could only tell how it did not get there. It was not a painting, it was not a scorch, and it was not a photograph.

Our team was composed of experts of a variety of faiths, from Catholics to total skeptics. We had Mormons, Evangelical Christians, and Jews. Our religious belief was not a criterion for being on the team. In fact, as a Jew, I felt uncomfortable being on the team and I tried to quit twice. One of my friends on the STRUP team, Don Lynn, worked for JPL and was a good Catholic. When I told him I wanted to quit because I was Jewish, he asked, "Have you forgotten that Jesus was a Jew?"

I told him I didn't know much about Jesus, but I did know he was a Jew. He asked, "Don't you think he'd want one of the Chosen People on our team?" He told me to go to Turin and do the best job I could, and not worry about being a Jew.

Are there any other objects in the world that compare to the Shroud?

There is nothing like it.

What effect have you seen the Shroud have on people?

I've observed a broad range of responses. Some have no reaction, but for many others it revives their faltering faith. But, in the end, faith is not based on a piece of cloth, but is a gift of God stirred in the hearts of those who look upon it. ■

Courtesy: www.catholicworldreport.com

Saturday evening

BY G. RAGAVIJAYA



It was an unclouded Saturday evening. After exploring Pondy bazaar all by myself, I was walking down in disarray, asking strangers for directions on where to board a bus to reach DMS in order to get back to my hostel. I was dog-tired. Plus, having spent all the money in shopping, I was left penniless, which ruled out the option of taking an auto.

With four assignments and four seminars coming up, the very thought of a jam-packed Sunday ahead was haunting me. And with no one to tell me a proper route to nearby bus stop! Being in Chennai all these years of my college life, I, like many other girls, have this eternal right to address every auto driver or a shopkeeper cordially as 'Anna' (elder brother). But that day was not mine. No Anna was able to help me and nor was I really in a mood to ask for help.

As I continued to walk cursing my fate, I saw an old man with tattered clothes, a haggard face and a woebegone look who was sitting on the footpath feebly. Had he begged for money, I too would have passed by like all those who walked before me. But this old man asked for food, describing in a muffled voice how he has been starving for so many days. My brain replaced that old man with my own self, say at some 70 years. How would I feel sitting down in the dust, begging for food in order to only survive, leaving behind all the self respect and inhibitions, with no place to go and no one to love! My heart sank for a moment and I stopped involuntarily. Sometimes something touches you so deeply for strange reasons, right? That something to me that day was that



scene of old man pleading for a bit of food just to live that moment..

Like a doll, without looking anywhere, I walked straight to a nearby shop to buy a packet of bread with the little money left with me. I offered it to him to receive a meek smile emanating from his despairing face. But the effect of that meek smile was overwhelming. A new-found strength engulfed my tired soul. A strong desire streaked in my heart like a flash of lightning. Someday somehow I should ascend to a position wherein I can help millions of people like this helpless old man waiting for death.

You would have surely come across some youths who are idealistic, and so swear solemnly that they would uplift the poor etc, etc? Well, I am a proud member of that utopian club for a very long time, say since school days. But that day, some deeper parts of my unexplored self were touched. Nonetheless, I continued walking in search of the bus stop. Then, incomprehensibly, everything fell into place. I walked a few steps to see a

traffic police man who gave me clear directions on where to go and which bus to take. Surprisingly I crossed the busiest road effortlessly, in spite of my terrible fear of crossing a busy road. Even before I reached the bus stop, on the way, a 23 C was waiting, caught up in the traffic. That was the one which I was asked to take. With a deep sense of gratitude, without any delay, I swiftly ran alongside to get into the bus which started the next moment I stepped in, as though it was waiting for me all this time!

And here is the part which confirmed that the day was surely special. Once inside the bus, I approached the conductor to ask for a ticket to DMS. I searched my bag for money, but there was nothing. I didn't know what to do. The conductor was watching me all this while, how I got into the bus, panting for breath. With a warm look and a mild smile, he said, 'No ma, no need for a ticket, your stop is the one after next. It's okay. You don't have to buy a ticket'.

Seriously? On a normal day, I would never expect this from an MTC bus conductor, who at the first place should have yelled at me for boarding the bus in a signal! No exaggeration. I did not have to buy a ticket that day. And if he had asked me to buy one, I did not know what I'd have done. Is this what they call Karma? Or, is it just because, I did something good for someone, my conscience has expanded and the divine-part of me is interpreting all these this way?

That old beggar is living for another day because a stranger just managed to buy a packet of bread for him, imagining herself in his position. An MTC bus conductor realized the stop for the passenger to get down is just two stops away and decides not to demand money for a ticket. May be, even small, thoughtful acts of love and consideration can turn this world into a beautiful place for us to live. ■

Ragavijaya G. is a first year student of M.A. English Literature at Stella Maris College, Chennai.

BY LUCAS SHARMA, SJ

Confronting inner prejudices

Adopted from Nepal and brought up in the U.S. by a white family, this Jesuit describes how he is coming to terms with his own and others' racial prejudices.

Race and ethnicity slapped me in the face during the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC). I arrived in Washington, DC's Dulles Airport in August 2009, ready for JVC. New city, new people, new adventure. I felt a little nervous. Being from the Pacific Northwest, I immediately went to Starbucks in the airport. The stark racial contrast should have been obvious. All the Starbucks baristas were *African American*. All the customers were almost all *white men and women*, many wearing suits and ties. What does this division suggest?

That was the first major slap in the face that year, and yet somehow, I missed the message. I just assumed I was seeing what I studied in my sociology courses – the effects of *economic* inequality. It couldn't be *racial* inequality, I had presumed that racism mostly ended with Martin Luther King Jr's struggle for racial justice. If racism did still exist, it wasn't in the North where I was from. All of my friends were good-hearted, caring people who wanted equal rights for all people. I'm not racist, I thought; I believe in equal rights for all people.

Moreover, I am a racial minority myself. I was adopted from Nepal into a middle-class, American, mostly white family. My father is also adopted from Nepal, but the rest of our family is white. I worked hard, got a generous scholarship to go to college, and became successful like my other college classmates. I was a minority but wasn't impacted by racism.

During my experience in JVC, I worked for the legal clinic at 'Bread for the City', a social service organization in DC. I should have noticed on the first day of work how all the clients were African American or Latino. During my year at Bread, I can confidently say that I talked with three white people coming in for legal assistance. Three out of literally hundreds.

Slowly, I began to see a city organized geographically and economically around

color lines. Most of my clients lived in neighborhoods that were poorer. The farther west I walked in the city, the whiter and wealthier it became.

Moreover, I saw my own prejudices emerge. I had failed to see the ways that I make judgments based on race and ethnicity. I formed pre-conceived notions of my clients, filtered through the experience of my own "hard work leads to success" narrative. Race wasn't a category of the past – it was a category *inside* of myself – stripping my own clients of the dignity Bread for the City promised to provide them.

It's been five years since I flew into Dulles Airport, and I am still haunted by that experience. And so is the U.S. apparently. We have an African American president, a sign of progress certainly, but we also have police brutality, resulting in the death of young black men shot by white police officers. We are emotionally charged about the issue. It's no surprise that many Americans question the fairness of the criminal justice system.

The racism that flares up in places like Ferguson may seem distant for some, but not for people who must encounter racism in their everyday lives. We are left with questions when we are confronted by racism in documentaries or theatrical presentations. How do we address a problem so large, when we ourselves don't seem to harbor racist views or know racist people?

Attitudes about these issues are shaped by the experiences, culture, and relationships that have brought us to today. They are also shaped by narratives we learn. I learned the narrative that all people are equal today, that racism is

over, and that we can all freely become the person we want to be. JVC showed me that it wasn't fully true. I resisted it because it was painful: the racial divide in the airport was so *painfully* obvious that I didn't want to believe it was true.

Unfortunately all my stereotypes and prejudices did not end with JVC. It's still painful to see places of privilege or suffering in my life and in the lives of others. The changes needed are massive – changes in housing segregation and school systems, police tactics, and cultural attitudes about race, just to name a few. How can I even put a *dent* in such a pervasive problem? Perhaps by asking hard-hitting questions like:

Where is this prejudice coming from? What in my life caused me to feel this unspoken prejudice? How do I respond out of a place of love and generosity, not out of fear?

The answers are humbling. Most of the time, I'm not the good guy in the story. I'm that guy I believed didn't exist in the U.S. anymore. Owning that is scary and embarrassing.

Asking these questions has made me *ruined for life*, and a new narrative has emerged. Not the American Dream narrative that promises unlimited self-remaking, because I saw people struggling just to get by. A new narrative, one that admits how my own beliefs contribute to the racism my clients faced everyday. It's not a bleak narrative, but it is a challenging one – one of readjusting my own thoughts, words, and actions. It's a continuing narrative of confronting my own prejudices. ■

Courtesy: *The Jesuit Post*
(<http://www.thejesuitpost.org>)

AGNELO PINTO, SJ
(GOA) 1940 - 2015



Born in Belgaum on 25 Feb 1940, Agnelo joined the Novitiate at Vinayalaya on 20 June 1955 and was ordained at Old Goa on 19 March 1969.

A man with various postings - he served as Vice-Principal, as Principal of St. Paul, Belgaum; Rector of St. Paul, Treasurer of Belgaum Xavier Company and consultor of the Province. After retiring from the educational apostolate he took over as Director of the Youth Retreat Movement from Fr George D'Sa. He was also Spiritual Director of the Pius X Pastoral Institute in Old Goa, and later in 2003 took charge of Pedro Arrupe Institute, Raia. This testifies to his enormous capabilities and talents.

One of his outstanding features as a Jesuit was his availability. Any Provincial would be happy to have a man like Agnelo. He was one of those who could be sent anywhere at any time, for any work. He would help out with Masses and confessions. When no retreats could be held at Old Goa due to renovation work, he visited the schools to give retreats. This inconvenience Agnelo took in his stride.

By nature, Agnelo was helpful and as treasurer attended to the monetary needs of the missionaries without delay. When the Primary Block of St Paul's needed to be overhauled, Agnelo made several trips to the military authorities to get the required permissions. No task was too great for him. Here was a man who did not spare himself any sacrifice to be of service.

In mid-Nov 2014, Agnelo had a fall and the CT scan revealed complexities. A series of tests revealed that Agnelo had a brain tumour, and the doctors thought a surgery could be risky. Agnelo was later shifted to Shanti Avedna, Loutolim and was attended to by the hospice staff there till he breathed his last on 03 March 2015. Here was a man who had been a great example of *availability* and *service* to the Province. He had a profound sense of duty, that whatever he did he perceived as being for the greater good. We thank God for a companion like Agnelo. Rest in peace, Fr. Agnelo.

- William Rodrigues, SJ

DONATUS JEYARAJ, SJ
(MDU) 1939 - 2015



As a former Provincial of the Madurai Province, Tertian Director and Novice Master, Fr Donatus Jeyaraj was well-known in the Assistancy. So the news of his sudden death, on 01 April '15, in the middle of a long retreat that he was directing, plunged all in the Province into a deep sadness.

Born on 29 Oct 1939, he joined the Society on 19 June 1957. He was ordained a priest on 25 March 1971 and made his Final Profession in the Society on 08 Sept 1976. After his ordination in 1971 he served in various capacities - Minister, Registrar, Tertian Director, Parish Priest, Novice Master, Socius to the Provincial, Superior, Spiritual Guide and Retreat Director. In 2013 he joined the community at Dhyana Ashram, Chennai and took to spiritual guidance, counselling and directing retreats. In March he came down to direct a 30 days retreat at the LIFE Centre, run by the Claretians, at Nochiodaipatti near Dindigul. On 31 March he felt unwell and visited St Joseph's Hospital, and insisted on going back to continue the retreat. On 01 April he was rushed to the hospital and around 8.30 p.m. he passed away, apparently due to a massive heart attack.

A deeply spiritual person, he was calm, serene and reflective. He had rare insights into life, people and issues, which he shared in his own inimitable way that made people think. Gifted with a refreshing sense of humour, he could be hilarious and keep people laughing. As a Novice Master twice, a Tertian Director and a sought-after Spiritual Guide for many years, he must have guided hundreds of Jesuits and other Religious and helped them find light, peace and God. His funeral Mass at Beschi was on 02 April, Holy Thursday. Fr Sebast L.Raj, Provincial shared the sadness and sense of loss everyone in the province felt. Fr Jebamalai Raja, Chennai Mission Superior, was the homilist. Frs A.J. Thamburaj, Michael Alosanaya and Mr Justin, a relative paid tributes to the exemplary Jesuit, before he was laid to rest.

- M.A.J.A

FRANCIS XAVIER AIND, SJ
(DUM) 1944 - 2015



Br Francis Xavier Aind was suffering from diabetes since 2006. In recent months it got more acute and eventually on March 28 he had to be hospitalized at Kurji Hospital in Patna for dialysis. On 01 April at 8.10 pm he breathed his last. The funeral rites were led by the Provincial, Fr Varghese Pallipalakkatt,

Br. Francis Xavier Aind, born at Altapur, had his schooling at St. Ignatius School, Majlispur. He joined the Santal Region of the Society of Jesus at Sitagarha in 1967. He had his training in agriculture at Namkum. When the Santal Region had just embarked on its important ministry of training Santal Catechists for the local Churches with a Santal population at Catechists' Training Centre (CTC), Torai, Br. Francis was assigned to CTC, where he was destined to remain for the next 30 years. The Lord had blessed Francis with an engaging personality: simple, pleasant, hard working, respectful, joyful, ready to help. He was good at singing, blessed with a good voice for preaching and reading, and a good teaching methodology to teach village catechists.

Bishop Telesphore Toppo of Dumka appointed Br Francis the Diocesan Director of Krus Vir or Eucharistic Crusaders. Francis entered the new ministry with enthusiasm and in October of that same year organized the first rally of the Crusaders at Tinpahar. It was a great success. Then he embarked on visiting the schools to confirm the moderators and guide them in imparting the values of the Krus Vir, namely Eucharistic devotion and mission.

At CTC, Br. Francis guided those attending the various courses in meditating, the reading of the Bible, in leading the Sunday Girja without priests in the villages, in singing, etc. The number of catechists, laity and children touched by Br Francis Xavier's zeal, to the greater glory of God, is known to the Lord and reckoned to his undying account.

May the Lord grant Br Francis Xavier the fullness of his divine vision!

- P. Aquilina, SJ

South Asian Assistency Appointments

Appointed by Fr General

Fr Edward Mudavassery (HAZ) - Rector, De Nobili College, Pune
 Fr Keith Abranches (GUJ) - Socius to/Admonitor of POSA
 Fr Michael Thanaraj (JAM) - Rector, Vidyajyoti, Delhi.
 Fr. Francis Parmar (GUJ) - JCSA Consultor; West Zone Coordinator.
 Fr Jose Vadassery (PAT) - JCSA Consultor; North Zone Coordinator

Appointed by Provincial of South Asia

JORBAGH, CURIA

Fr Sunny Jacob (JAM) - Secretary, JEA (w.e.f.15 Oct 2014)
 Fr Gabriel Tirkey (DAR) - Secy to POSA & Webmaster of JCSA website, Archives.
 Fr Claudius Tauro (DUM) - Convener, JCI Finance Commission (wef 1 April 2015).
 Fr. Irudaya Raj (MDU) - Coordinator of Commissions (wef 20 April) - Additional.

VIDYAJYOTI, DELHI

Fr Mohan Joseph (KAR) - Minister (wef 20 June 2015)
 Fr Michael Alosanai (MDU) - Spiritual Director.
 Fr. Rajkumar Joseph (AND) - Lecturer, Systematic Theology.
 P.R. John (AND) - Secy of Commission for Religious Studies (JERES) & Convenor of Forum for South Asia Jesuit Theologians (wef 1 Jan 2015)
 Fr Stanislaus Alla (AND) - Additional responsibility as Registrar
 Fr Joseph Victor Edwin (DEL) - Secretary for Christian-Muslim Relations South Asia
 Fr Valan Antony (CCU) - Promoted to the rank of Reader (wef 23 March 2015)
 Fr Christopher G. Pragasam (Delhi Diocese) - Associate Reader (wef 13 April, 2015)
 Fr Jerome G. Sylvester, IMS - Director, Jnana Bharati RTC, Varanasi (wef 3 Nov 2014)
 Fr Leo Fernando (MDU) - Editor-in chief
 Fr Poulouse Mangai (CCU) - Secretary
 Fr Poulouse Mangai, Fr Valan Antony (CCU) - Associate Editors Core Team to manage and publish
 Fr P.R. John (AND) -Book Review Editor Vidyajyoti Journal (VJTR)
 Fr Edwin Rodriguez (BOM) -Technical Asst
 Br Fulgence Ekka (RAN) -Manager

JDV, PUNE

Fr Joseph D'Mello (KAR) - Lecturer, Faculty of Theo, Resi at DNC (wef June 2015)
 Fr Francis Gonsalves (GUJ) - Prof, Faculty of Theo, Resi at Papal Sem (wef June 2015).
 Fr. Francis Puducherry (GUJ) - Lecturer, Faculty of Theology, Resi at DNC (wef Jan 2016).
 Fr Lancy Monterio (KAR) - Lecturer (wef 1 June 2014) Karnataka RTC.
 Fr Arjen Tete (CCU) - Lecturer, Faculty of Theology (wef Nov 2015).
 Fr Jose Panadan (GUJ) - Associate Lecturer, Faculty of Theo (wef. June 2015)

Fr.P.T. Joseph (JAM) - Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology (wef June 2015)
 Sr Fabian, UMI - Doctoral Studies in Theology, JSTB, USA.
 Fr Prasad Lankapalli (AND) - Promoted to the rank of Reader, Theo (wef 21 January 2015)
 Fr. Kuruvilla Pandikattu (DUM) - Dean, Faculty of Philo (wef 26 Sep 2014)
 Fr John Karuvelil (JAM) - Promoted to the rank of Reader (wef 26 Sep 2014)

JDV PG BLOCK, PUNE

Fr Vincent Crasta (KAR) - Moderator, (attached to DNC Community. wef May 2015)

DE NOBILI COLLEGE, PUNE

Fr Jacob Kulangara (GUJ) - Minister (wef 15 May 2015).
 Fr Jesu Raj (DUM) - Sabbatical (wef 15 May 2015)
 Fr Alex Gnana Pragasam (JAM) - Secretray, DNC Trust (wef 7 April 2015)
 Fr Ramesh Macwan (GUJ) - Revisor: JVD, DNC, Papal Sem. (wef 1st April 2015)

PAPAL SEMINARY, PUNE

Fr Francis Ezhakunnel (JAM) - Moderator of Philosophers (wef 1 May 2015)
 Fr Joseph Karunaidass D (AND) - Minister (wef 15 May 2015)
 Fr George Cordeiro (BOM) - Spiritual Director (wef 15 May 2015)

STAYA NILAYAM, CHENNAI

Fr Vinod Soreng (RAN) - Lecturer, (wef 1 Nov 2014)
 Fr Boniface Panna (MAP) - Reassigned to SN Faculty of Philo (wef June 2015)
 Fr Vibin Padayadan (KER) - Studies (BHU)
 Fr Jagadish Murala (AND) - Doctoral Studies: Madras Uni; Resi: Dhyana Ashram

INDIAN SOCIAL INSTITUTE, DELHI

Fr Stanislaus Jebamalai (GUJ) - JESA Secretary (Term Extended) (wef 16 Oct 2014)

INDIAN SOCIAL INSTITUTE, BANGALORE

Fr Selvaraj Arulnathan (MDU) - Director, ISI (additional), (wef 10 April 2015).
 Fr Martin Puthussery (CCU) - Coordr: Labour & Migration Unit; Admin (wef 1 May 2015)
 Fr Prakash Louis (PAT) - Sabbatical. Resi. ISI-Bngalore.

SITAGARHA TERTIANSHIP

Fr Stephen Koitharayil (DUM) - Tertian Director (w.e.f. June 2015)

KANDY TERTIANSHIP

Fr Stanley C. Philips (SRI) - Co-Tertian Director (wef Dec 2015)

SEMBAGANUR TERTIANSHIP

Fr William Sequeira (KAR) - Tertian Director (w.e.f. June 2015)

AFGHANISTAN

Sch. Jude Sahaya (CCU) - Regency

Lessons for Life

I've learned from the U.S.

BY CHRISTU SAVARIRAJ, SJ

Have a great day, Sir!

On my arrival in Boston I took a walk around Boston College campus. Right at the gate a workman greeted me, "Have a great day, Sir!" A stranger wishing me a good day took me by surprise. Such pleasantries have become part and parcel of people's life here. Words like "Have a wonderful evening", or "Enjoy the pleasant afternoon", make me feel good about oneself and others and life.

You come first

Another thing that I admire here is that most people act as if the interest of the other is more important than theirs. If a car driver sees you waiting to cross the road he or she will stop to ensure that you cross the road first. When you enter through a door in public buildings, the person ahead of you will open the door with a smile and allow you to enter first. I have caught this habit and now whenever I open a door I turn back to see whether anybody is coming behind me - except when I enter my own room.

Ask and you shall be heard

Got lost? Want a piece of information? Be cool and hesitate not to approach people. They will be willing to help you. Whether it's your class room or University office or any type of store, just ask or mail them and you are certain to receive a reply. They treat everyone as 'valuable'. So the mantra is 'just text them.'

Know the history of the land

As soon as I arrived in Boston I visited some of the historical sites and acquainted myself with the history of America. I used to discuss with people issues pertaining to the current scenario. They appreciate my keenness to learn the history of their land. This really helped me to bond with people and shed my prejudices against them. Knowing the culture and customs of people will redeem you from unnecessary cultural shock too.

There are more things in common

The moment we land in a foreign land immediately we tend to see how that country is different from ours. I realized that such a short-sightedness is harmful. Hence, I learnt to look at what

Christu Savariraj, SJ, (PAT) is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Leadership at Boston College, Boston, U.S.A



is common to both India and America and acknowledge them. Undue focus on differences can lead to excessive nationalism.

Knowledge is power

How well-informed you are is important here. Having an in-depth knowledge in your subject or profession brings you respect. Therefore strive to acquire knowledge and skills. There is no dearth of resources in America for information. Just girdle yourself and dive into the ocean of knowledge. But be careful and prudent to choose what is essential. For there is a lot of junk too here.

Let your voice be heard

Don't be too quiet but speak out your mind. Active participation in the classroom, dining hall or recreation lets people know what you are and what you think. If you want to disagree or point out something is not correct, you have the freedom to do so. Share your positive experiences about people and places in America. Appreciate the goodness even if you find some things weird.

Take a break

Academic work in the U.S. is very demanding and it can drain you out mentally and physically. Slogging day and night with books can make you depressed. Therefore don't become a nerdy and get hooked to books or your laptop. Go for a long drive or visit art galleries and museums or chill out with friends. I realized soon after coming here that

such outlets give me the much-needed relaxation.

Be simple but...

Most people here wear casual dress and lead a simple life. At the same time they expect you to be formal and follow certain etiquette with regard to personal relationships. They value their privacy a lot. Hence I learnt not to get too friendly or personal with them at the very first meeting, without knowing them.

Remember you are an ambassador

When I walk around the college campus or take a stroll on the city streets or commute in public transport I keep reminding myself, "You are in a foreign land and you represent the rich legacy and tradition of India. You are an ambassador here. Hence, don't do anything that will bring disgrace to your country. People watch your words and actions." I ensure that I leave a positive impression on the minds of people. ■



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*given us by God,
in the sweetness of the face of a child,
look upon this family
that is your very own
and in your motherliness,
grant perennial youth to our hearts.
May there arise in us
a renewed commitment in our vocation to follow Jesus
and may our charity be more joyful from this day.
Teach us that love can stand
with steadfastness at the foot of the cross.*

Source: www.catholicdoors.com



MOMENTS



© Vivian Richard sj (KAR)

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”

- Maya Angelou