

# JIVAN

News and Views of Jesuits in India

April 2015



## Arise, Companions, Awaken the World!

**JCSA Meet**  
at Vinayalaya

**John O'Malley, SJ**  
interview

**Witnessing**  
in a polarised India

**Leonardo Boff**  
on Pope Francis

**Short Story**  
that won 2nd prize

**Lessons**  
from India

Longed to touch and feel  
Longed to see and look  
Where He walked

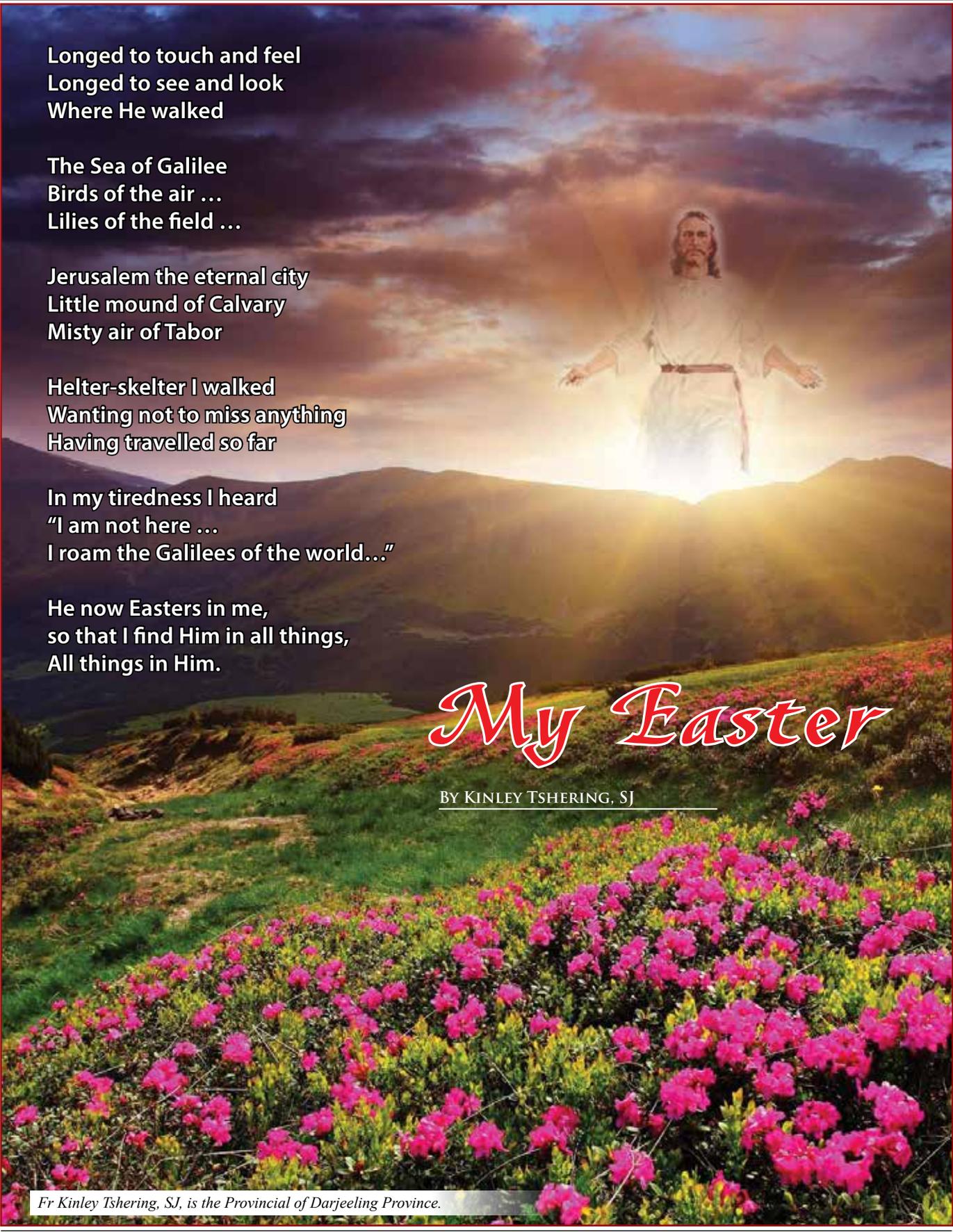
The Sea of Galilee  
Birds of the air ...  
Lilies of the field ...

Jerusalem the eternal city  
Little mound of Calvary  
Misty air of Tabor

Helter-skelter I walked  
Wanting not to miss anything  
Having travelled so far

In my tiredness I heard  
"I am not here ...  
I roam the Galilees of the world..."

He now Easters in me,  
so that I find Him in all things,  
All things in Him.



# My Easter

BY KINLEY TSHERING, SJ

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

APRIL 2015

**Editor:**

M.A. Joe Antony, SJ

**Editorial office administration,**

**typing & layout:**

Udaya Prabhu  
Visuvasam

**Correspondents:**

Benedict Santosh, John Rose,  
Shailendra Boora, Victor Edwin

**Advisory Board:**

Agapit Turkey, Benny S.,  
Jerry Rosario, John Joseph,  
V.T. Jose, Luke Rodrigues,  
Michael Amaladoss, Rex A. Pai

**Published by**

**Jerry Sequeira, SJ**

for Gujarat Sahitya Prakash Society  
P.B. 70, Anand - 388 001  
and printed by him at Anand Press,  
Anand - 388 001.

**Matter for publication  
to be sent to:**

The Editor, Jivan  
C/o IDCR

P.B. 3301, Loyola College, Chennai - 600 034  
Phone: 91-44-28175656  
email: jivaneditor@gmail.com

**Circulation & change of address:**

Circulation Manager, Jivan,  
Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, P.B. 70,  
Anand - 388 001, Gujarat.  
email: jivandoot@yahoo.co.in  
Annual Subscription: Rs.250/-

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

**D**id you hear that a Union Minister referred to the safe release of our own Alex Premkumar and held it up as an example of the BJP government's 'positive secularism'?

After attacks in churches in Delhi and one in Mumbai, there is a growing perception that these were orchestrated by the Hindutva elements, emboldened now because of the BJP government. The robbery in a convent in West Bengal and the rape of a senior nun there have strengthened this perception.

A number of our leaders have voiced the Christian community's anxieties. Some political parties as well as other thinkers have spoken about it. (See p. 12) The most talked about is an article written by Julio Ribeiro in *the Indian Express* (17 March '15). The Minister, Nitin Gadkari, who talked of the priest's release, also referred to Ribeiro's article and said it saddened him. What did Ribeiro, a devout Catholic and a highly respected former police officer, say?

"There was a time, not very long ago - one year short of 30, to be precise - when only a Christian was chosen to go to Punjab to fight what then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi termed "the nation's battle" against separatists. I had accepted a "demotion" from secretary in the Union home ministry to DGP of the state of Punjab at the personal request of the prime minister.

"Arjun Singh, the cabinet minister, remarked that when my appointment was announced the next morning, the Hindus of Punjab would breathe more freely and rejoice. I presume Hindus would include RSS cadres... When 25 RSS men on parade were shot dead in cold blood one morning, then Punjab Governor S.S. Ray and I rushed to the spot to console the stricken families. ..The governor was heckled and abused. I was welcomed.

"Today, in my 86th year, I feel threatened, reduced to a stranger in my own country. The same category of citizens who had put their trust in me to rescue them... have now come out of the woodwork to condemn me for practising a religion that is different from theirs... Is it coincidence or a well-thought-out plan that the systematic targeting of a small and peaceful community should begin only

after the BJP government of Narendra Modi came to power last May? "Ghar wapsi", the declaration of Christmas as "Good Governance Day", the attack on Christian churches and schools in Delhi, all added to a sense of siege that now afflicts these peaceful people...."

Now that the talk about this is getting louder and louder, like good Jesuits, we should, patiently and carefully, look at both sides. On the one side is what everyone knows: Hindu Rashtra and Hindutva are part of the core ideology of the RSS, which has fathered not merely the BJP that rules the country now, but also quite a few organizations whose job is to provoke a religious divide. It is the same RSS that has forged Modi, our Prime Minister, and many of his colleagues. Wherever the BJP has come to power its men (and women!) say, do and allow things that make the minorities feel insecure. All this is true.

On the other hand, does this insecurity - this 'sense of seige' - make us see crimes that can happen anywhere, committed by criminals whose motives may have nothing to do with any religion, as motivated attacks against the Christian community?

The attack and the rape happened in West Bengal, which is not ruled by the BJP. Gadkari pointed out that two of the men arrested for the attack are Muslims. The police say that they suspect a criminal gang in Bangladesh that crosses the borders for such crimes. Could there be others who exploit our anxiety and suspicion? Do some political parties use these for their own political goals? Gadkari asserted that this perception has been created by opposition parties. "Such things happened even during Congress rule. Our party, our government have nothing to do with this. We will not protect anyone damaging a minority institution, church or mosque. ..We will protect minorities." Gadkari also revealed that he talked about Ribeiro's perception with the Prime Minister who was "very sensitive, equally concerned" about "this perception".

Let us wait and watch what they will do to address this perception. For all the shepherds and sheep of "the little flock" this could be an Easter hope and prayer. A happy Easter!  
- M.A.J.A.



Arise, Companions,

*Awaken Our World!*

BY FRANCIS GONSALVES, SJ

### Time to Wake Up to Times-Places-Persons

When agonized Jesus needed his apostles most, they were fast asleep. Yet, when they awoke to the deeper meaning of his life-death-resurrection and were Spirit-filled at Pentecost, they became firebrands “turning the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). Peter’s successor, Pope Francis, is also turning the world upside down. And we Jesuits are experiencing an unprecedented ‘confluence of *kairos*’ in terms of time-place-persons.

First, we have a historic situation where the Pope happens to be a Jesuit. Second, in terms of ‘place’ these two harmoniously straddle contexts as diverse as Latin America (Argentina), Europe (Italy-Spain), and Asia (Japan-Philippines) thereby opening out horizons hitherto unthinkable. Third, in terms of ‘time’: (a) the commemoration of the Restoration of the Society is fresh in our minds and hearts, (b) we’re celebrating the ‘Year of Consecrated Life’ with Pope Francis exhorting us to “Wake Up!” and (c) we’re participating in Provincial Congregations, which will fructify in GC 36. Fourth, in terms of ‘numbers’ the South Asian Assistency is the largest in the world and must contribute a lion’s share of changes urgently required to turn the world upside down, collaborating with God’s Spirit who ceaselessly “blows where it wills” (Jn 3:8).

This article is a summary of my presentation at the October 2014 JCSA Phesama meeting where Julian

Fernandes, Rudi Heredia, Jerry Rosario and I offered reflections for discussion. My reflections - highlighting trinities and triads - will first lay down foundations.

### 2. Foundations: United with the Trinity to Take Stock of Triads

Ignatius loved triads: three points for meditation, three human powers, three types of persons, three kinds of humility, three methods of praying and Trinity envisioned as three musical notes. In consonance with Inigo’s peak experience at La Storta - where he had an apparition of the Trinity, with the Father saying to him: “I wish that you serve us”—let’s place ourselves in the bosom of the Trinity to gaze upon our province-Society-Church-World with their lights and shadows, perils and possibilities. We do this in order to ‘*know*’ how God sees all these realities. Knowing must lead to loving, and serving.

#### 2.1. A Spatiotemporal Triad of Times-Persons-Spaces

For anything to be successful, we require the *right person* at the *right time* in the *right place*. Fifty years ago VC II urged the Church to prudently respond to the ‘signs of the *times*’ (LG 4). Simultaneously, the Church was also becoming aware of the changing ‘signs of *place*’ since, from being a predominantly so-called ‘Christian West’, the Church was evolving into a ‘Christian East’ and ‘Christian South’ with growing numbers in Africa same demographic characterizes the today, there being African and Latin than Europeans. Thus, taking stock of times-places-persons is indispensable for any missionary endeavour.

#### A Sociological Triad of Space-Knowledge-Power

Coupled with our focus on times-places-persons, we note that globalization has changed our world drastically. Physical borders have collapsed. Today, one does not have to physically move to Hong Kong or New York to give a talk to people or transact business in these faraway places. The InfoTech revolution has radically reduced the distance between places, cut the time taken to do what were formerly considered time-consuming tasks, and rendered massive work forces (labourers) redundant. Today, one can travel in cyberspace and lecture from home to millions of viewers, worldwide, via satellite, video conferencing, etc.

*The ‘institute’ - rules, decrees, customs, etc - evolved from a day-to-day living of life and not the other way around.*



and Asia. This change Society of Jesus, many more Asian, American Jesuits and north Americans. of times-places-persons is indispensable for any missionary endeavour.

In these changed globalized circumstances, Marxian and postmodern thinkers hold that those who seek success need not be overly concerned about accumulating 'physical space' (land, buildings, machinery, etc.) but should control what can be called 'conceptual space' referring to revolutionary ideas, transformative discourses, evocative symbols, creative insights, etc. For example, Bill Gates and 'Microsoft' do not own skyscrapers and large tracts of land, but have captured worlds of ideas, colonized minds, revamped traditional concepts, bridged communication gaps and linked billions of people worldwide through internet webs. In fact, while physical space was an asset in pre-globalization times, it could now be a 'white elephant' that restricts fast flows of resources (personnel or capital investments) into other channels and avenues which yield better output.

Another insight that will help us to effectively evaluate our Society is the close connection of the triad: space, knowledge, power. The space that one occupies leads to one getting a particular type of knowledge and wielding a specific type of power. Thus, if a Jesuit spends his whole time only in an academic institution without any contact with the poor in slums, or without regular dealings with the lay faithful in parishes, he is not likely to know their struggles

and problems. While the saying 'knowledge is power' is true; we note that certain types of knowledge give rise to certain types of power depending on where one lives.

**Community, Identity, Mission: Tripod Supporting Jesuit Life**

The above foundations will now enable us to review three areas highlighted in GC 35 - Community, Identity and Mission - upon which Jesuit life rests. Every Jesuit belongs to some community, possesses an identity, and is entrusted with a mission. Our deft dealings within these three domains will determine our effectiveness as Jesuits.

*Fr General desires that resources be pooled together and more provinces be clubbed together so as to use resources more effectively.*



*Conceptualizing Jesuit Community:* Community is basic to Jesuit life. We usually think of community as those sharing common space in some institution or 'centre'. However, today, influential theorists remind us that there is also the possibility of having 'imagined communities' or 'symbolic communities'. For instance, Anthony

Cohen writes: "Community exists in the minds of its members and should not be confused with geographic location. By extension, the distinctiveness of communities and, thus, the reality of their boundaries, similarly lies in the mind, in the meanings which people attach to them, not in their structural forms." Sudhir Kakar's research reinforces this by showing how people suddenly get violent and begin killing their neighbours who belong to a different religion since their sense of "We" (community) gets threatened, although in normal times they might have lived peacefully. A good example of 'imagined communities' is the *Sangh Parivar* striving to create a *Hindu Rashtra* by malicious use of myths, stories, symbols, images, etc.

3.2. *Affixing Jesuit Identity:* Identities are hotly contested today. It's said, "In the jungle eat or be eaten, in society define or be defined."

Identity is not something fixed and constructed once-and-for-all. Identities shift, change, and evolve. In *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, Amartya Sen warns us that identities can - and have often been - the cause of violence. Identities associated with antiquity, power, purity, knowledge, elitism and so on can be asserted in public to defend personal defects, establish superiority, wield power, gain advantage, subordinate or demonize others or simply mask the true self. Today, there is need

to ask: What is my/our 'Jesuit identity' [personal, provincial, universal]? Do we still cling on to a SJ = *Sab Jannewalla* [know-all] myth? Is there need to reformulate our identity?

*Mission as 'Com-Mission':*

Reflecting upon mission, we can raise Inigo's three questions before the Crucified Christ: What have I/We done? What am I/We doing? What will I/We do? Jesuit mission is always 'com-mission', i.e., we are sent by the Father to labour alongside the Christ suffering in various ways, today, in the power of the Spirit. Jesuits are ever on the move for *More*. Are we really mobile, movable; or, do we mouth clichés like 'men on the frontiers' while being cozily nestled in our comfort zones? What does Arrupe's phrase *apostolic aggressivity* mean? What about GC 35's 'community as mission'?

**Evaluating our Jesuit 'MNC':  
Magis Networking Companionship**

With these brief reflections on the community-identity-mission foundational tripod, we could reflect upon the effectiveness of our 'way of proceeding'. Like any other MNC, we Jesuits have an impressive multinational network owning large tracts of land, institutions, labour, capital and organization at our disposal. Indeed, we are an MNC: *Magis Networking Companionship* - inheritors of a priceless Ignatian legacy: our 'sources'. Moreover, we must look around us and within us to see what 'resources' we possess, here-and-now, and also imagine what '*More*' we can do as men of the '*Magis*' (outsources).

*4.1. Looking Backward at Sources:*

We go back to the root, the *fons et principium* of Ignatian charism. In

***The world perspective is different if seen from the outskirts rather than from the centre. This forces us to continuously rethink our religious life.***

times when priestly life was swinging between the poles of extreme worldliness on the one hand and ignorance, *fuga mundi* (run away from the evil world) and *apotaxis* (total renunciation of world to retreat into monastic enclaves), on the other, Inigo devised what Faber called a revolutionary *instituto vitae* [way of life]: "The *institutum* [rules, decrees, customs, etc.] evolved from a day-to-day living of life [*vita*] and not the other way around." What's striking about the first companions is that they had an institute by which they *lived* long before they dreamed of seeking approval from the Apostolic See. The Society of Jesus would be a mobile, pilgrim, ready-to-go-anywhere, anytime *communitas in dispersionem*. Although physical proximity would help these 'friends in the Lord' it was not necessary since their communion was rooted in God. Thus, in Manapadu, Francis Xavier pinned the signatures of his companions close to his heart because it was not physical proximity that

kept him connected to them, but communion in Christ.

Original Jesuit identity evolved from the *instituto vitae* or manner of life that was constantly, consciously lived in the Triune God. Inigo himself would later define "the institute in Spanish as *compañía* [Latin, *societas*] and his friends as *compañeros* [Latin, *socius*] ... *Compañía* and *compañero* come from the Latin *cum* + *panis*, meaning, those who share

bread; and the root of

Latin *societas* and *socius* is *sec*, which occurs in the verb *sequor* [follow]: one who follows another, complies with or conforms to another, one closely associated with another. The two sets of words indicate that Jesuits

would be 'sharers of bread', sharing in common purpose, sharing in the same life and the same aspirations.

Authentic Jesuit mission flows from community-and-identity. Inigo and friends struggled with ascetical problems, juridical problems, ministerial problems, practical problems, even a problem of public relations to decide about obedience. After discernment, Inigo wrote: "We concluded that it is better and more necessary for us to give obedience to one of our companions." Obedience was expected of religious even before the time of Ignatius; however, obeying *for the sake of mission* was an Ignatian innovation. Impelled by 'obedience for mission' the First Companions took up ministries which others never ever imagined. For example, when an important Council like Trent did not even have



a single word on foreign missions, Inigo - the impossible dreamer - had already commissioned Francis Xavier to the Indies. Truly, it was the *Magis*, the *greater* good which determined mission and not any predetermined structures or institutions.

Interestingly, our Society was suppressed not because we ran schools and colleges, but because of the 'marginal missions' which shook political powers (Spain's Charles III and Portugal's Marquis of Pombal), challenged economic exploitation (*Reductions* of Paraguay), opposed theological errors (Jansenism), and critiqued clerical decadence and papal laxity (Clement XIV). And, though Clement XIV signed *Dominus ac Redemptor* on July 21, 1773, he secretly confessed: "I have cut off my right hand!"

*Gauging Our 'Resources'*: 'Resources' embrace everything that the South Asian Assistancy owns. Basically, it's all the 'hardware' we possess in terms of land-buildings-institutions-capital-machinery, plus all the 'software' [the 'conceptual spaces'] by way of Jesuit minds-brains, Jesuitical shrewdness, Jesuit academic degrees, conceptual competence, intellectual abilities and organizational-planning-managerial skills. Here, many questions regarding community-identity-mission arise. For instance, in terms of 'physical space', how much land do we possess? How many institutions-buildings do we own? How many 'centres' do we have? What are these 'central' to? What is the 'periphery' or 'frontier' of these 'centres'? What are the equipments-vehicles-machineries-computer aids

we use? Are all really beneficial? How much of the above 'hardware' is immovable and might prove difficult to maintain in the future? Can we think of any other model besides the 'institutional model'? How does institutionalization affect our mobility for 'marginal missions'?

In terms of 'conceptual competence' as well as administration and organization, we could ask: How many of 'ours' are in administration, employed either full-time or part-time in each of our 'centres'? How many are in the intellectual apostolate? How many of those in the intellectual apostolate contribute outside of our 'Jesuit institution'; for e.g., in the University, in daily

***Institutions carry with them potential risks. They can become outmoded and irrelevant and so lose their religious identity.***

newspapers, on TV and other secular media, or government/NGO groups? Here, one might also ask: How much of money do we have? From where? What hooks-hurdles-handicaps come along with it? How well spread out is our capital? Any FCRA difficulties foreseeable? What about budgeting and accountability systems for our institutions and

works? What if our financial resources dry up and our donors stop funding us? Does what we 'have' symbolize who we 'are', in India: with a vow of *aparigraha*, minority, 'least society'?

*Reaching Outward for 'Outsources'*: "Do not do yourself what someone else can more profitably do for you," is the basic logic for outsourcing in our global world. Hence, it is pertinent to ask: Do we outsource the works that others can do better than ourselves? To what extent do non-Jesuits partake of our ministries? Only as executors? Or, as co-planners, co-executors and co-evaluators? Are there things, which we are doing right now, that can be done far better/faster by others and handed over to them so that we can concentrate on other areas of greater pastoral-prophetic importance? What is the extent of lay participation in our pastoral ministries? These are some of the questions that can be asked in this sphere.

**In the Footsteps of Pope Francis and Fr General**

At the outset I'd mentioned that we're witnessing a 'confluence of *kairoi*' through the words, works and wondrous witness of Pope Francis and Fr General, Adolfo Nicolas. It would help our reflections to mention a few of these:

*Our Magis-Motivated, Margin-*

*Moving Pope Francis*: Pope Francis has rocked the 'Barque of Peter' like no other past pope. First, he moved residence from the Apostolic Palace to Domus Sanctae Marthae. This was spatial as well as symbolic. Second,



choosing a small band of eight cardinals from different parts of the world as ‘core councillors’ and later appointing cardinals from small nations, worldwide, shows that he is keen on spreading centralized power over a larger area. Third, his call for a ‘poor church’ and a ‘church for the poor’ indicate his resolve to specifically opt for the poor and the marginalized: washing the feet of women, opening soup kitchens, barber-shops and night-shelters at the Vatican, meeting grieving survivors of typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, migrants at Lampedusa, Italy, etc. Fourth, the questionnaire he sends to families worldwide to get an idea of their concerns and crises is heartwarming. Fifth, a people-centered pastoral sensitivity animates his approach to all issues. Sixth, he is globally respected as a man of God and a lover of the poor.

Pope Francis’s sayings are challenging: “The world perspective is different if seen from the outskirts rather than from the centre. This forces us to continuously rethink our religious life.” He stated that in order to opt for the poor one must live with them: “We have to look at things from the periphery. We must go there in order to really know the life of the people. Otherwise we tend to embrace stern, fundamentalist positions, based on a centralized vision.” Of the centrality of discernment, he said: “Discernment is always done in the presence of the Lord, looking at the signs, listening to the things that happen, the feeling of the people, especially the poor.” Above all, he pleads: “Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living! It is possible to live differently in this world!”

**Although physical proximity would help these ‘friends in the Lord’ it was not necessary since their communion was rooted in God.**

*Structural Changes Envisioned by Fr General:* In the field of participation in universal planning and call for more cooperation, Fr General desires that resources be pooled together and more provinces be clubbed together so as to use resources more effectively. He has also stressed the intellectual apostolate as one of the main contributions of the Society. He cautions about institutionalization: “Institutions are an important resource for promoting the *missio Dei*, the reason for the Society’s existence. They can be a starting point for a variety of programs, offer a suitable basis for appropriate initiatives in their local area, and assure people that Jesuits take seriously their commitment to serve them. .... Yet it is also true that institutions carry with them *potential risks*. They can become outmoded and irrelevant, lose their religious and Jesuit identity, consume a large number of personnel and financial resources, and thus become obstacles to apostolic mobility, overlooking other creative apostolic initiatives.”



## 6. Called to ‘Be’ More and ‘Do’ More

As we participate in provincial congregations and prepare for GC 36, let’s evaluate our persons-times-spaces with that ‘third eye’ of faith. Let’s question our community-identity-mission: (a) How large and inclusive is my/our conception of community? What are the lights and shadows therein? How do we respond to these? (b) How can I/We reformulate

Jesuit identity so as to stand in solidarity with those who have lost their identity? (c) What is my/our dream for mission? What should we build up anew? What should we

prophetically break down? How do we *be* different and *act* differently to make a difference?

When Francis Xavier was commissioned to India, he was fully awake and aroused by Inigo’s words: “Go, set the world on fire!” Today, Pope Francis reiterates, “Go forth!” May the Triune God plant big dreams in our hearts and give us a daring spirit to truly conceptualize and commit ourselves to frontier missions in order to set the world on fire, anew. By so doing we will be exemplary, effective disciples of God’s Son who once said: “I have come to cast fire upon the earth and how I wish it were already kindled!” (Lk 12:49) .....

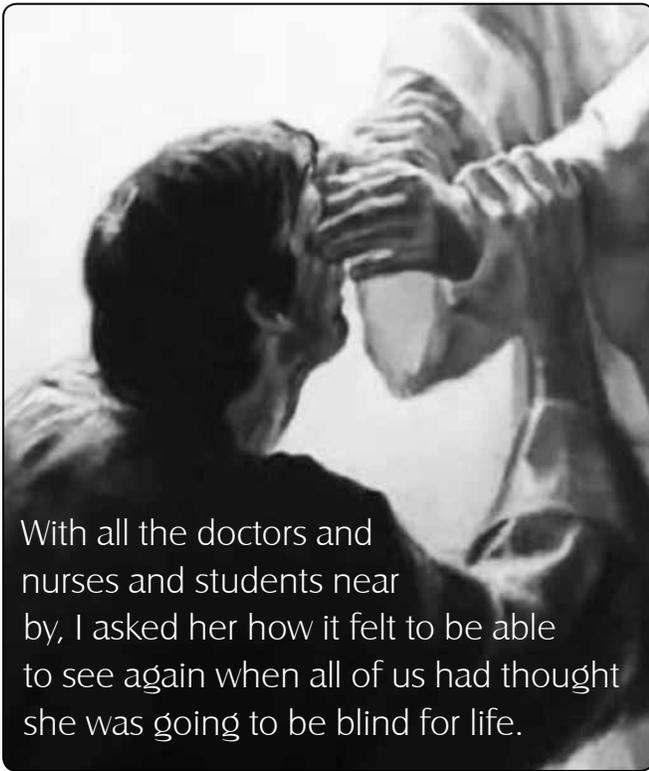
*Fr Francis Gonsalves, SJ (GUJ) is currently a Professor of Theology at the Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi. He can be contacted at: fragonsa@gmail.com*

BY PAUL O'REILLY, SJ

I sometimes wonder what it felt like to be Jesus, to have the power to heal people just by touching them... No fuss, no drugs, no operations – you just get better right away. What a wonderful thing to be able to do for people!

One person who made me think that was Tessa; and the best feeling I've ever had in my life was making her see again.

When I first met Tessa, she was a 14-year old girl who had just come into our remote mission hospital in the Amazon with a very serious and very rare infection of the brain called cavernous sinus thrombosis. That's when an infection gets into the blood vessels right inside the



With all the doctors and nurses and students near by, I asked her how it felt to be able to see again when all of us had thought she was going to be blind for life.

brain and it cuts off the blood supply to the eyes. Even if they don't die, they are often seriously and permanently brain damaged.

Tessa did not die; but she was completely blind for about ten days. According to the books we looked up, once this happens, this blindness is usually permanent. But we put her on all the treatment we could think of and hoped for the best. And for once, the best happened.



## The power to heal

Almost miraculously, she began to recover and every day, when I went to see her, she would be able to see just a little better until, after about six weeks, her sight was almost completely back to normal. I don't think I've ever felt so proud of myself.

One day on the big weekly grand ward round, with all the doctors and nurses and students, I asked her how it felt to be able to see again when all of us had thought she was going to be blind for life. She thought for a little while and then she said she felt 'a bit sorry'. I was surprised – and a little disappointed – and rather regretting having asked the question in such a public way - I asked her why?

She replied: because she wanted people to go on treating her like they had when she was blind. When she was blind, whenever people came to her, they would touch her – just to let her know they were there. And they would touch her with great gentleness and love. That hadn't happened to her before. And she liked that. And now that she could see again, she didn't want them to stop doing that.

I learned from that – I hope. I learned that it was not I who had healed her at all. Certainly, I had used my medicines to fight the infection and stop her from dying and even get her sight back. But the people who had healed her were all those people who had come to see her and had touched her with love. And to her, that was more important even than getting back her sight.

What that taught me was that it isn't just Jesus who can heal people simply by touching them. All of us have the power to heal people – if we touch them the way that Jesus touched them.

*(Paul O'Reilly SJ, is a doctor who works among the homeless in London.)*

*Courtesy: Jesuits & Friends*

# JCSA Meet at Vinayalaya



**Thanked God with Prem Kumar:** The JCSA meeting began on a celebratory note, on 22 Feb 2015, at Vinayalaya, Mumbai, with the announcement of Fr Premkumar Alexi's release from captivity in Afghanistan, after 8 months and 20 days. The Afghan mission is one of the frontier missions of the JCSA. It was only natural for the provincials to breathe a sigh of relief on his release. They thanked the Lord and celebrated with him the new lease of life he has been given. The icing on the cake was being with Fr Premkumar for a morning session on 25 Feb, when he shared his harrowing experiences. It was a moving experience for all of us, to encounter one who entered the lion's den (Taliban), yet returned stronger and more determined to work for the cause of refugees.

**Various inputs followed:** A day and a half was set aside for a workshop on "Transformational Leadership" by Fr George Sebastian, (JAM). He dealt with two issues: Leadership Code and DISC. Good Leadership consists of 60 -70% of common elements that make up leadership, while the other 30% is made up of the specific requirements of the organization. We listed points specific to Jesuit leadership. They were: spirituality with a difference (a total trust in God and an attitude of discernment in all undertakings), knowledge of the Society, People-centeredness with special concern for the poor, Cura Personalis, Confidentiality, Self-sacrificing love, Love for the Society and the Church, Simplicity of life and a Good communityman. DISC stands for Dominant, Inspirational, Steadiness, Compliance. It helps a leader discover his/her behavioural patterns in the context of assigned leadership tasks. Further reflection on DISC led us to name the viruses in our respective provinces, and also to unearth the viruses at the assistancy level.

Three inputs on ministry with the youth were highlighted. They were the CLC, AICUF, and the Alumni association in Mumbai. Each of them evinced interest among the provincials, who reflected on how similar programs could be replicated in their respective provinces, so as to reach out to youth in a meaningful way, molding them into men and women for others.

Sharing by Fr John Dardis, SJ, President of the European Conference, gave us a sense of where the conference was heading. He gave us an idea of how they were dealing, in a professional and sensitive manner, with the process of restructuring. He picked two major challenges they faced: evangelizing in a secular milieu and bringing about unity among the diverse units of the conference, which consists of 27 sovereign nations. He did mention that the Pope Francis effect was manifesting itself in a slow but perceptible recovery in vocations to the Society.

"Emerging Socio-Political Trends in India", was the topic dealt with by two eminent lawyers cum social activists and writers: Teesta Setalvada and Irfan Engineer. Their inputs were informative, analytical, and motivating. They provided us with a view to the current scenario in the country, not usually dealt with by the media. They viewed the situation from the point of view of the marginalized, the minorities, and secular-minded concerned citizens. They also provided us with positive alternatives and steps that remedy the current situation.

**Break and Relaxation:** The half day's break provided the provincials time to relax with one another as they spent an evening,

lounged upon the upper deck of the launch, on a placid Arabian Sea at the historic "Gate Way of India".

**Down to Business:** Business sessions involve a lot of work. They are preceded by commissions and committees who work on various assignments given to them, which come to the JCSA for their consideration and decisions. This meeting had its fair share of business.

Fr General has recently created a solidarity fund for the whole Society, getting provinces with surplus funds in the seminary arca, to transfer them to the solidarity fund, so as to benefit provinces that have insufficient funds, to care for the formation needs of large number of scholastics. A similar attempt is being undertaken at the assistancy level to redistribute and cater to the needs of the provinces in the S.A. Assistancy.

Given the felt need to reorient the working of the two ISI's (Delhi & Bangalore), so as to increase their impact on the national and international stage, synergize their resources, and be of help to the provinces in their social outreach programs, Fr Sebastia Raj, presented to the JCSA the findings of the evaluation undertaken by a commission to study ISI, Delhi. He also presented the situation of ISI Bangalore, and raised some pertinent questions for our reflection.

Fr Irudaya Raj (ADF) shared the findings of the various meetings with formation groups and the progress made so far. The assessment of candidates to the Society at the pre-novitiate made more professional; the Log Book to follow up scholastics from one stage to the other, housing collegians etc. Concerns revolved around how to make formation a personalized, integrated and transformational experience for the formees, leading them to become men of spiritual, social and intellectual depth. - who would use the media without succumbing to its addictiveness. More scholastics and priests should be enrolled for Master's in Philosophy and Theology.

**Planning and Evaluation:** The next meeting to be held in Pune in early November, will include the delegates to GC 36. For the first timers to a GC, it will serve as a more immediate preparation for the GC. According to the new constitution of the GC, the work of the congregation and preparation of the document will start in the assistancy itself.

The meeting that closed on 28 Feb was well planned and efficiently conducted. A lot of business was transacted. There was a sense of openness to share, to learn from each other, and be challenged by others. Specifically there was a willingness to cooperate on the ambitious plan of restructuring, started in the assistancy, so as to streamline its functioning and make it more responsive to the needs of mission - both local and universal. Fr George Pattery, as head of the group, provided the necessary direction and clarity when required. Fr Lisbert D'souza was present at all sessions, intervening whenever necessary to provide valuable insights, direction and encouragement.

After 14 years Bombay province hosted the JCSA meeting. Fr Vernon D'Cunha, the provincial, provided the participants with refurbished living rooms in corridors named after Fr Arrupe and Fr Faber and a conference room, named, "Pope Francis Hall". He, along with the local team of Jesuits and others, were in constant attendance.

- Keith Abranches, SJ

**V**idyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi conducted a two-day national seminar on "Witnessing to the Gospel in a Polarised India" on 16-17 February 2015. Fr P.R. John was the co-ordinator of the seminar. Two Jesuit sociologists, Prof Rudolf Heredia and Prof Ambrose Pinto made brilliant presentations on 'Religious Freedom: The Constitutional Debate and the Law Today' and 'The Challenges of Minorities, Christians and Dalits in India in the Present Context of Hindutva' respectively. A well-known Indian theologian Prof Jacob Parappally, MSFS made

## Witnessing to the Gospel in a Polarized India

an excellent presentation on 'Witnessing to the Gospel: Gift and Task in the Present Day India'. A noted writer and historian from Jamia Millia Islamia, Prof Mukul Kesavan presented an incisive analysis on the cultural nationalism of the BJP government under the title: 'Nationalism at Crossroads: The Struggle for Political 'Commonsense'.

**Unity in Diversity and Diversity in Unity:** India is immensely diverse in every aspect of life. Peoples of this nation speak numerous languages. Their cultures are varied. They follow different religious traditions. Their dress, tastes, literary, cultural and political histories are so varied. Thus, ours is rightly called the subcontinent! The diversity enriches us. In this diversity we affirm our unity and in our unity we recognise diversity. Our unity as peoples of India derives its strength and nourishment from such diversity. From this diversity arise a shared sense of oneness and a deeply mystical experience of union as fellow citizens. A common political identity as Indians comes *not* from a particular dominant culture, but from a shared sense of oneness that is rooted in diversity. This unity in diversity and diversity in unity is the bedrock of our Indian Nationalism.

**Homogenization does not fit the sub-continent:** Prof. Mukul Kesavan insisted that the leaders of our freedom struggle invoked this shared-sense-of-oneness and shaped and moulded a Nationalism that tried to represent different shades of beliefs, perspectives, and ways of life of Indians. They found an effective way of representing diversity in the pluralistic subcontinent. The Indian National Congress that steered the freedom struggle embraced diversity and its leaders adopted a self-conscious pluralism. They did not favour a syncretic uniformity, in which cultures merge and give rise to one Indian Culture! It would be simply an illusion. They knew that such homogenization does not fit the sub-continent. Such homogeneity neglects diversity and obfuscates Nationalism with majoritarianism. Such majoritarianism creates first class and second class citizens. One dominant community corners powers for oneself with a powerful political rhetoric. It is obvious that RSS and their ideological associates hold on to such truncated vision and try to force this upon a diverse nation, Prof. Kesavan maintained.

**Emerging aspirations of subaltern groups:** The struggle for preserving and protecting diversity and secular space in present day India. The nationalism forged by the leaders of our

freedom struggle should be opened to emerging aspirations of many subaltern groups; Dalits, Adivasis, socially disadvantaged groups, and minorities. The emerging young Indians from every socio-cultural-religious group want a new and developed India, free from corruption. An India for all - not for any particular section of people, or only for Corporates. This needs leaders with vision and integrity. Mr Arvind Kejriwal has shown such imagination and integrity. It certainly looks like spring time in Delhi politics. We need more such leaders.



**Human rights as a common ground for all secular forces:** To take this a step further, the socially disadvantaged, marginalised groups, Dalits, Adivasis and major sections of minorities continue to remain at the peripheries. Their situation has worsened in the first decade of this new century. They cannot be sacrificed on the altar of development. Any development discourse thus should include their rights and aspirations. The Nationalism that emphasises diversity should make human rights as a common ground for all secular forces to interact and work with. The nationalism that respects diversity should build its secular edifice on the foundation of Human Rights.

**Threat to Minorities:** Fr Ambrose Pinto, speaking on 'The Challenges of Hindutva to Minorities (Christians and Dalits)' stated that a vocal section in our country acknowledges the Christian contribution to nation-building, especially in the fields of education, health care and social sector. However in the new BJP government the Christian community has been systematically sidelined: the conspicuous absence of Prime Minister's wishes to the Christian community on Christmas Day 2014; the way 25 December was announced as 'Good Governance Day', the lies spread on conversions, the attacks. Hindutvavadis' 'Hindi, Hindu and Hindustan' was a threat to national unity. Christians are considered a threat because Christianity tries to empower the weaker sections of our nation and how this is construed as detrimental to the Hindutvavadis' socio-economic status. An adequate response to this threat should begin by creating awareness on the divisive nature of the Hindutva forces.

**Witnessing to the gospel:** Fr Jacob Parappally's paper was on the theme of the seminar: 'Witnessing to the Gospel: A Gift and a Task in the Present Day India'. He emphasized the need for witnessing to the gospel in a fragmented society 'which does not allow humans to live in harmony and peace'. He said that Christianity was supposed to be the good news in contrast to the bad news of intolerance. We are supposed to foster a culture of communion against the Hindutva's culture of division; integral development of everyone against exploitation by a few. He urged us to promote the Gospel values inherent in Indian Constitution. Frs Denzil, Maria Arul Raja, and Francis Minj responded to the talks. A theologizing session was facilitated by Frs John Mundu, Stan Alla and Sr Shalini Mulackal.

- Benedict Santhosh, P.R. John & Victor Edwin

# 50 Years after Vatican II: Looking with Pope Francis' Eyes

interview with **John O'Malley, SJ**

**John W. O'Malley, SJ**, a historian, theologian and professor at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., is a well-known writer and author of several books which include: *The First Jesuits* (1993: translated into 12 languages), *What Happened at Vatican II* (2008), and *The Jesuits: A History from Ignatius to the Present* (2014). He presented his thoughts on "the Legacy of Vatican II with Pope Francis' eyes" in a public lecture at Santa Clara University on 05 Feb '15. He also spoke extensively about Pope Francis' leadership and spirituality. Here are excerpts from what he told **John Rose, SJ**, our correspondent, for an exclusive interview to Jivan.

**It has been 50 years since Vatican II ended. What is the legacy of the council?**

Among other legacies, the Vatican II gave the Church a new role as reconciler in a world torn apart by hatreds and violence. Reconciliation, a mission incumbent upon the leaders of the Church but also upon each and every Catholic, was one of the great themes running through the Council and was expressed in a variety of ways. The document on the liturgy, for instance, promoted a reconciliation of the Church with non-Western cultures by inviting symbols and rituals from those cultures into the liturgy itself. *Nostra Aetate* meant putting behind us a tradition of belittling and denigrating other faiths. Pope John Paul II set a marvelous example by his many meetings with Jewish and Muslim groups. Pope Francis continues with this same legacy.

**What prompted such a turn?**

The life experiences of Pope John XXIII, which were unlike those of any previous pope, hold important clues. As a young priest, he had served in the Italian Army in World War I; later he spent

nearly two decades as a Vatican diplomat in Bulgaria and Turkey, and was papal nuncio to Paris at the end of World War II. He knew diversity, turmoil, sin and evil firsthand, but he also knew goodness as he found it in people of other faiths and no faith. As far as I know, he never used the word "reconciliation," but it captures, I believe, what inspired him.

Vatican II, in its decree on the lit-

condition for not becoming an irrelevant fossil. Change, as such, is not the enemy of identity but often the condition for maintaining it.

**What is the lasting legacy of the Vatican II?**

The lasting legacy of Vatican II is that it taught us *how to live*. Let me explain. For the first time in history, the Council



**"Francis is the first pope in 50 years not to have participated in Vatican II, yet he is, in my opinion, the most thoroughly Vatican II pope we have ever had."**

urgency, also opened the Mass to symbols and traditions of non-Western cultures, permitting the displacement of Latin with vernacular languages. This reconciliatory move has played a part in the remarkable growth of the Church in Africa and parts of Asia.

**How are these changes really important to the Church?**

The Church, like any living organism, has changed with time and will continue to change in the years to come. This is a condition for being alive. This is a

insisted on the "universal call to holiness" and made clear that promoting that call was what the Church was all about. Moreover, through its vocabulary the council provided a template of holiness. Look at the words: hope, friendship, partnership, collegiality, reconciliation, brotherhood and sisterhood. These are deeply Christian words which were virtually absent in the previous Councils. The council called us to work in the world for the Church but also *for the world itself*. This might sound like a platitude, but no council had ever spoken this way or called

upon Christians to expend themselves in this way. The real fruit of *this* Council is how it taught us how to *live*. That is incomparably more important than theological niceties and will, I hope, be the lasting legacy of the Council.

Before the council, Catholics were not only forbidden to pray with those of other faiths but also indoctrinated into a disdain or even contempt for them. What would you like to say now?

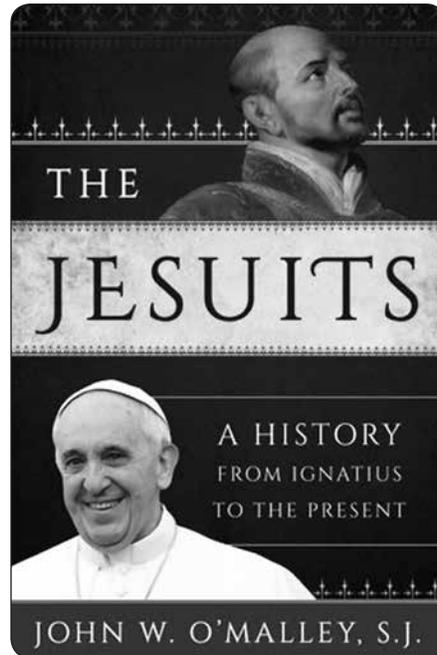
Catholics are now, under the leadership of Pope Francis, encouraged to foster friendly relations with Orthodox and Protestant Christians, as well as Jews and Muslims, and even to pray with them. Two years ago, I taught a doctoral seminar on Vatican II to six students: one Catholic, one Jew, two Protestants and two Muslims. I have officiated at weddings alongside rabbis and Methodist pastors. Catholic colleges and universities now as a matter of course have rabbis, imams and Protestant ministers on their campus ministry staff.

What is special about Pope Francis?

Francis is the first pope in 50 years not to have participated in Vatican II, yet he is, in my opinion, the most thoroughly Vatican II pope we have ever had. He was ordained in 1969, which means his theological training came immediately after the council. He learned to see the council in its totality and with a freedom that came from NOT participating. I believe that Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI on some deep level were still fighting the battles of the council. Francis transcended that, and he showed it in remarkable ways, such as his ongoing and public dialogue with Rabbi Abraham Skorka. No Catholic prelate in the history of the church had ever done anything remotely resembling that. It was possible (and made desirable) by the Council. More could be said, for example, about his major role in reviving CELAM, the Conference of Bishops of Latin America, another example of dialogue as well as of emphasizing the dignity and importance of the local church, another major theme of the council.

Does Jesuit spirituality influence his actions?

I think it is impossible fully to understand Pope Francis without reckoning with the impact on him of his Jesuit experience and Jesuit spirituality. His frequent use of the word “periphery”



and the need for the church to go out of itself into a missionary mode is but one instance. In his concluding message to the recent Extraordinary Synod he likened the debates to a corporate “discernment of spirits,” and in that regard he made explicit mention of the Spiritual Exercises. I think that his insistence with bishops gathered for the Synod that they speak their minds without fear but also be ready to listen to others, is an idea he got from participating in General Congregations 32 and 33.

How do you see him as a world’s spiritual leader?

He IS today the world’s spiritual leader. If you want proof, look at the way he is celebrated in the USA, not a specially Catholic-favoring country on the cover of almost every important secular magazine!

He is recognized as a genuine person - what you see is what you get. And what you get is what so many people today are looking for - a leader who has a positive message, who seems to be in

touch with grass-roots reality, who holds up high ideals but understands human weakness and is compassionate towards it. He speaks to people’s best and deepest yearnings for themselves and the world they live in.

What has he done that no pope has dared?

When shortly after he was elected he washed the feet of a Muslim woman, a convicted criminal, he did something no pope had dared -not just the act itself, but defying the rules set down by the Holy See itself. When he appointed the cardinals to help him with the reform of the Curia - the G9 - he again did something no pope had done, i.e., publically admitting that the pope did not have all the answers and himself needed an ongoing dialogue in order to perform his function.

Can we call him a servant leader?

Last year in the United States *Fortune* magazine, one of the most highly esteemed magazines by the business community, ran a long article on him as a manager and CEO. The article was highly appreciative of his style of leadership. He calls together the best people to advise him, engages in dialogue with them, but does not try to dodge his responsibility in making the final decision.

He needs a lot of courage to change things, doesn’t he?

Very attractive in Francis is his boldness and courage. This was characteristic of him in Argentina and now in the Vatican. One of my favorite passages in the Jesuit Constitutions occurs in Part Nine, the part dedicated to the superior general. It lists the qualities the general should have - a man of deep prayer, a man of solid virtue, a man who knows how to combine firmness and compassion. These are wonderful and absolutely basic, but they are what we would expect. But most telling is the document’s insistence that the general be a person of great soul, magnanimous, ready to undertake great and arduous tasks. That passage is unique to the Society of Jesus, and nothing like it occurs in correlative documents of other religious orders. Francis embodies it to an exemplary degree. ■

# Ordinary Human Love:

## *A Guide for Easter*

BY MATT SPOTTS, SJ

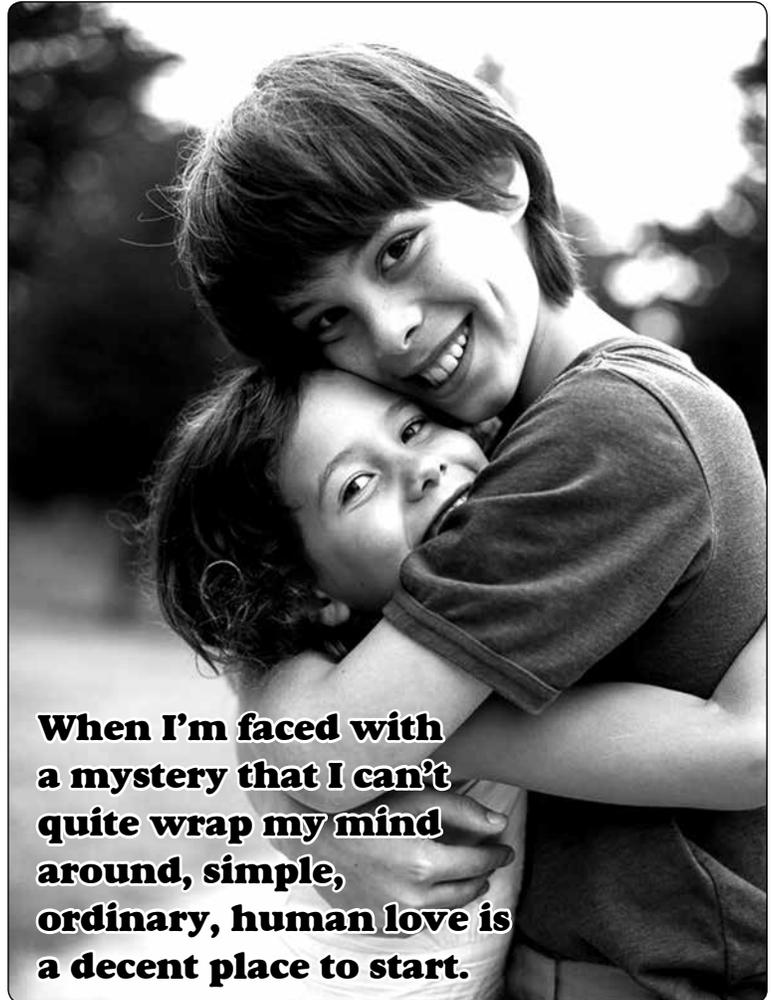
I'm absolutely pathetic at being sneaky. One look at my face or a careful listen to my voice is usually enough for the people who know me best to tell whether I'm planning something. As far as I can remember, I've only ever pulled off one major surprise on a family member.

My sister was graduating from high school during my first year as a Jesuit, and after some careful (and nefarious?) planning with my mom and my superior, I sadly let my sister know that I wasn't going to be able to make it home for her graduation. She was gracious about the whole thing, but it was evident she was disappointed. The surprise was on.

The morning of her graduation, I dragged myself out of bed hours before sunrise, poured enough caffeine into my system to keep me vertical and alert, and managed to time the five hour drive so that I arrived while my sister was at her graduation rehearsal. After half-terrifying my unsuspecting dad ("What are you doing here!?) and my other two siblings, all that was left to do was to sit and wait. Half an hour went by, and then an hour, and finally I heard her car door slam.

As she stepped into the house she stared, incomprehension written all over her features. The next thing I knew, I'd had the wind knocked out of me. My sister had hurled herself into me with a tackle of which Sean Payton's New Orleans Saints would be proud. We cried and we laughed. It was as purely joyful a moment as I've ever experienced.

It can be hard for me to "get" the Resurrection. If I ever have trouble imagining Christmas all I have to do is remember friends and family members holding a newborn, their joy not quite hidden behind their tired eyes. Likewise with something like the Last Supper, there I can reach back in my memories of special meals enjoyed with dear friends in order to



**When I'm faced with a mystery that I can't quite wrap my mind around, simple, ordinary, human love is a decent place to start.**

let the mystery in just a little deeper.

But the Resurrection is just a bit different. I don't have the slightest idea what it looks like when a person rises from the dead, let alone what it feels like. And while the joy of Easter liturgies is infectious, I still find the mystery of Jesus rising from the grave to be just a little hard to touch.

But I do know what human love is. I do know what it's like to surprise my sister with a totally unexpected reunion and to have my whole family grin and laugh until it hurts. And maybe when I'm faced with a mystery that I can't quite wrap my mind around, that simple, ordinary, human love is a decent place to start. ■

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

BY W.K. PRADEEP, SJ



“He looks like Osama.”

“No, like Afridi.”

“I think, Jack Sparrow of *The Pirates of the Caribbean*.” He giggled and started clicking a photo of the stranger with a beard, lying on the rocky ground. Their father, who was following them, reached and said, “What nonsense are you talkin’? Can’t you see the man dyin’ of hunger and thirst? Give me some water.”

Peter put his mobile inside and took out the water-jerkin. His father gently lifted the emaciated man’s head and poured some water into his mouth. Not a drop of water escaped his mouth.

Celin muttered, “Swallowing like the black hole!”

He revived a bit from his long slumber, and stared at the four strangers surrounding him.

Bill, slowly helping the stranger sit leaning on the rock, asked, “Who are you? Where are you from?”

Mustering all his strength, he whispered, “Razak”

“Rajan!” burst out Xavi, who was watching all this quietly. “Oh, this sounds like our Father’s name, Money Rajan!”

“How many times to tell you: not Money – Manirajan!” corrected Celin. “You must be from India.”

Razak nodded.

As a twelve-year old, he had joined his friends for namaaz. After that they went to the talkies in Jotipukur in South Calcutta, to watch *Kahona Pyar Hai*. He had gone without the knowledge of his parents; and he had lied to his sister Shameena that they were going for a dinner. Later, when he became conscious, he was in a training camp with scores of boys running about learning to use guns. Since then, umpteen times had he cried remembering his family back in Jotipukur, though not as often as in the early days. Two decades had passed since then, and he had completely forgotten how it felt like to be called an Indian.

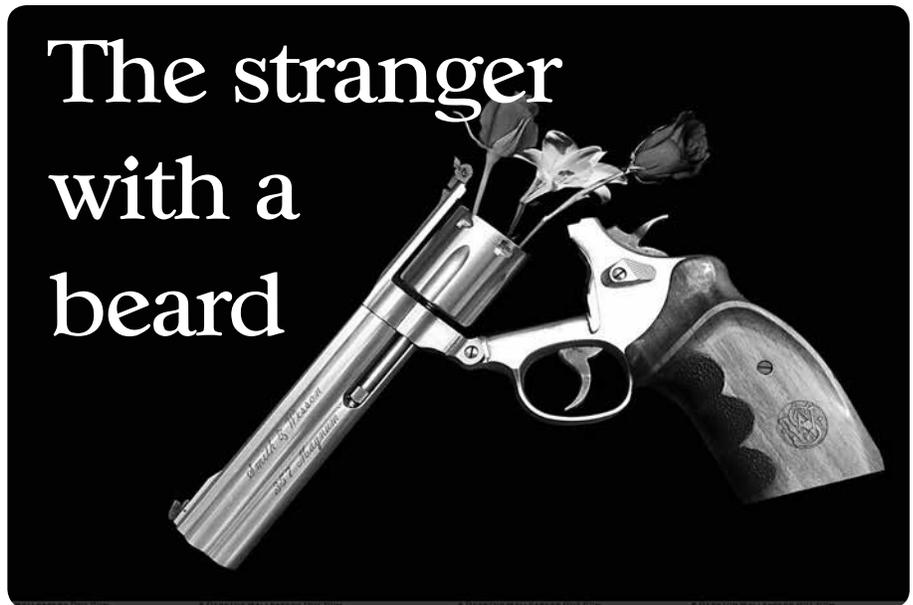
Razak grew up like all other boys in the camp. He and his friends - Abdul, Rahim, Anwar, Kaship and Sageer — from different parts of India, Afghanistan

and Pakistan - called themselves the ‘Sexy Six’. They knew their duty very well. Their leaders had convinced them of the imminence of the global Islamic state, and brainwashed them to take responsibility for realizing it, to the extent of sacrificing their life, and, if needed, even those of their kith and kin. For this apparent holy mission, they had undergone a vigorous training in shooting, climbing rocks and fences, hacking e-mails, developing softwares to detonate sophisticated bombs... Razak wanted a chance to prove not only his mastery but also his commitment. That

change in him, and, to his pleasant surprise, shared the same sentiments. Now, they were no more ‘the Sexy Six’. They were only five. They could no longer live that life. They would be ‘Vive Five’! They planned a great escape; they must get out of this graveyard and live a life of their own.

Alas! The plan was discovered. They came after them with guns spitting fire at them. Three died on the spot. Razak dragged wounded Kaship, who after sometime, for want of proper medical aid, bled to death.

## The stranger with a beard



situation had come when ‘the Sexy Six’ were assigned the task of finishing off a young journalism student who had repeatedly come too close to their camp, and they ruthlessly slaughtered him.

But, another day gave a u-turn to Razak’s commitment. Sageer, his friend, was accused of treason and brutally shot on his forehead – just for helping a twelve-year-old boy escape.

*‘Treason? Didn’t that child, like others of his age, deserve his liberty to fashion his blossoming future, away from this wretched slaughter-house? Are all those innocent people not worthy of a decent, happy and peaceful home today, as much as of a blissful heaven tomorrow? Is it worth dying to build a kingdom for god who does not mind sacrificing innocent lives in order to establish his reign?’*

His close friends noticed the gradual

Riya was very angry. “How come you brought home a stranger? Bill, we don’t know who he is. A Muslim or a Christian? Who knows? If some militants have been chasin’ him, they’ll come and shoot all of us!”

“Don’t talk so, my dear. We teach our children about the Good Samaritan. How could we leave him in that condition? Don’t you think that the commandments are more important than the creed?”

“But...”

“Let him recover. Later, we’ll see what to do. He is havin’ a lot of nightmares already. Let’s not disturb him. By the way, has kerosene come at least this month?”

“You don’t listen to me. We’re already in a terrible condition. And now one more creature to feed and protect! I don’t know what’s goin’ to happen!” She

left the room.

Peter said, "Don't worry, Pa. She's still in the trauma of having lost Anto. She doesn't want to jeopardize others as well. I think you did the right thing. When he wakes up..."

As their voice faded, Razak slowly opened his eyes. He saw a picture of the Sacred Heart on the wall. He continued his train of thoughts.

*"This is a Christian family in a Muslim country! If they come to know who I am? I'll soon be handed over to the military. Will there be a trial at all? What will I tell them? This place is no safer than the one I left. If I leave this place, where will I go? Are maa and baap still alive? And my sister? What's her name?.. How could I forget that?"*

Celin entered and looked at him kindly. "Hello, Raj bhaiya – hope you don't mind me callin' you bhaiya. How're you now?"

"I'm fine, sister."

"Oh! I'm Celin. You know, we were admirin' your beard. Peter, though, had to trim it a bit for dressin' the wound on your cheek. Tell me, Raj bhaiya, where did you come from?"

*"Raj? Oh no! I'm Razak. But shall I tell her? They've been taking care of me so well. If I say that I am a – that was a militant? Better let them think that I am Raj..."*

"Don't want to talk? Never mind." Celin could only see the distress in his eyes, but not the thoughts behind them. "Wonderin' how you landed up here? No helicopter at all. Peter, Xavi and Pa carried you. And this fell from your pocket."

He wanted to snatch away the black and white photo of his parents. But his hands did not move. This was the first treasure he had put in when he had bought his first wallet in Behala years ago. Perhaps that was the factor that had encouraged him to venture out of the slaughter-house.

"Bhaiya, are you a Christian or a Hindu? For long, I've been dreamin' of India. Will you invite us to your home when you go back?" Celin continued chattering.

Now he remembered! Yes, his sister's name was Shameena. *Is this Shameena talking to me here? If Shameena comes to know what I have been doing,*

*will she accept me and talk to me like this?*

Riya entered the room with a mopstick and a bucket. "You are awake! Thank God! Eh Celin, don't pester him with your queries! Let him relax. How are you, Raj? You must eat somethin'."

Riya went back to the kitchen and brought some wheat-malt in a bowl, and helped him sit. Razak – now Raj – held the bowl and gulped the whole content like a hungry python swallowing a mouse.

*"Was it the same lady who was chiding her husband a few minutes ago, for bringing me here? If she comes to know of the danger of my being here!?"*

As Riya left, Celin continued, "Mama is very strange. She is angry that you're here. But, every now and then, she comes to check if your temperature is down. When she speaks with Pa, she flares up. And now, so nicely she feeds you. I can't understand. Yesterday, she was sayin' that you reminded her of Anto bhaiya. Poor bhaiya!" She pointed to a photograph on the wall. "He wanted to become a great journalist. Last May, he went missin' and hasn't turned up. Some say, he must have been killed. But, mama says, he is goin' to return some day. I don't understand anythin'."

Razak - Raj - kept looking at the photograph.

That was a real bomb!

*"I am being cared for by the parents and siblings of the very young man I mercilessly slaughtered a year ago! This is my end! How can I tell them who I am!? Oh Allah! I can't bear this! How on earth could I do such injustice to these people? They are so kind to me; then their boy must have been a fine gentleman too. How much he had begged to be spared! He had clung to my feet! Oh God, in the name of spreading Your faith, I've become an animal! How will these people ever forgive me? How can I ask? How can anyone forgive me? But I should confess..."*

Bill and Peter grappled to remove Xavi's grip from Razak's neck. At last, Xavi released the grasp, and started crying. Riya and Celin were weeping. Even Bill's eyes were wet.

*"Here is the man who cold-bloodedly murdered our Anto. How can we forgive him?"*

Razak's throat choked. The wound

on his cheek was open again; and a mixture of blood, sweat and tears, was flowing down his beard. *"Why did they stop him from killing me? It's better for me to die! I don't deserve to live. Oh God..."*

"Get up," said Bill. "We have things to do."

Razak obediently hauled himself onto his feet, ready to be handcuffed and hanged at any moment. Bill took Riya to the adjacent room.

*Where did they go? Why doesn't this roof fall down and smash my head right now? Had I died in my first voyage to Iraq! Had I died at least during the shooting practices!*

Bill and Riya re-entered the room. Bill asked calmly, "Where exactly are you from? What are your parents' names?"

"Please don't ask me that," Razak pleaded. They must be quite old now and must be thinkin' that I'm dead. Let them not suffer again by the news about me. Do to me whatever you want to. But please leave them alone."

"You've suffered enough. It looks like the Razak who killed Anto is already dead. You better go back to your parents and start a new life. I'll ask Fr Mali to make the arrangement."

Riya said with tears, "We know the anguish of losing a son. At least, let your parents be spared of that."

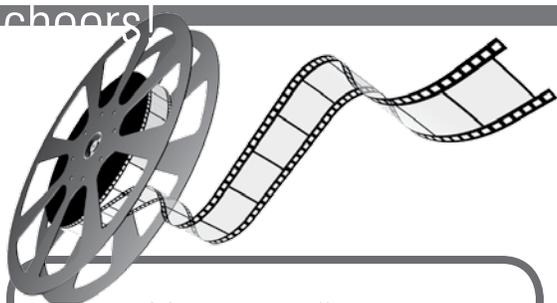
\*\*\*

When they reached the Terminal C of Baghdad International Airport, they were looking so dejected that anyone looking at them would have thought that the family had come to see their son go on some experimental mission to Mars!

Bill handed over the ticket and a chit. "When you reach Calcutta, meet Fr Bishwash at the given address. He'll help you find your family and your new life."

With tears of gratitude, Razak hugged each of them. "I don't know what to say." Riya kissed him on his forehead and said, "Never mention. God bless you always!" With a heavy heart, he picked up his tiny bag and moved ahead. Celin took out the new bangles she had bought that day, and ran to him, "Bhaiya, give this to your sister. Tell her that there is an Iraqi Shameena too." ■

*W.K. Pradeep, SJ is the assistant director of Jesuit Training College at Jakhama, Kohima, Nagaland.*

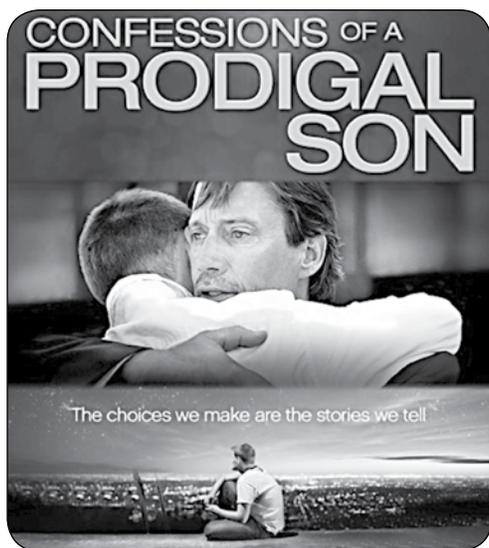


## Happy endings

*Confessions of a Prodigal Son*

A film by Allan Spiers

Starring Kevin Sorbo, Michael Bolten, Tanya Chisholm



*Confessions of a Prodigal Son* is a modern-day retelling of the Prodigal Son story that Jesus famously told. It is a coming-of-age tale following Sean (Nathan Clarkson) as he rebels and leaves his home, family and father (Kevin Sorbo) to figure out life on his own. Two years later - while still on the journey to find life's answers - Sean suddenly finds himself questioning everything he thought he knew as he is confronted by a professor (Darwin Harris) who challenges Sean to see his life as a story; a best friend (Azal James) walking a dangerous path; and a strong and beautiful young woman (Rachael Lee) who is on her own journey to answers. Each one of these elements causes Sean to greater examine the choices he is making. The story is one of drama, laughter, relationships, faith, and redemption, ultimately asking the question "Can broken stories have happy endings?"

## 'Let me be lashed instead of Saudi blogger!'



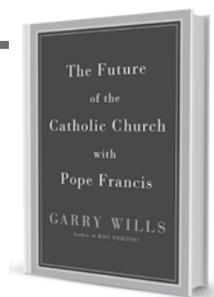
A group of top American intellectuals have volunteered to "take" the 1,000 lash sentence imposed by the Saudi government on a prominent liberal Saudi blogger, Raif Badawi. The move, which follows widespread international outrage at the sentence, is being led by Robert P. George, a leading professor at Princeton University. Professor George said: "Together with six colleagues on the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, I sent a letter to the Saudi Ambassador to the US calling on the Saudi government to stop the horrific torture of Badawi — an advocate of religious freedom and freedom of expression in the Saudi Kingdom. If the Saudi government refuses, we each asked to take 100 of Mr. Badawi's lashes so that we could suffer with him." In his website Mr Badawi, 31, has criticised the country's hardline religious establishment. He was sentenced to ten years in prison as well as 1,000 lashes. So harsh is the flogging that it has to be administered in individual sessions of 50 lashes a time in order to stop the recipient dying. The first bout of 50 lashes was dished out to Mr Badawi on 9 Jan '15, before hundreds of spectators in a public square in front of a mosque in the Red Sea city of Jeddah. The date for a second set of lashes has so far been postponed as doctors have said that Mr Badawi's injuries from the first flogging have not yet healed.

Source: The Telegraph

## Will he change the Church?

In this book a bestselling historian takes on a pressing question in modern religion—will Pope Francis embrace change? Pope Francis, the first Jesuit pope and the first from the Americas, offers a challenge to his church. Can he bring about significant change? Should he? Garry Wills, the prizewinning historian, argues that changes have been the evidence of life in the Catholic Church. In this brilliant and incisive study, he gives seven examples of deep and serious changes that have taken place (or are taking place) within the last century. Only by examining the history of the Church we can understand Pope Francis's and the Church's challenges. Any changes that meet those challenges will have impact only if the Church, the people of God, support them. Wills considers the lessons Pope Francis seems to have learned. The challenge that Pope Francis offers the Church is its ability to undertake new spiritual adventures, making it a poor church for the poor, after the example of Jesus.

- [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)



*The Future of the Catholic Church with Pope Francis*

By Garry Wills

Published by Viking Press, USA  
Pages: 288, Rs. 1300



BY KALPANA SHARMA

# How about Ma Bachao (‘save the mother)?

This is a season of symbols. A woman air force officer leads the official guard of honour to welcome President Obama; contingents of women and girls march in step during the Republic Day parade; the Prime Minister launches a ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ (Save the girl child, teach the girl child’) campaign in Haryana, the state with the worst sex ratio in the country. All of this is good. Symbols matter. But are they enough?

It is very well to talk about saving our daughters and educating them, but what about Ma Bachao, saving our mothers? For every daughter that is killed, there is a mother who is demeaned, not respected. If she accedes to the demand to abort a female foetus, it is only because she knows too well what life will be like for a daughter if she is born.

Of course, even if the daughter is not aborted before birth, and is permitted to enter this world, there is no guarantee that her mother will survive. India’s worst-kept secret is that it has the highest number of women dying during childbirth in the world. According to the latest United Nations report, an estimated 17 per cent of the 2.89 lakh women worldwide who died during childbirth in 2013 were in India. In other words, 50,000 women in a year, or 137 every day, or around 11 or 12 every hour die due to pregnancy-related health complications.

For a country that is preening and

pretending to be an emerging power in the world, and whose leaders glibly rub shoulders with the most powerful, this is unacceptable. Our place in the family of nations when it comes to our mothers is in fact at the bottom. Even Nigeria, a country beset by so many problems including the brutal killings of girls, women and children by Boko Haram in its northern and eastern provinces, does better than India.

The reason for the high maternal mortality figures is not just the lack of institutional deliveries, which means ensuring that every woman who is pregnant reaches a hospital or medical facility in time. That would help and the rate of such deliveries is gradually improving, although not fast enough.

The underlying cause is the persistent malnourishment and undernourishment of millions of women, many of whom are not yet ready to go through childbirth. According to the National Family Health Survey-3, an estimated 60 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 45 are anaemic. So even if you get such women to a hospital in time, they might not survive.

In any case, a large number of them are too young to bear children. They should have had the knowledge to protect themselves from pregnancy but know nothing about contraceptives or spacing. Even if they did, they are denied a voice, a say in whether or not they are ready to have a child. Also, even if such women survive childbirth, they succumb later to infections and diseases and their low birth weight children have slim chances of survival.

What is frustrating about this situation is not just this “silent epidemic”, as someone put it, of maternal deaths, but the fact that women continue to be seen mainly as baby-producing machines.

Since 1994, when India participated in the UN-sponsored International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, the world community accepted that women’s health needs to be addressed not just during pregnancy but at all times. If women are healthy, they will be healthy mothers, giving birth to children with a fair chance of surviving. That is such an obvious point that it hardly bears repeating.

Yet, despite the internationally accepted concept of women’s reproductive health and rights that includes giving women the choice to have or not to have children, to decide how many, and to access health care for their other needs, women continue to be viewed principally for their ability to reproduce. And hence, whether it is people like Sakshi Maharaj urging Hindu women to produce five or more children, or so-called ‘population’ experts telling them to have fewer children, a woman is reduced to the sum of her reproductive parts.

If mothers cannot be saved, who will care for the daughters? It is easier to come up with catchy slogans than to get to the root of the malaise in our country, where women are valued only if they produce babies of the accepted gender, i.e. male, and if they do so quietly without raising their voices. ■

*Courtesy: The Hindu*

The Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP) is developing a protocol that outlines steps for Jesuits in responding to disasters in this part of the world. Responses to catastrophic events

## Increasing collaboration on Disaster Risk Management



are collaborative in nature, joining local efforts and guiding important international support. This is an ongoing process with other organisations and there is much learning from the experiences of Jesuits on the ground. The effort is also to find ways to collaborate across different phases in disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) that demand a wider range of coordination beyond disaster.

While people in many Jesuit institutions are doing great work in DRRM, having a protocol taps and develops the great potential for *magis* as more people are reached, networks are broadened, impact multiplied, and response is deepened. A protocol for coordination amongst people provides a system for decision-making and action that outlines procedures and actions to be followed in a particular situation.

The JCAP protocol is a work in progress to guide Jesuit collaborative action and is presently part of a review in the Philippine Province. Hopefully, the protocol can be used and improved by other Provinces in their areas of concern given the appropriateness of context and emerging networks. It is presently focused on floods and landslides but will be easily adapted to facilitate collaboration in the case of earthquakes, tsunamis, fires, volcanic eruptions, and droughts.

While the disaster management cycle is generally described as having four phases (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery), there is an increasing realization of a fifth phase or redesign. The JCAP protocol presents a coordination framework with five phases:

Phase 1 – Ordinary time: Disaster mitigation and preparedness

Phase 2 – Alert: Disaster event

warning and identification

Phase 3 – ASAP: Response & relief

Phase 4 – Weeks and months after the disaster: Recovery and rehabilitation

Phase 5 – Months and years after the disaster: Restructure and redesign

Phases 2 to 4 are where many efforts are ongoing, but there is also increasing recognition of the need for more preparedness during “ordinary time” (Phase 1), when it is not the rainy or typhoon season. This is the perfect time to undertake trainings and workshops.

On the other hand, Phase 5 is when restructure and redesign take place and where lessons learnt from the disaster inform future plans. Building safer and better houses with a local social economy is a guiding principle, and is the time to review and revise building standards, zoning plans and policies, economic development programs that are socially inclusive, and networking and organising so that capacities are shared and alliances and agreements are established amongst government, international agencies, professionals, and others from civil society.

Jesuit resource mobilisation is also a topic of concern in the JCAP protocol. Often, local and national disaster resource mobilisations are adequate but when extreme events occur and result in a national calamity, international support is mobilised. Jesuit resource mobilisation can be both national and international, as the benefit of institution and apostolic outreach, as well as communications and networks, is available in many places. Xavier Network is a key partner in international disaster collaboration.

The protocol seeks to integrate Jesuit area disaster engagement on the

ground while networking with national and international organisations in support of the communities affected. To facilitate donations and support, a clear and simple process is needed for donors to make contributions. And most importantly, a transparent and accountable system for monitoring and reporting funds is needed so that donations are properly documented, official receipts are issued as needed, and donors are kept informed of developments.

This transparent and accountable fund management is also crucial for securing long-term resources for post-disaster rehabilitation, restructure, and redesign. International awareness has to recognise that the long-term problem is tied not only to climate change impact through more extreme weather events but also to livelihoods and secure tenure of homes. These are critical in reducing the social impact of disasters.

Donor expectations and resource mobilisation need to be re-assessed so that social and economic inclusion are built into the financial assistance provided, beyond relief and provision of roofs, housing materials, houses, and fishing boats. The key elements are access to land, sustaining the local social economy, building capacity in local government, and developing a diversity of options for livelihood and entrepreneurship.

“God is Creator of the universe and all life, and in disaster risk reduction we are challenged to experience through our faith how to embrace “natural” disasters,” said Fr Pedro Walpole, SJ, JCAP Coordinator for Reconciliation with Creation. “We are learning humbly that we are embracing not an “act of God” but human vulnerability and mortality as part of an ongoing Creation. At the same time, it is beginning to dawn on us that we are partly a trigger of our own suffering through climate change. In our faith, we slowly come to understand that the crucified Christ silently accompanies those who suffer. We need to be able to communicate this while expressing deep hope for humanity, knowing God’s fidelity to us. This is why today we seek a much deeper response of compassion and reconciliation on Earth.” (EcoJesuit) ■

Courtesy: <http://sjapc.net/>

BY MARCELO LARRAQUY

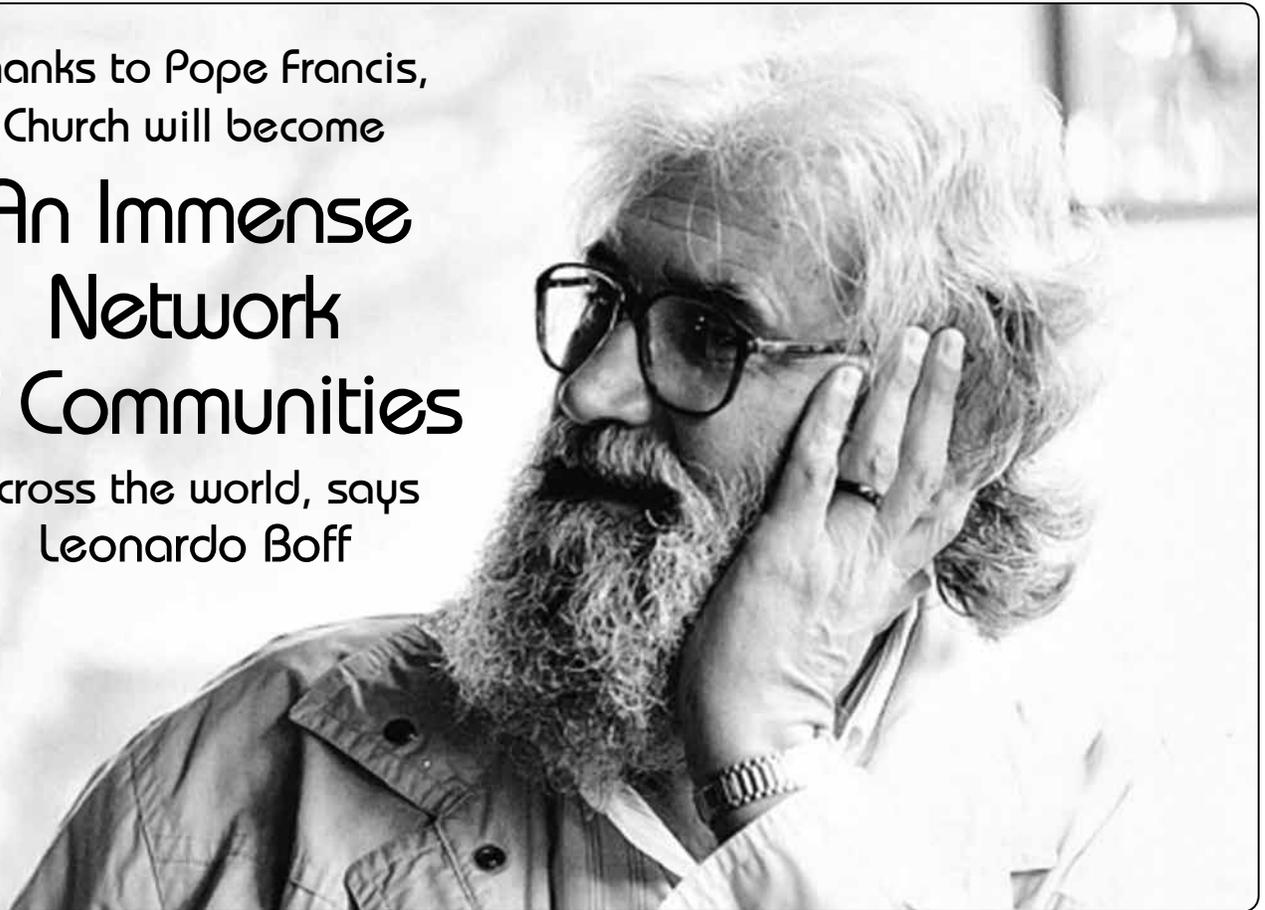
Leonardo Boff, formerly a Franciscan friar from Brazil, was once a prominent Catholic theologian and key figure of Liberation Theology. He was silenced in the

I have the approval of Brazilian bishops and remain a theologian. Compared to what the pope is saying today to cardinals and bishops, the book for which I was condemned is all piety. At the end of the day they listened to the reformers.

- which Pope Francis has supported earlier - as closely related. That is not how they saw it in the 1970s. Some people spoke of "class oppression" and others, of "popular piety."

The difference was in the methodology, not the fundamental

Thanks to Pope Francis,  
Church will become  
**An Immense  
Network  
of Communities**  
across the world, says  
Leonardo Boff



1980s by the Vatican for his views in his book called, *Church: Charism and Power*, in which he had urged an important role for the laity in the Church. Threatened with sanctions again for his speech at the Rio Summit of 1992, he decided to leave the priesthood. The now 77-year-old theologian, who is married and works as a professor emeritus, spoke to Marcelo Larraquy for Clarín.

What was your life like after the decision to quit priesthood?

I did not break with the Church. I keep doing what I did before, baptizing, marrying couples, celebrating services.

Why do you think that happened?

The Church was demoralized. Its spiritual goal was to be humanity's moral guide, and then they discover there were people in the Church who gravely offended the innocent. There was child abuse, money laundering. No European cardinal would have confronted this. They called on the right person to tackle these problems.

In your book *Francis of Rome and Francis of Assisi*, you cite Liberation theology and the People's theology

intention. I remember talks in Germany with Juan Carlos Scannone, a Jesuit priest and theological inspiration to Jorge Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, in which each spoke from their particular position but all of them within the ark of liberation. The people are oppressed. Culture is silenced. The method was different but the intention, the aim, was liberation - whether through popular culture, the path of organizing the people, or awareness. Suspicion and marginalization began to hover around us. But we are doing the same pastoral work. Nobody entered the

Communist Party.

How did Liberation theology evolve? Now we hear more about ecology.

Along with the poor, you have to add the Earth as the “great pauper” that is oppressed and devastated. We have been saying it since the 1980s. It’s the *eco-theology* of liberation. It is

Aires, at a meeting of religious orders.

I read an article in which you wrote that Jorge Bergoglio should be discarded “at the threshold” of the 2005 conclave, because of his conservative profile and because you linked him to the Argentine junta of the 1970s.

I did not know him then. I didn’t

from the fourth century, until Jorge Bergoglio. Pope’s reforms will change its Rome-centric structure.

Some people fear that the reforms will weaken the Church’s doctrine.

Two models are face-to-face. The doctrinaire model with the dogmas of canonical law used so far, and on the other side the People of God, a Church that respects human fallibility and weakness, and accompanies people as a pastor. There is a pastor in one Church,

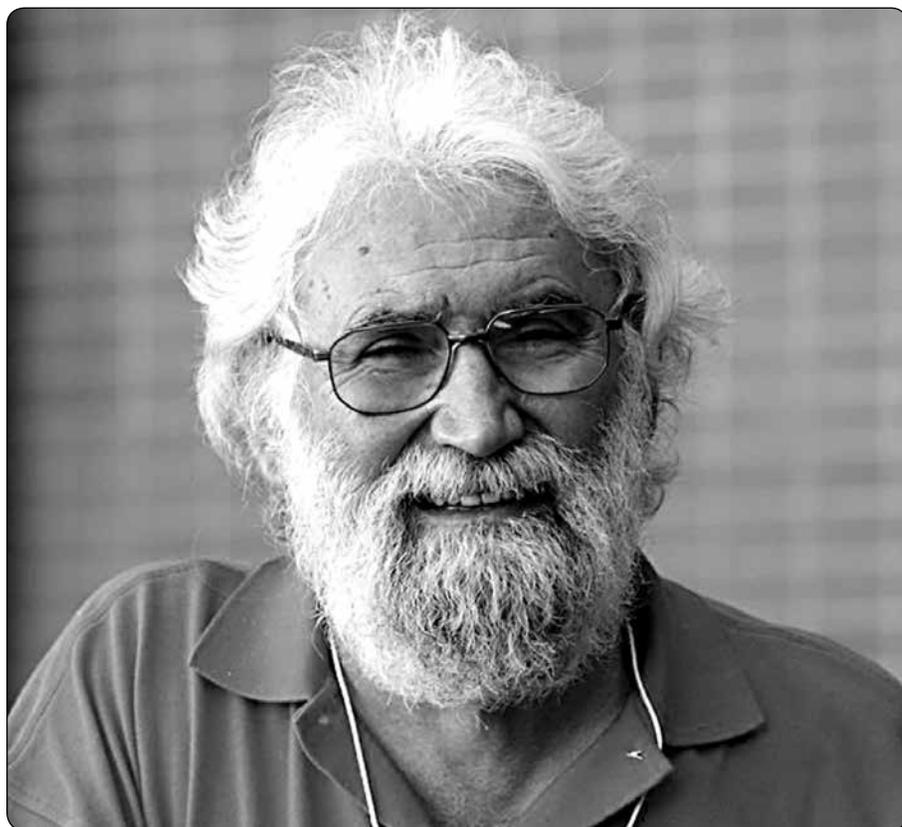
*“I made a prophecy at the last conclave that the next pope would be a “Francis” who would restore a Church in ruins.”*

and a doctor in the other. The pope’s position is clear. The Church must walk with history and read the signs of the times.

Two years into this papacy, what will Francis’s legacy be?

My opinion is that he will pave the way for Third World pontiffs, from Asia, Africa and Latin America. And these will bring new blood into old, European Christianity, which is aged and in a way slowly dying. His legacy will be a Church less centered on Rome and based more on an immense network of communities across the world, with a pope who walks among them. It will not be just a Western Church, but a global Church. ■

Courtesy: Clarin



not as if we went from red theology to green theology. It is the same liberating impulse.

Did the pope ask for your writing when he was preparing his encyclical on the environment?

Yes, he is preparing an encyclical on how to save life on the planet. I sent him material twice.

Did you meet him?

I met him in 1971 at the San Miguel’s Colegio Máximo in Buenos

know he visited the shantytowns. The image of the Argentine Church was that it was closed and did not confront the dictatorship. I made a prophecy at the last conclave that the next pope would be a “Francis” who would restore a Church in ruins. And when he was presented over St Peter’s Square, he first asked for the blessing of the People of God, then blessed the people as their servant. A Church that makes sacred power the source of its articulations, has no love, forgiveness or mercy. That is how the Church structured itself

# No, the Jesuits didn't start World War I

*Conspiracy theories that do not die*



BY DAMIAN THOMPSON

*It is hard to believe, but it is true. Conspiracy theories are not a matter of the past. A book published by the Pacific Institute of San Diego, California, claims that it is Jesuits who sank the Titanic! It says that Jesuits started the First World War! The Pacific Institute blames the Jesuits and the Vatican for the terrorist attack on 9/11! How do we deal with such conspiracy theories?*

I'm sure you don't need to be told that all this is rubbish from beginning to end. Dealing, as it does, with events that occurred over a century ago, it's easy to laugh at. But on second thoughts, we shouldn't. Conspiracy theories are as harmful in the 21st century as at any point in the past. The Church cannot afford to pretend they don't exist.

The Pacific Institute is a contemporary organisation that, in addition to exploiting the agonising deaths of 1,500 people in the Titanic disaster, also blames the Jesuits and the Vatican for the murders of 9/11. Thanks

to the internet, it is keeping alive the so-called "black legend" of Jesuit world domination. Let's take a quick look at that phenomenon.

The legend dates back at least as far as 1614, when an anonymous book, entitled *Monita Secreta*, was published in Poland.

To quote John W. O'Malley, SJ in his new history of the order (*See p.13, 14*), this "crude forgery purported to be secret instructions from the superior general of the Society telling select members how to fleece widows of their fortunes, how to use confessional secrets to blackmail rulers, and how by these and other despicable means to climb to the pinnacle of political power".

This story circulated almost unchanged in 19th-century America, where Puritan-inspired fear of Catholics remained a potent political force until the middle of the 20th century. Nearly always it took the form of a conspiracy theory. But Catholics were not the only victims of this way of thinking. Confusingly, the same people who detected the swish of the Jesuit robe

behind every locked door were often equally paranoid about Freemasons – the traditional enemies of the Catholic Church.

It's well known that many of the founders of the American Republic, including George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, were masons; some of the principles of the constitution, including freedom of religion, were derived in part from Freemasonry. This made the brotherhood deeply unpopular with hardline Protestants, who turned their religious crusade against it into America's first third-party movement: the Anti-Masonic Party.

This body drew heavily on conspiracy theories very similar to ones directed against the Catholic Church. Many voters believed in both sets of allegations. This would have been baffling to, say, citizens of France, where you picked your side, pious Catholic or anti-clerical mason, and subscribed exclusively to the appropriate conspiracy theory.

But the simultaneous popularity of anti-Jesuit and anti-Freemason

legends in America is not as strange as it might appear. What it illustrates is the malleability of conspiracy thinking throughout history. The demons are interchangeable: Catholics, Freemasons, the Illuminati and, most persistently, Jews. The structure of the story remains broadly the same. “They” are rich, powerful, secretive and plotting world domination. The righteous must act now to thwart their plans.

The Catholic Church has had an intimate association with conspiracy theories throughout its history. Often it has been the target of the same sort of propaganda directed against other groups: the *Monita Secreta* forgery bears a strong resemblance to The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, an anti-Semitic hoax written in Tsarist Russia in which Jews supposedly plot to subvert the morals of the Gentiles and impose Zionism through the banking system. The Protocols inspired Hitler – and Henry Ford, who sponsored the publication of half a million copies of them. Today they are popular among Muslims in London (I bought my copy in an Islamic bookshop in Bayswater).

Alas, certain Right-wing Catholics have not been able to resist the lure of the Protocols: they were favourite reading material of Bishop Richard Williamson, disgraced bishop of the Society of St Pius X (which expelled him in 2012). Williamson, though an Englishman, was immersed in a French Catholic conspiratorial subculture that predates the Protocols. Ultra-clericalist Frenchmen in the Third Republic blamed all their misfortunes on Jews and Freemasons.

This mindset persists in traditionalist circles, to the point where it undermines attempts by benevolent Catholic conservatives to popularise their old-fashioned devotions. To quote Francis Phillips, writing in the *Catholic Herald* in 2011, “some very dodgy elements have lately attached themselves to the campaign long and bravely fought by Daphne McLeod [emphatically not a bigot] to restore proper catechesis in Catholic schools.

Masonic plots? Third Secret of Fatima skulduggery? You name it, they believe it.”

Catholics need to face up to the reality that, over 2,000 years, elements in the Church have been progenitors as well as victims of conspiracy theories. Mostly this should be a source of shame – but we need to bear in mind that paranoid thinking is to some extent part of the DNA of Christianity in general; Protestants and Eastern Orthodox are also vulnerable to it.

The Book of Revelation is in the canon of the New Testament. It’s also a conspiracy theory whose authors introduced early Christians to the notion of the Antichrist, littering the text with mathematical codes and lurid allegory. Most scholars think that 666, the Number of the Beast, is derived from assigning numerical values to the letters of the name of the Emperor Nero. Nowadays we associate this kind of behaviour with orange-haired Protestant tele-evangelists. But the game of decoding Revelation and its Jewish predecessor, the Book of Daniel, was played enthusiastically by the medieval Church.

Today it seems repugnant to Catholics that Luther should have identified the Pope as Antichrist. We forget that both pontiffs and Catholic monarchs had previously taken great pleasure in identifying their own enemies as this Satanic figure, whom the Bible explicitly tells us will emerge from disguise shortly before Jesus returns.

I’m not qualified to say what the Church’s theological response should be to this aspect of its heritage. But in practical terms it should be alert to its persistence on the fringes of Catholicism. The Church did not invent the conspiracy theory: it flourished in Second Temple Judaism and possibly Zoroastrianism before that; arguably it is a natural human reaction to inexplicable, troubling and disappointing events. Christians do, however, have a responsibility to monitor it – for the simple reason that

the self-appointed investigators of “hidden plots” spread lies with the aim of hurting people they dislike.

Through no fault of his own, Pope Francis is in the bizarre position of living next door to his predecessor. This has revived a well-worn Catholic conspiracy theory: that the “real” Pope is being held prisoner in the Vatican by an interloper. As soon as Benedict announced his resignation I knew there would be trouble. Lo and behold, a mysterious prophet called Maria Divine Mercy (MDM) has appeared online to reveal that “my poor Holy Vicar, Pope Benedict XVI” has been ousted by a false prophet from Argentina by the name of Bergoglio.” Although MDM has no significant following in the Church, milder versions of this scenario play well in some traditionalist circles. No doubt Pope Francis will shrug them off.

There is, however, a more pressing reason for the Church to study conspiracy thinking. Sometimes allegations are made against the Vatican that demand investigation. The “court” that the Holy Father dislikes so much is secretive and gossipy – and, as we must now accept, not beyond covering up grave financial and sexual crimes. Distinguishing truth from rumour and falsehood in such an environment is tricky – but the Church has a duty to do so if it is to heal the wounds it has created.

That process will be made easier if bishops, priests and lay advisers know how to recognise the signs of a conspiracy theory. These ancient nightmares have come back to haunt Catholics and other minorities thanks, paradoxically, to the latest developments in digital technology. Propagandists everywhere are having a field day constructing alternative realities that frighten us and poison our minds. As a first step, may I suggest that the Vatican finally learns how to use the internet? ■

*Courtesy: (excerpts from an article in the Catholic Herald magazine, 23 Jan ‘15)*

**Prof. Akhtarul Wasey** is the Commissioner of Linguistic Minorities (CLM), Government of India. This office is a Constitutional authority and Prof. Wasey was appointed to this office by the President of India recently. Earlier he was the head of the Department of Islamic Studies and the Director of the Zakir Hussain Institute of Islamic Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Prof. Wasey was one of the signatories of 'A Common Word' that was sent by Muslim intellectuals to Pope Benedict XVI in October 2007 and other Christian leaders inviting them for dialogue. An enthusiastic promoter of Christian-Muslim Relations in India, he continues to support and facilitate young practitioners of dialogue from both Christian and Muslim communities to build bridges between the believers of these two faiths.

Recently he was invited to speak at the Conference organised by the Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica, Rome on their golden jubilee. Prof Wasey spoke to Victor Edwin SJ for Jivan.

You were a special invitee from India to participate and speak in the Conference organised by Pontifical



a dedicated lot with a missionary zeal. Another significant point is that the Institute has some very distinguished and noted Islamic scholars as visiting or guest faculty.

Tell us briefly the contents of your presentation in the Conference?

within one religious mould. Therefore, we should respect the will of God and as far as our role is concerned vis-à-vis our religions we should communicate, whatever is truth according to our religious perspective. Mere tolerance will not do, respecting others is really required. Thirdly, the theological gulf

## “No scope in Islam for terrorism or tyranny”

### interview with Prof Akhtarul Wasey

Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI) in Rome on their Golden Jubilee. What were your impressions of this Catholic Institute and its efforts in Christian Muslim Dialogue?

I feel privileged to be invited from India, in fact from South Asia, to participate in this conference. I am also very much impressed by the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, Rome as they are teaching Islam directly from the original sources, so there should not be any chance to be misled or having a negative biased attitude. The Rector and other faculty members are

I was part of a panel which took part in a round table on the 'Challenges Ahead'. The chairperson was Prof. John Borelli, Special Assistant to the President for Inter-Religious Initiatives, Georgetown University, U.S. In my presentation I emphasised the following points: First, Islam is a religion inclusive by nature and stands for Unity of God, Unity of Religion and Unity among all people. Secondly, I stressed that religious pluralism is the expression of the will of God for the world. It is God's design and desire for humanity. If God wanted he could have created all of us

between Islam and Christianity is irreconcilable. The differences are not going to go anywhere. They will remain. The differences need not make us alien to one another. We should respect our different viewpoints and beliefs. We should not forget that Islam shares with Christianity the principles of social commitment, care for the needy, and the obligation to act honestly in every circumstance. We should celebrate the differences and vie with one another in doing good deeds. Moreover, Muslims and Christians honour Mary, Mother of Jesus. Quran the holy book has dedicated

a chapter to Mary. This is theologically important for both of us. Finally I told the august audience that we should agree on one thing that freedom of expression should not be abused and I declared in unequivocal terms that neither we approve the publication of cartoons nor the ensuing violence.

**At the conclusion of the Conference you had an audience with the Holy Father Pope Francis. Tell us about meeting the Pope?**

That was a great moment of my life when I had the honour to meet the Holy Father Pope Francis. While standing in the line to meet him, I thanked him in my heart for his courageous stand to oppose violence in the name of religion, his simplicity in praying with Muslims for peace in Syria and his humility to wash the feet of a Muslim woman during the Holy Thursday Liturgy in a Roman prison. When I met and shook hands with him, I felt he is a model of dialogue both in word and deed. He was kind, full of joy, and full of warmth. In those brief but wonderful moments, I thanked him for his principled stand on the freedom of religion and affirmed that we Muslims look forward to work with Christians and all people of good will to work for justice and peace in the world. I expressed the deep sense of pain and agony of Muslims around the world when insults are heaped upon the memory of Prophet Muhammad, Peace be upon him, or any other prophet in the name of freedom of expression.

**You have a deep shared understanding with Jesuit scholars like Prof Christian W Troll, SJ. Tell us how both of you worked together for promotion of Christian Muslim Relations in the Academic level while he was here in India and later?**

Yes, I am proud of the fact that I have been in association with a scholar like Prof. Christian W. Troll. Prof. Troll is one of the distinguished scholars of Islam with specific specialisation in Islam in India. From Fr Troll I have learnt the importance of clarity in dealing with

critical questions in studying religions, the necessity of patience to persevere in the cause of dialogue, and the way in which one should study the religion of others with sympathy, at the same time without losing one's own religious identity. On a number of occasions - conferences and dialogue meetings - we worked together promoting relations between Muslims and Christians. I had my initial training as a student of Islamic Studies under Prof. Mushirul Haq and Prof. Ziaul Hasan Farooqui. Both these professors were good friends of Prof Troll and studied under W.C. Smith and Charles Adams. These great men gave a new dimension to the study of Islam with all possible objectivity.

**In India, though Christians and Muslims do not have any open confrontation on issues, their relations often seem to be very superficial. How to overcome this superficiality and build closer, lasting relationships?**

There might be some distance between the two communities for historical and socio-cultural reasons. But that is not the case everywhere and every time. Being minority communities in India, they have common problems and therefore, Christian and Muslim leaders are now very often meeting on a common platform to find out ways and means to face the common challenges. But I agree that there is a need for having more interaction, cooperation not only between Christians and Muslims but also other sections of the society, all those who believe in the secular, democratic values enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

**As an Indian Muslim deeply committed to Faith and secularism, how do you respond to atrocities committed by Muslims who belong to groups like ISIS and Boko Haram on hapless Christians?**

I am already on record that ISIS, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida are the worst possible enemies of Islam and Muslims and humanity. In word and deed they are against Islam and its values. They

are bringing a bad name to Muslims in this global village. The world must not forget the fact that they are killing more Muslims than Non-Muslims. I would also like to say that according to Quran, even the killing of one innocent person, irrespective of his region or religion, is like the killing of whole humanity. I am against all type of terrorism, extremism and mindless violence, whoever may be the perpetrator. I have always said that Muslim majority nations must ensure the fundamental human rights of their non-Muslim minorities, which they expect for themselves in non-Muslim countries. The basic essence of Islam is love, compassion and justice therefore; there is no scope for any type of injustice, tyranny, etc.

**Often people ask though large number of Muslims do not subscribe to the views of the likes of ISIS and others, why are Muslims not on streets condemning ISIS forcefully. How do you respond to that?**

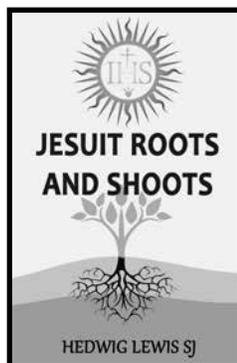
I think it is an erroneous view. Muslims throughout the world have openly raised their voices against terrorism. From Al-Azhar, Cairo to Darul Uloom, Deoband, from Sufi to Salafi scholars have issued not ordinary statements but forceful Fatwas against terrorism. In India itself there were a number of conferences and meetings that condemned the activities of these disgraced and anti-human groups. Most recently, in the last week of February, 2015 a grand conference was organised by the Muslim World League in the Holy city of Mekkah, under the direct patronage of the custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, against terrorism. The very location of the conference signifies its seriousness and importance. Often such news is covered by the Urdu media in India. But that is not enough. These should be published by English and other regional language dailies. However, it should be noted that deliberate attempts by some vested interests around the globe spreading Islamophobia is no cure for terrorism. ■

## Our Roots

- Jesuit Roots and Shoots
- Hedwig Lewis, SJ
- Gujarat Sahitya Prakash  
Post Box 70, Anand - 388 001
- Pages: 164; Price: Rs.200

This book's roots are in *Gujarat Jesuit Samachar* and *Jivan*. In Dec 2011 Fr Hedwig wrote to me saying that trying to collect 'Ignatian Ripples' for GJS he has come up with a treasury of Ignatiana, three of which he has shortened into articles that will fit a page of *Jivan* and asked if I would publish them in *Jivan*. I suggested that, without stopping with three, he continues to write a one-page regular column which we can call 'Roots'. He did so from Jan 2012 to Dec 2014. Now adding 'shoots' to these roots, he has published them as a book. Its value is obvious.

- M.A.J.A.

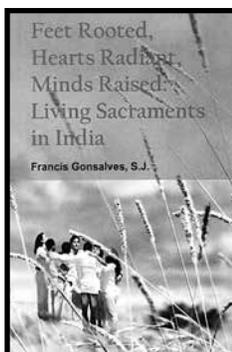


## Sacraments seen anew

- Feet Rooted, Hearts Radiant, Minds Raised: Living Sacraments in India
- Francis Gonsalves, SJ
- Gujarat Sahitya Prakash  
Post Box 70, Anand - 388 001
- Pages: 316; Price: Rs.250

Sacraments were said to be 'instruments of the Church to confer grace.' This new, lively book offers a 'cosmotheandric' image of sacraments. In his Foreword, Prof Michael Amaladoss, SJ explains what the author means by this. "Sacraments are symbolic social celebrations of the community that are rooted in the body and the earth, but reach down to the divine, thus integrating the whole of reality." He says Gonsalves "presents before us the human, biblical, ecclesial and theological context of these celebrations."

- M.A.J.A.

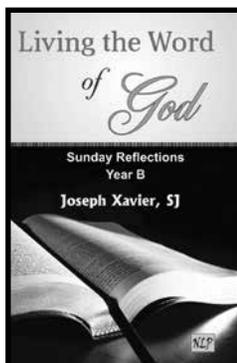


## Sunday Reflections

- Living the Word of God (Year B)
- Joseph Xavier, SJ
- The New Leader Publications  
Armenian Street, Chennai - 600001
- Pages: 208; Price: Rs.100

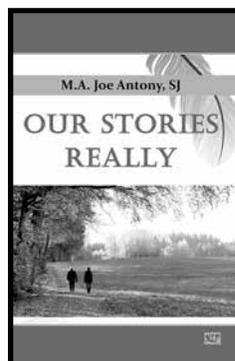
This is a compilation of 'Sunday Reflections' for the liturgical year B, originally published in *the New Leader*. This volume follows the first collection, with reflections on the Sunday readings for the year A. The author, Fr Joseph Xavier, SJ, is an Indian Jesuit who teaches fundamental theology at the Gregorian University, Rome. His reflections can assist all those who have to present God's word every Sunday to people hungry for it.

- P.M.



## Our Stories

- Our Stories Really
- M.A. Joe Antony, SJ
- The New Leader Publications  
Armenian Street, Chennai - 600001
- Pages: 172; Price: Rs.100



In his 'Publisher's Note' Fr Antony Pancras, Editor, *the New Leader*, says, "Fr M.A. Joe Antony, SJ, Editor, *Jivan*, is not only a versatile writer but also a great story-teller. One of the regular columns which was fondly and eagerly read by readers of *the New Leader* was 'Our Stories Really' by Fr Joe Antony, SJ...New Leader Publications is proud to present all the forty stories in one book to the members of the New Leader Books."

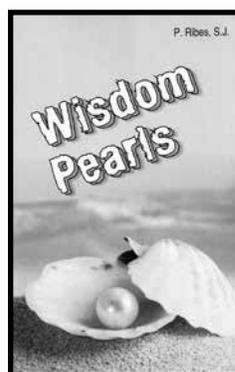
- J.P.

## Wisdom Pearls

- Wisdom Pearls
- P. Ribes, SJ
- Gujarat Sahitya Prakash  
Post Box 70, Anand - 388 001
- Pages: 134; Price: Rs.100

The book is the latest from the tireless Jesuit from Spain who has served in India, working as a pastor, educator and youth animator. Like his other books which present to animators stories and parables which they can use in groups, this one offers stories and verses which highlight a value or a quality we need for 'right living.'

- U.P.



## Jesuits of Bengal Mission

- Discovery of Bengal
- Ed. by Albert Huart & Felix Raj, SJ
- The Goethals Indian Library and Research Society, Kolkata - 700 016
- Pages: 240; Price: Rs.300

The book is a collection of articles written by various writers on those who worked in the Jesuit Mission in Bengal in various fields - pastoral work, education, dialogue, writing and research. The anthology that celebrates the bicentenary of the Restoration of the Society is meant to be a tribute to the Belgian Jesuits, the pioneers of the

- E.A.



Jesuit mission in Bengal.

## GEORGE PULICKAL, SJ (DEL) 1952 - 2015



A "Man of the Heart," as he used to describe himself, Bro. Geo led a roller-coaster life which saw many a whirlwind. Braving them all, he reached out to his students, especially the underprivileged and hoped to remain alive in their hearts as he took leave of this world on 4 Feb '15.

Bro. Geo was born on 12 Jan 1952 in a middle class family in Cherthala, Kerala. After his schooling, he chose to study Hindi in order to become a teacher. But in the year 1973, at the age of 21, he heard the call and joined the novitiate in Patna. After his formation he went to Rajasthan College, Jaipur, for B.A. (Honours) in English. After his B.Ed in Jamshedpur Geo served as Vice Principal, Junior School, St. Xavier's, Patna during 1983-86. Then he obtained his M.A. from St. Stephen's College, Delhi in 1988 and returned to Patna, St. Xavier's as its Vice Principal in 1989 and served till 1992. While doing B.Ed in Jamshedpur, Geo, popular among his peers and elected College Union Secretary, fell in love with a girl. He was pulled between these two attractions, but finally Geo convinced her to marry another man and decided to stick to his original commitment.

Another life-shaking event occurred in 1986 when Geo received word that his father had suffered a stroke and was in a coma. The news was so shattering that Geo began to question his faith. After his father's death at the age of 75, Geo fell a victim of depression. He wanted to give up his religion. He questioned God for denying him the opportunity to speak to his father one last time. Life made no sense, and he even contemplated suicide. His Jesuit superiors, realizing his condition, took him to an ashram in Haridwar where he stayed on for months. He attended prayer services and bhajans and gradually began to experience healing.

From 1992 to 1995 Geo served as the Headmaster of the Catholic High School, Ara, a school for the underprivileged. In 1995 he was deputed to St. Xavier's School, Jaipur, as Vice Principal. After securing MEd from MSU, Baroda in 1996, Geo served as Principal of St. Xavier's School, Shahbad for over a year. Then he was appointed to Loyola College of Education, Namchi, Sikkim first as a member of the staff and later as its Principal. The years from 1998 to 2000 at Namchi were so fulfilling that he wanted to stay on; but the Delhi Province wanted him at Bhiwadi, where he laboured for five years. In 2005 Geo was appointed to Behror School and then in 2011 was sent to the newly started St. Xavier's College, Jaipur as its Vice Principal. Geo served as the Province and Assistancy Coordinator of Brothers for a number of years.

In 2012 he was diagnosed with renal failure, which required periodic dialysis. He felt helpless. Books became his constant companion, and spirituality his source of strength. As his health worsened, he began to look at every day as a gift. He looked back at life with a great sense of satisfaction and felt "No regrets, No ill-will." The call came on 04 Feb '15 at about 4 am, when Geo, in his sleep, slipped off into his eternal rest. As he wanted, he will be remembered as a "Man of the Heart," who would remain alive in the hearts of his students.

- Augustine Perumalil, SJ & Mathew Padayatty SJ

## MICHAEL THANNIVELIL, SJ (KER) 1947 - 2015



During the funeral Mass presided over by Fr M K George and the funeral rites conducted by Bishop Varghese Chakkalakal of Calicut, many Jesuits were found sobbing. They were crying for Br Michael Thannivelil, the beloved of all in the Province, who had passed away due to liver cancer. At the funeral Mass there were four shared homilies wherein each one recalled the greatness of Michael. They highlighted his qualities and contributions.

Michael was born on 18 June 1947. He entered the Society in 1968. After his Novitiate in Christ Hall, Calicut from 1968 - 70, he did his Juniorate at X T T I, Patna. As he was the secretary at the Regional Assistant's Office in Rome from 1979 to 1984, he took his Last Vows at Fr General's Curia in Rome on 02 Feb 1981, received by Fr Pedro Arrupe. After a few months of computer training in USA he came back to Kerala and was appointed secretary to the Provincial. He was minister at St Xavier's College and also Christ Hall, Calicut.

"Michaelachan," as he was affectionately called by some, took over as the infirmarian of Christ Hall in 2003 and for 11 years he did the job splendidly to the satisfaction of all. In the year 2006 he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and after chemotherapy and bone marrow transplant he appeared good and everyone thought that he was out of danger. Yet the virus remained dormant in him. It made its second appearance affecting his liver, and leading to his death on 09 Feb at Nirmala Hospital, Marykunnu. In spite of his sickness, he devoted his time and energy in taking care of the sick and old at Christ Hall. He used to spend endless hours by the side of the sick Jesuits in hospitals. He had tremendous patience and he did even repulsive jobs. Michael was a gem of a person. Sick and old Jesuits felt that there was someone for them and now they will feel the vacuum.

While I was the Provincial, I had the opportunity to interact with him on many occasions while he was at the wheels. He enjoyed driving. He used to wait for me at the railway station or bus stand or airport to receive me even at odd hours. He was ever willing to oblige. He was a self-sacrificing Jesuit who went about doing good. He had a gentle and kind heart. He wanted his helpers to be as devoted as himself while taking care of the sick and old. He knew the peculiarities of each sick Jesuit under him but he knew how to handle them. His cancer brought him nearer to God and nearer to people. He performed his job with total commitment and extreme devotion.

What matters is not the number of years that one lives but how he lives. In the case of Br Michael they were years of grace for the Province. He left behind a track record of ennobling service and he went about spreading the fragrance all around him. There will be sweet fragrance on the hands of those who handle roses and Br Michael was such a person who handed roses to all throughout his life. He was an angel of love. What a glorious life! There is no doubt that he will be received by St Michael at the heavenly portal. Death is not a window that closes, but a door that opens to the light, the Eternal Light. May his soul rest in Peace!

- Joseph Kallepallil, SJ

### Is this our mission?

Thanks for the report about Alex Premkumar's safe release and the interview with him. We are glad that he is safe and out. Prem says that he is willing to go back if the Society and the Province send him back. It shows his generosity and obedience. However, it is foolish heroics. Our whole mission of sending our Jesuits into such a place is, as one famous Buddhist teacher has remarked about such adventures, idiotic compassion. It betrays a messianic complex. The Americans are caught by such a complex and it only brings chaos and destruction.

There are hostilities between India and Pakistan, and the Taliban are Pakistan's creatures. By simply running some schools for girls or boys we are not going to save the country. It is the Afghans who have to help themselves and the country. What we can do in such a complex situation is - if we can - to invite some of their own people, provide them the needed training and give help and send them back to help their people or to run schools and the like. The training we give should not be simply some routine science or English. Education should be basically in raising questions and opening the windows of awareness. The psychologist Carl Jung has described the demands of today's complex situation: "Therefore the individual who wishes to have an answer to the problem of evil, as it is posed today, has need, first and foremost, of self-knowledge, that is, the utmost possible knowledge of his own wholeness. He must know relentlessly how much good he can do, and what crimes he is capable of, and must beware of regarding the one as real and the other as illusion. Both are elements within his nature." We have to rethink the whole concept of mission in today's world, in the context of the all-pervasive communication networks and the people's demand and need that they take charge of their own destiny. Above all, we have to recover our primary vocation and roots in the heart of the Gospel - faith-hope-love - and not get lost in the secular gospels. We should ask if such foolhardy and disastrous adventures are our mission and if we should mindlessly throw our foot-soldiers into the jaws of evil and death.

- Ama Samy, SJ  
Kodaikanal, T.N. - 624 104

### Francis of Assisi on the outside but..

While reading and reflecting about the leadership of the Provincials of JCSA.. I remembered these comments about Pope Francis, a brother Jesuit.

"Every time I met with him, I felt I was in front of some boss of a Wall Street-listed company," said one professional expert hired to assist reform. His leadership style is one of an austere workaholic who remains the master while serving. "Francis of Assisi is what you see from the outside, but when you come close to him, you recognize a Jesuit general," said another layperson at the Vatican.

Being a "Jesuit general" means Francis does not just want a structural reorganization, but, first, what he calls "spiritual reform." This is what his speech to the curia before Christmas was all about. He spelled out 15 "diseases" he had sensed, including one he termed "existential schizophrenia." According to Francis, this is a disease that "often strikes those who abandon pastoral service and restrict themselves to bureaucratic matters, thus losing contact with reality, with concrete people."

"Spiritual reform" was also the reason for a retreat outside Rome during Lent. Before, these "spiritual exercises" used to happen inside the Vatican, during working hours. They were not a real break. The Jesuit pope wants his collaborators to be healed, like good Christians preparing for Easter.

- Ranjit Yawu, SJ  
Sri Lanka



### Greatest miracle

In your editorial in the March '15 issue of *Jivan* you have commented on two hard-to-believe, miraculous events and asked us to thank the Lord for these miracles and ask him for more miracles. The safe return of Fr Alex Premkumar after eight months in the custody of Talibans in Afghanistan is a true miracle. There is no other way of describing it. The greatest miracle of recent times is, of course, Pope Francis, who has managed to focus the world's attention on the poor of this world, whom the rich and the comfortable tend to ignore or forget. Even those who do not like the Catholic Church for various reasons love him and pay attention to what he says and does. Isn't that a miracle?

- Felix Joseph, SJ  
Trichy, T.N. - 620 002

### On interfaith dialogue

Prof Ambrogio Bongiovanni (Francis Xavier Movement, Rome) and Prof Leonard Fernando SJ (Vidyajyoti, Delhi) had organised three seminars on interfaith dialogue entitled: 'Windows on Dialogue' in (2007), 'Dialogue in the Pluralistic World' in (2012) and 'Interfaith Spirituality: The Power of Confluence' in (2013). The first and second seminars were organised in Delhi and the third one was held in Hyderabad.

The three seminars dealt with various themes related to interfaith dialogue and the contributors are all eminent scholars.

The proceedings have been published under the same titles as of the seminars by ISPCCK, Delhi. They are priced at Rs.225, Rs 250 and Rs 150 respectively. Those who want to buy copies of these books can write to me at Vidyajyoti, 23 Raj Niwas Marg, Delhi 110 054. You may order your copies also via email: victoredwinsj@gmail.com

- Victor Edwin, SJ  
Delhi - 110 054

# Lessons for Life

## *I've learned from India*

BY MILROY FERNANDO, SJ

**Embrace the uncertainty:** I wasn't really prepared for India. I don't think you ever could be. No matter how well you plan your time in India, it never goes according to plan. Simply because, India is exotic and exiting. India wows you and breaks your heart at the same time. In India be ready to 'embrace' the 'uncertainty' and to 'explore' the 'mystery'.

**Learn to co-exist:** Everywhere you go you see waves of people moving on the sidewalks and the streets. India truly is a concoction of variety and an amalgam of diversity in every sphere of life. But instead of being overwhelmed with this widespread *mélange*, Indians accept this huge spectrum of multiplicity with open arms and happily co-exist with each other. It teaches you to co-exist, share and still somehow retain your individuality. In India be ready to 'capture' the 'complexity' and 'enjoy' your 'individuality'.

**Learn to wait:** Though people are moving very quickly in vehicles, everything else in India seems to be moving at a much slower pace, and the people don't seem to mind at all. Being on time is optional, and five minutes can mean an hour. But, no one seems to be stressed or bothered by this, they just sit and wait patiently. Life unfolds in the present allowing time to rush past unobserved. To make the most of time, lose track of it.

**Travel with an open mind:** India is magic. India is a sensory overload. Above all else, India is educational - there's a lot to learn simply by traveling there. From its celebrations of festivals to its trains, life lessons come at you at the speed of light, and while they may surprise you, they do create an awareness of the breadth of the cultural differences possible in this world. In India be ready to 'travel' with an open mind and be humble to know that you don't know to learn.

**Be ready to be religious:** India is devoutly religious, which means that after family, God is the most important thing to typical Indians (cricket being a close third). The temples, rituals and iconography are impossible to miss and with such a massive collective faith, it quickly becomes evident that it shouldn't be taken lightly, especially if you want to tune in to the undercurrents of an elaborate and ancient culture. Religion

*Milroy Fernando, SJ, who belongs to the Sri Lankan Province, did his tertianship at SHC, Shembaganur, Tamil Nadu, South India.*



is woven deep into the fabric of India. In India be ready to be 'religious' and to be made simply 'spiritual'.

**Value the family:** People in India show respect, loyalty, affection and bonding to significant others, specially, to family members and in my experience, also to their teachers. Most Indians wouldn't think twice about sacrificing their own happiness for the well-being of the family. It's not a choice, it's a way of life, and a lack of commitment to family means far more than simple dishonor, it's a personal shortcoming. In India be ready to 'value' the family life.

**Focus on relationships:** Relationships are crucial in India. It is through people that agreements fail or succeed. Being considered as an in-group member is necessary. Material possessions are less important. Money is important, but it is not the primary motivator. Peer appraisal is not that popular in India, maybe because relationships are more important and

collectivism towards in-groups is present. Wherever you look, people, usually men - more often than women - are gathered together, sitting on the ground, chatting. In India be ready to admire 'relationships' and avoid to sail a one man ship.

**Travel inwards:** Surprisingly, what impressed me the most in India were not the wonders of marble art work or the ancient temples, instead it was a quiet peaceful spot that I found inside of me. The world that you see when you close your eyes is

the most beautiful place. It is calmer than a beach at sunset, and more picturesque than the snow-topped mountains. It doesn't take time to get there. It is always present in you as soon as you draw your attention inwards. India teaches you to tell yourself: "All this is unreal. I am Pure Consciousness. I am God."

**Dream and be hopeful:** India teaches you also to keep your hope alive. No matter how worse the situations is, Indians are always hopeful for a better tomorrow for themselves and their country. Indians know what it means to not take your blessings for granted. They are happy, as they readily accept the imperfections. Therefore, the people find many ways to celebrate - lots of festivals and dance performances. They seem to perceive that life is a great gift. So even the poor know how to celebrate life. India teaches you to keep dreaming and remain hopeful.



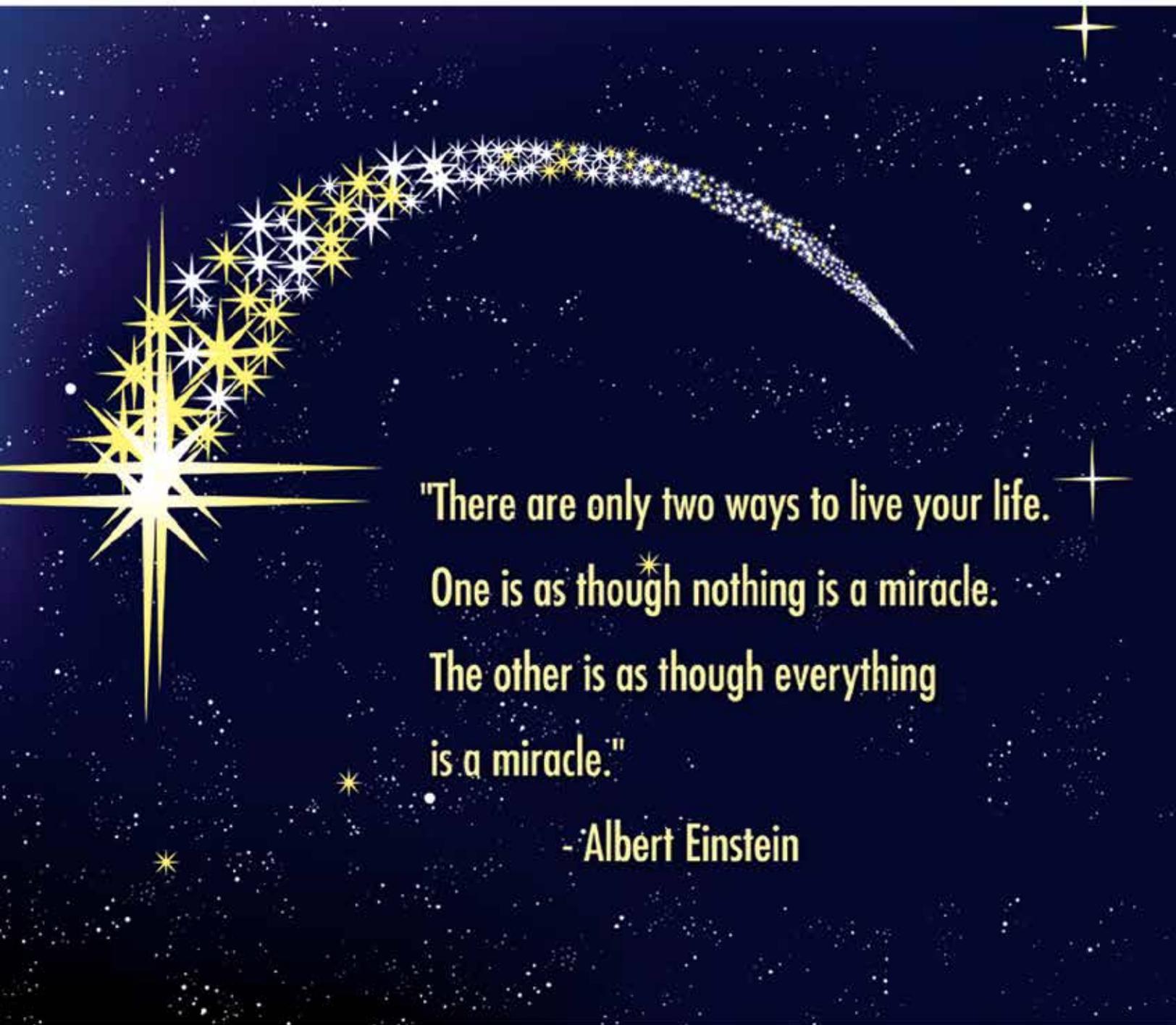
# Heavenly Father,

*God of mercy,  
we no longer look for Jesus among the dead,  
for he is alive and has become the Lord of life.  
From the waters of death  
you raise us with him  
and renew your gift of life within us.  
Increase in our minds and hearts  
the risen life we share with Christ,  
and help us to grow as your people  
toward the fullness of eternal life with you.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

*Source: [www.catholicdoors.com](http://www.catholicdoors.com)*



# MOMENTS



"There are only two ways to live your life.  
One is as though nothing is a miracle.  
The other is as though everything  
is a miracle."

- Albert Einstein