

JIVAN

News and Views of Jesuits in India

November-December 2016



Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ

31st Superior General

Francis Effect
& Jesuit response

Reconciliation
is our priority, says Fr Sosa

Will always hope,
says Bishop Audo of Aleppo

Recipe for Christmas all year long

BY JOANNA FUCHS

*Take a heap of child-like wonder
That opens up our eyes
To the unexpected gifts in life -
Each day a sweet surprise.*

*Mix in fond appreciation
For the people whom we know;
Like festive Christmas candles,
Each one has a special glow.*

*Stir it all with human kindness;
Wrap it up in love and peace,
Decorate with optimism, and
Our joy will never cease.*

*If we use this healthy recipe,
We know we will remember
To be in the Christmas spirit,
Even when it's not December.*

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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2016

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Thank God, our Church and our Society of Jesus - at least at the highest levels - are substantially and noticeably different from this world. If what goes on in the world of politics happens within the Church and our Society, could Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio have been elected the Pope, could Fr Arturo Sosa have been elected the Jesuit General?

The electoral process that has placed such wonderful men at the top is, thank God, still immune from the evils that have corrupted and corroded elections in nations across the world.

We don't know much about what goes on behind closed doors in a papal conclave, but we saw for ourselves what happened at the General Curia in the days prior to the election of the new General.

The process revealed once again the spiritual and the administrative genius that St Ignatius is. Days of silence and prayer free the electors from the prejudices that may lurk within their very human hearts. Don't we know that biases based on race, nationality, language and caste wreak havoc in elections elsewhere? Then the days of 'murmuration' - when canvassing for oneself or someone else is strictly prohibited, when the electors engage in discreet, one-to-one conversations looking for the right man - quietly lead to a consensus. And on the day of the election - after praying yet again - the electors, through a secret ballot, zero in quickly - without any rancour or resentment - on the right man. Marvellous, isn't it?

In order to introduce to the readers of *Jivan* this 'right man' with an endearing smile, a refreshing sense of humour and an unusual moustache, we have compiled, in the cover feature in this issue, what some Jesuits who know him well have to say about him (*See p. 4-7*).

As one who has to deal with words all the time, I was amazed that he summarized in one single sentence (in his homily at the Thanksgiving Mass) our identity, our mission, our challenges and the faith, hope and collaboration that could help us meet them: "Like Ignatius and his first companions, who fought and lived under the banner of the cross in the service of the Lord and his Church, we also want to contribute to what seems impossible today: a humanity reconciled in justice, living in peace in a common house well-kept, where there is room for everyone because we recognize that we are siblings, son and daughters of the same and unique Father."

In the last issue I wrote, "By the time you are able to read this issue our Delegates would have elected a successor to the eminently amiable Fr Adolfo Nicholas." By the time you are able to read this issue, the U.S. voters would have elected their President.

See what their electoral process has come up with: both the candidates from the two major parties are distrustful and disliked. But the Republican candidate, Donald Trump, has shocked the world.

This is what *the New York Times* had to say about him in an editorial that sought to explain why he should not be elected: "It became clear that Mr. Trump's views were matters of dangerous impulse and cynical pandering rather than thoughtful politics. His has been "a campaign marked by bursts of false and outrageous allegations, personal insults, xenophobic nationalism, unapologetic sexism and positions that shift according to his audience and his whims."

What a stark contrast he offers to Pope Francis! When Pope Francis asks nations to provide shelter to refugees, Trump has pledged a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslim newcomers and the deportation of 11 million undocumented immigrants. When Pope Francis entreats the nations to care for this planet earth, our God-given home, Trump "has repeatedly denounced global warming as a 'hoax.' While Pope Francis strongly condemns sexual abuse, Trump boasts, in a video, of the degrading, dehumanising way in which he deals with women. The number of women who have accused him of sexual assaults keeps going up. What is really frightening is not merely the fact that such a person can slip through successfully a democracy's carefully designed electoral process, but also the thousands of his American supporters who seem to think and act like him.

What I said about the innate wisdom and efficacy of the electoral process in the Church and the Society is true only for the top-level elections. In many religious congregations, and alas, in some of our own provinces, the process has more to do with politics than with Providence. What will we have to offer the world of Trumps?

While praying for aspiring politicians everywhere, don't forget to thank God, during this Christmas season, for what truly gives us joy and hope, for all that sustains us during the year: St Ignatius, Pope Francis, Fr Adolfo Nicolas, Fr Arturo Sosa, the on-going GC 36, our delegates, our communities, our friends, families and collaborators...
- M.A.J.A.



“Who is Arturo Sosa, SJ?”

Jesuits who know the new Jesuit General talk of his background, qualities and strengths

Arturo Peraza, SJ:

(Provincial of Venezuela, home Province of Fr Sosa)

Taught me to look at God with the eyes of the poor:

These days many of my companions have asked me in many different ways this question: Who is Arturo Sosa? Never have I had to talk about a person so many times. It was the repetition of a personal history. The more it was repeated, the more memories it brought to my mind. At the same time I had this serene interior conviction that this was someone whom I could see as our General.

When I was in the Novitiate and in Philosophy, he was a Jesuit who was admired for his ability. Already in those days he was a person who resonated in the Venezuelan news media. He was our professor of political philosophy. He was close to his students but at the same time demanding. For the second year of my regency, when I was studying Law, I was sent to the Manuel Aguirre Community where Arturo Sosa was my spiritual director for four years. This allowed me to get very close to him and discover the spiritual depth of my namesake.

I recall the community liturgies where we shared the Word and our experiences, in a community made up of five or six members. In those liturgies Arturo expounded on his close relationship with God as father - even using the term *papa* - as merciful and as the God of the history of our people, who invited all to read the signs of the times in the life of our people. I am reminded of his Sunday Masses in the Church of La Pastora, a parish of Caracas, where the whole community shared the homily which he would finalize with a sort of a synthesis and personal comments.

He taught me to look at God with the eyes of the poor, with serious

analysis so as to understand the reality that surrounded us, to see in the history of our country a way to understand our present and find paths to the future. The analyst Arturo has a desire to search for and find signs of God's invitation in our time, readings about the ways that allow us to enter more profoundly into human transcendence, and search for the same transcendence of the history that we are living. I would say that he taught me the meaning of a faith that is incarnate.

This incarnate faith can be found in his writings and in his intellectual rigour, but even more in his ability to relate to and come close to all, especially those who are most humble. In La Pastora, the poor live in gutters and there he found a road to commitment. Our house was open to all in the community of the poor that surrounded us, the people of the gutters, and especially to the youth of our sector. Arturo had many friends. That is why he didn't speak simply from books but from the heart of the people around us.

When I finished my studies in Law and my stint as a regent, I discovered that not only I, but also my namesake, were moving. He was to be my superior in Theology. He had accompanied me for a year there, when it was announced that he had been appointed Provincial of Venezuela. It was in 1996. He would continue as Provincial until 2004. During this time, he gave the Venezuelan Province a process of discernment that allowed us to construct the Apostolic Plan of the Province which we follow until this day. A plan with a vision for 20 years. Really it is hard to believe that in a Province such as Venezuela, where everything is in constant change, we were able to be guided by a plan in which we all easily recognize ourselves all the time. The Plan continues to clarify our work and motivates us to work in collaboration with



others, men and women, helps us understand the need to network, to work together. Part of this plan is the desire to collaborate in the formation of popular organizations and civil groups which can play a role in the Venezuelan political, social and economic process - a task that is much more complicated today than when we began. It strives to strengthen the laity and youth as collaborators in our Church.

In this plan it is clear that we want to commit ourselves to the poor of our country and the theme of frontier makes its appearance. We accepted the challenge to work on the frontiers - human, apostolic and social frontiers. The reality of the refugees, the presence of irregular groups of distinct signs, of legal and illegal commerce, especially of gasoline, the reality of the farm workers and of other elements, became a call for the whole Province. Arturo at the end of his term as Provincial was assigned to the Catholic University of Táchira - on the border- and he was determined to make this a border university on the frontier.

I knew Arturo when he was in one of his best facets of creativity and integration. He received a university of 9,000 students, which meant the creation of a new campus at a time when Venezuela had clear signs of crisis in sectors of production, hidden by the wealth of oil. He went to a university that was a good school, but that only looked interiorly into itself; and he opened it to the reality of the frontier by bring it into contact with neighboring communities, with the dioceses, with our frontier parishes, with the schools of Fe y Algeria in the area, with the reality of refugees, with the world of the farm worker, etc. A relationship that included investigation and publication of data about the area but also continued on to a direct commitment with actions

aimed at change. It was a change that he accomplished with the whole Jesuit community that accompanied him and with many lay persons who in many ways shared and joined this dream.

From this change was born the Interprovincial Apostolic Frontier Network (RAIF in Spanish). I participated in its formation as a newly appointed Provincial. This network brought together the Venezuelan and Colombian Provinces to address our common problems. Arturo, with all his obligations - including that of the Counselor to Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás, Rector of the community - took on the responsibility of motivating this Network. And as he did before with the Province, he now got a diverse group from both sides of the border to dream up a plan, a path, that would unite us. And he did that even at a time when relations between the two presidents - Hugo Chavez Frías of Venezuela and Alvaro Uribe of Colombia - were very tense.

I don't want to forget a very human detail. While all of this was going on, in the Peter Faber Community where Arturo was the superior, there was an older Jesuit who had been an excellent theological professor, especially in the area of Christology: José Cruz Ayestarán. Unfortunately, he had problems related to mental health. Instead of sending him to our infirmary, Arturo assumed the task of accompanying Jose when possible and allowed him to stay in the community. Each day Arturo would prepare the pills Jose had to take and make sure he took them. He was able to smile at some of Fr. Jose's weird ways and he and the rest of the community made it a point to try to make him feel at home. At the same time Arturo was very close to the university students, to those in our parishes and the villages, to the laypersons who worked in Fe y Algeria. It was his way of expressing that God, who is papa, is merciful and committed.

It was hard for me to accept that Fr General Nicholas, who had already on two occasions given him international posts, took him to Rome to direct the International Houses. It was clear that this was one of the priorities of the GC 35 and Arturo, as a good Jesuit, simply accepted. Among other things he had to leave his mother who at that time (2014) was 90 years old. He used to visit her whenever he came for the national meeting of Rectors, but now his visits had to be limited to once a year. I want to recognize his mother, Margarita Abascal de Sosa, for what she has done for him, which is a great deal. ■

David Nazar, SJ:

(Fr David Nazar is a Canadian Jesuit, former Provincial of English Canada, who spent several years as Superior of the Jesuits in Ukraine. At present he is the Rector of the Pontifical Oriental Institute.)

A man with a profound, practical humility:

Fr Arturo Sosa is a man with a profound, practical humility. It shows itself in action more than in words. His job as Delegate for the Roman Works was difficult because these intercultural institutions have a complicated administrative structure. He listens, engages, understands, and then simply gets to work. His collegial manner allows people to know they have been heard.

In his responsibilities with us, the new General has been neither fearful nor aggressive. In cases of conflict, he openly presents the facts and appeals to the best that is in each of us. He will search for the creative path forward that enhances the mission and saves people from their own darkness.

The Orientale Institute is a case in point. It is a papal institute entrusted



to the Society by the popes, but has to work with various Vatican offices. ... Fr. Sosa has had the discipline of spirit to remain above petty reactions. Here you see the mettle of the man and his spirituality.

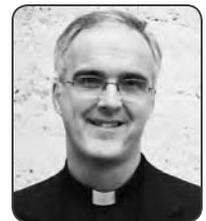
Fr Arturo Sosa has a healthy sense of humour and an open affection for people. When you add fearlessness, a willingness to engage challenges, and a forward-looking vision, you have the apt image for a Superior General today. Ours is not a time of clear plans and projects, of building up or tearing down. We are in a time of seeking, experimenting, and embracing change and "interculturality." The world needs witnesses of creative engagement and visionary hope. The Roman institutions have the potential to be key players for the Society and the Church in this context. Students at the Consortium (i.e., Gregorian, Biblicum, Orientale) come from 120 countries, overwhelmingly poorer and troubled ones. With Fr General's intimate knowledge of the Consortium, a priority of the Society, we have the opportunity to make of the Roman institutions modern, high-tech centres of a globalized education. If we retain the freedom and humour that we find in Fr. Arturo, we will hear God's voice appeal to our practical humility and will make good things happen under his leadership. ■

Gerry Whelan, SJ:

(Gerry Whelan, SJ, is an Irish Jesuit who lectures in the Gregorian University in Rome.)

Visionary, decisive, has a great sense of humour:

The new leader of the Jesuits worldwide is decisive, visionary and has a great sense of humour, My reaction to the



news of the election in one word – joy. He is a very decisive man, familiar and comfortable with leadership roles. He says he's not afraid to get into the middle of complex or fraught situations in order to work for a good outcome. A native of Venezuela, he was involved in mediation role with the controversial government of Hugo Chávez. He set up a university in one of the poorest regions of the country. And his academic credentials leave him well-placed to understand societal and political structures.

At a personal level, he is a warm and robust extrovert. I believe he will make a fine leader for the Jesuits. Fr Sosa possesses the qualities needed to lead the Society as they follow in the footsteps of Pope Francis, adapting a faith that does justice to the challenges posed by our globalised world. ■

Michael O'Sullivan, SJ:

(Michael O'Sullivan, SJ had to leave Chile under threat of death, when he worked there during the time of the Pinochet dictatorship)

Close to the heart of Pope Francis

In order to understand why the Jesuits would have elected someone like Fr Sosa, one has to look at the context, as well as the man himself. The Jesuits would have been aware of their special fourth vow to the Pope, who is himself a Jesuit, when choosing their new leader. So they would have wanted to reflect in their choice, some of the values close to the heart of Francis. Fr Arturo would appear to have a natural affinity with the Pope's concern for the poor, the displaced and the marginalised. He comes from a similar background as the Pope, knowing well



the huge disparity between the rich and the poor in Latin America. Like Bergoglio in Argentina, in his own country of Venezuela, Fr Sosa worked hard on behalf of the poor. He was involved in advocacy and mediation as a social and political scientist. And in practical ventures such as the building of schools for the poor and a university in an impoverished area. So, like the Pope, he comes from a long tradition of leaders in the Church who have discerned their Christian call in terms of the needs and concerns of their people. ■

Dizzi Perales, SJ:

(Dizzi Perales, SJ, is the permanent Coordinator of RAIF (Interprovincial Apostolic Region of the Colombian-Venezuelan border))

Always united with Jesus

Fr General is one of the Jesuits for whom I feel a lot of admiration. I see him as an excellent person, always attentive to the dynamic of the community, of the educational mission, of the country, of the Universal Society of Jesus. He is able to take care of the daily tasks and at the same time of large scale projects, always united with Jesus. ■



Jesús Rodríguez, SJ

(Rodríguez is a Venezuelan Jesuit who lived with Fr. Arturo for 8 years)

Broad vision

I see him as a man characterized both by 'faith-justice' and 'faith-culture', with a broad vision of the Society of Jesus that



includes the lay people. Arturo Sosa was very efficient in the projects he led in the border region with Colombia, emphasizing the relationships with the Colombian Jesuits. ■

Jorge Cela, SJ:

(Jorge Cela, SJ is the president of the Conference of Latino-american Provincials. He is a long time friend of Fr Sosa and has worked with him for a long time)

A strategist who is able to build new roads:

Arturo's history tells us he is a Renaissance man. His most obvious qualities are his people skills, and his ability to relate.



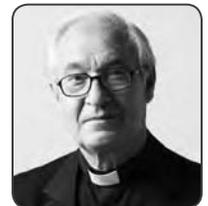
I think we chose him also because he is a strategist. His training in political science and his ability give him a strategic vision that goes beyond the obvious. He has the ability to penetrate reality, discover its potential, and build new roads with everyone, working towards consensus. ■

Luis Ugalde, SJ:

(Ugalde is a Spanish Jesuit who has been in Venezuela for more than 60 years)

Experienced and open

I would emphasize two aspects from his personality: his great openness and his experience in very diverse fields of activity. He is a man easily accessible, really open, with a very good formation. He did his regency in a large coop, working with the campesinos. There he could look at the society from the point of view of the poor. But he was also Director of the Social Centre and, later, Rector of a Catholic University." ■



An unnoticed God

BY BENJAMIN JOHN WILSON

Jesus came onto the scene virtually unnoticed. “There was no room for them in the inn,” Luke reports with understated reserve. Is it not curious that Luke seemingly finds nothing outlandish about the long-awaited messiah’s arrival occasioning practically no response except for one small band of shepherds who were tipped off by a rather singular display of “the glory of the Lord”?

No, Luke is an astute enough chronicler of both the human and the divine to know that God tends to avoid the spotlight and that we are in the habit of alternately overlooking and not looking far enough for God. God, the creator of the universe, became a helpless baby so insignificant and ordinary that not even a single decent room in the inn could be found for him. During the Christmas season, we, as a Church, collectively recall and celebrate that God is often closer and smaller than we think.

God in My Freezer

Recently, my wife was pregnant with our second child and was due at the same time that we planned to move. Our “new” old house required considerable work before it was ready to be moved into with a toddler and a soon-to-be newborn. Working on the house took us to the brink of exhaustion - and all of this in the lead-up to welcoming home a tiny, sleepless bundle of joy. Many friends came to our aid. One friend brought

us a dozen or so pints of Ben and Jerry’s ice cream and stashed them in our freezer. Each night, bleary-eyed from long hours of working on the house, my wife and I would gather around ice cream and rehash the day’s progress and size up the next day’s projects.

The cache of ice cream steadily diminished. Yet one evening we opened the freezer and found an as-of-yet undiscovered pint of Ben and Jerry’s. God was in that ice cream. I am certain of it. It was not that the last pint miraculously appeared. Its presence - tucked behind a bag of frozen vegetables - was entirely explicable. Our friend obviously had put it there. But that last pint of ice cream revealed something of the humble means God so characteristically assumes to communicate a bottomless love. Like a secret admirer eager to communicate affection, God employs ingenious creativity in riddling our lives with seemingly unsigned love notes. God seems content to be tucked away in small places not because God does not want to be found but because God is humble enough to wait for us to go looking. My friend with the ice cream showed me what God desperately wanted me to know in those anxious days: My family is loved. If I had been waiting for a thunderbolt from heaven to tell me that, I would have missed the message. God used a far subtler, sweeter means of communication that risked being overlooked altogether as something as ordinary as, well, some extraordinarily delicious ice cream.

St. Ignatius Loyola has a memorable phrase for thinking about God’s presence all around us.

Ignatius said, “God labors and works for me in all the creatures on the face of the earth.” His point was that one of the most common ways that God loves us is through other people. We are accustomed to interpreting other people’s words and actions toward us as indicating how they themselves feel about us. Ignatius invites us to see how our daily experiences of receiving love also reveal God’s own deep care for us.

But life is not all about finding hidden pints of ice cream. Another way that God is also “smaller” than we sometimes think is God’s presence in the most marginalized of our brothers and sisters, including those who are hungry, homeless or in prison. In Chapter 25 of the Gospel according to Matthew, we learn that whatever we do - or do not do - to “the least” of those around us, we do - or do not do - to Jesus himself. Matthew suggests that neither those who served others nor those who ignored others realized that it was Jesus they were encountering. Our eyes are not habituated to seeing God in those around us. It takes practice to perceive God in other people, particularly in those the world pushes to the margins. And the conclusion of Matthew 25 points out that it is no small thing to find God in those we might be tempted to look past: our salvation depends on it.

God Outstretched on the Cross

Part of the reason that no room could be found in the inn for Mary, Joseph and Jesus is that God so often slips by unnoticed in the seemingly small and ordinary. But even if the most lavish hospitality had been shown to the infant Jesus and his fatigued parents that night, no accommodations - not even the universe itself - could be roomy enough to enclose the God who had come to earth. God came to dwell

among us. We, however, can never domesticate God. We are always right to name an experience as potentially revelatory of God's presence. And at the same time, God remains beyond our limited human experience and understanding. God was both "in" that surprising last pint of ice cream

God in the overwhelming suffering and hardship that exists in our world and in our own lives? God's "bigness" comes into question when it can seem like he is absent from those places where his presence is most needed.

For more than half a century, Dorothy Day worked, wrote and

of ordinary meals among the poor at the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality, because she was familiar with God's penchant for dealing in the commonplace, the overlooked and the downtrodden. Understandably, we may ask of God, "Where are you when there are so many people



Part of the reason that no room could be found in the inn for Mary, Joseph and Jesus is that God so often slips by unnoticed in the seemingly small and ordinary.

and is infinitely more than it.

Karl Rahner, a German Jesuit theologian, had a delightful way of talking about this "more-ness" of God. To Rahner, God was not an inaccessible, rarified mystery entirely beyond reach. Instead, he perceived an unbounded roominess in God such that God is "infinitely knowable." We can know more and more about God and there is always more and more to know. The multiplicity of Gospel portraits of Jesus and the diversity of images of God throughout Scripture bear witness to this "more-ness" of God. We would do well to frequently revisit lesser-known passages in order to curb the tendency to shrink our image of God to a size and shape that often bears a striking resemblance to our own selves.

We can savor finding God in small moments when we feel surprisingly loved, or in epiphany experiences when we perceive God on the margins where Jesus promised we would find him. Can we also find

spoke tirelessly in response to the crushing needs of those living in poverty both near and far. Her own life was frequently marked by feelings of bleakness and depression. Even after becoming a national celebrity and being called upon by St. Mother Teresa and Thomas Merton, O.C.S.O., Dorothy Day continued to struggle with feeling unwanted, unloved and unloving. Again and again, she turned to the Eucharist and communal meals to find God's presence. She famously concludes her autobiography with the lines: "We know Him in the breaking of the bread, and we know each other in the breaking of the bread, and we are not alone anymore."

Dorothy Day found solace in the Eucharist, which continues to make present the God who, outstretched on the cross, went to the very depths of all that is human out of love for us. The God who was content to arrive almost unnoticed in Bethlehem was lifted up for all to see at Golgotha. She also took comfort in the rhythm

suffering?" Might God not also be asking the same question of us? As St Teresa of Avila says, "Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours."

That ragged assortment of shepherds who "went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger" could well be the patron saints of the Christmas season. They were humble enough to be overcome with awe at the glory of the Lord that shone around them. And with eyes still burning from the sight of it, they could equally make out God's tiny, bundled figure in the shadows of the manger. Holy shepherds, pray for us this Christmas that we too might fall in worship surrounded by God's immeasurable heavenly light and run in haste to find God's tiniest trace here on earth.

(Benjamin J. Wilson, a product of Jesuit and Holy Cross education, works at the University of Notre Dame's Center for Social Concerns.)

Courtesy: America

Lecture on Jesuit's contribution to study of Sufism

Islamic Studies Association, New Delhi, organised a lecture, "In the way of the Sufi: Paul Jackson's Contribution to Silsila Yi Maneri" by Dr Meenakshi Khanna, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of History, IP College for Women, Delhi on 01 Oct '16 at St Xavier's School, Delhi.

Dr. Meenakshi Khanna, a scholar in South Asian Sufism, who has researched on Sufi dream traditions, has been associated with Vidjayoti College of Theology for more than two decades. Dr Meenakshi began by outlining different genres of Sufi literature - available for reconstructing the history of Sufism in the Indian subcontinent. Significant among these are *treatises (rasail)* on specific themes written by Sufis themselves, *discourses (malfuzat)* recorded in Sufi gatherings, *letters (maktub)* that Sufis sent to their disciples, giving guidance on specific issues that the disciples sought for, *biographical notings (tazkira)* about Sufis, and poetic compositions. This literary genre, earliest example of which is traced to a treatise *Kashf al mahjub* of Ali Hujwiri (c. 1050), was largely produced in Persian. Considerable literature is also available in the local languages called '*Hindavi*' in those days. While the treaties and letters were mostly penned by the Sufis themselves, their disciples (*murids*) produced records of the master's (*shaikh's*) teachings in Sufi gatherings.

The speaker went on to introduce the idea of *silsila* (literally meaning 'chain'), signifying continuous link between teacher and disciple that are traced back to Prophet Muhammad, some of the more popular being the Chishti, Suhrawardi, Shattari, Qadiri, Naqshbandi and Firdausi. The latter was the principal affiliation of Shaikh Sharafuddin Maneri (d. 1381), the revered Sufi from Bihar who is also known as *Makhdum-i Jahan* (The Teacher of the World). Shaikh Maneri is the subject of the Jesuit Fr Paul Jackson's study of over four decades. Fr Jackson's deep knowledge of Persian and his insightful understanding of Sufi practices in South Asia have eminently prepared him to make a life-time contribution to Sufi studies through his translation of Sharafuddin Maneri's Letters (*Maktubat-i sadi*) and discourses (*Khwan-i pur ni'mat* and *Ma'din al ma'ani*) Jackson brought to light the spiritual treasures of Maneri's teaching in a language that people can easily read and understand. However, the great value of Jackson's work lies in unveiling the richness of Sufi mysticism and spirituality that remained veiled in ancient Persian in modern idiomatic English without losing the spirit of Maneri and his times. Dr Meenakshi Khanna introduced to her listeners all the major works of Paul Jackson.

Moreover, she said Fr Jackson was not only a rigorous scholar but a Catholic Sufi, who entered into a spiritual realm where he recognized that dialogue with Muslims is the way of seeing God in and through the eyes of Muslims. She noted that it is a long way from what happened in Akbar's Court where Jesuits debated with the Emperor. A journey Jesuits started in the Court of Akbar (1556-1605) has brought about a significant dialogue between Christians and Muslims of this subcontinent. Further, she interpreted the deep relations that Fr Jackson had established with his supervisor and mentor Prof. Hasan Askari, a relationship similar to a Pir-Muridi relationship. "I wish I had a pir like Askari Saheb," Dr Khanna said.

After Mrs Khanna's presentation there was a lively discussion focusing on the importance of rigorous training in languages for fruitful work with ancient texts and the relevance of discovering the riches of the past for a harmonious future.

- Victor Edwin, SJ

Juniorate Staff Meet in Sri Lanka

The meeting at Sri Lanka saw possibly the largest turnout ever for an all-Juniorate staff meeting. Seventeen Jesuits made their way gleefully to this quaint little island destination. We arrived in Colombo on 11 Sep '16 to a warm reception by the Sri Lankan Jesuits, and then went over to Fatima Retreat house, Kandy, for the business part of our trip.

The meet comprised firstly, a three-day 'Faculty Development Programme' animated by Fr Peter Francis, SJ from XLRI. His well-planned sessions took us through agreeing upon intended outcomes for our Juniorates, introducing participants to recent trends in language teaching, sharing of best practices, compiling common learning materials, and improving upon the Assistancy Standardized English Test (ASET). All agreed that the three days opened up new avenues for us regarding Juniorate training.



We had our regular sharing as well, where we highlighted the rewarding features in each Juniorate along with the 'tough meat' (pain points), and proposed changes in schedule, methods, evaluation, etc. The Juniorate staff also came up with a few recommendations concerning procedural and policy matters. Much discussion centered around the current question of 'Mixed Juniorates' in the wake of the restructuring processes currently on in the Assistancy.

There were culturally educative moments too. We visited the 'temple of the tooth', a local Catholic shrine and the National Seminary of Kandy. We also spent a few precious moments with Aloysius Pieris, SJ. The swim at Galle, a picturesque seaside locale, was refreshing. The 'happy hours' spent in the company of the local Jesuit community and the tertians in Kandy made for an unforgettable experience.

The hospitality of the Sri Lankan Jesuits was something to behold. Our sincere thanks go out to Fr Kilbert, the Dean of the Sri Lanka Juniorate, who made all this possible. We are grateful also to the Provincial of Sri Lanka, Fr Jeyaraj Rasiyah. We also thank our ADF, Fr Raj Irudaya, for his insightful presence all through.

- Learyo Rodrigues, SJ

“The top priority for Jesuits is to work for reconciliation,” *says the new General*

BY GERARD O'CONNELL

The top priority for Jesuits at this moment in history is “to work for reconciliation in the world,” Arturo Sosa, SJ, the new Superior General of the Society of Jesus, said in Rome, on 18 Oct '16 at his first press conference since his election.

This is a “great challenge,” he said, because it means “we have to strive for reconciliation between human beings, reconciliation with God and reconciliation with the created world.”

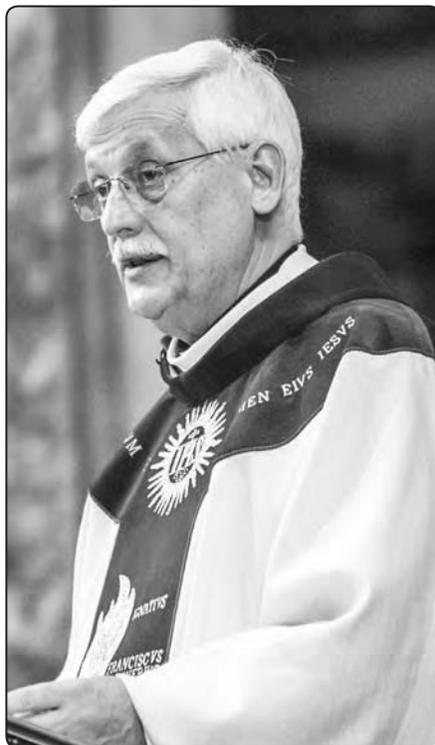
He revealed that this is “the call” that has come “from all regions of the world” in the consultation conducted over the past two years in preparation for the 36th General Congregation that is now underway at the Jesuit Curia in Rome.

He described it as a call from “a world that feels split, divided and in which there is much violence and war.” All this is more visible in some countries like Syria, Iraq and Venezuela, but it is also happening in many other places that get little media attention. Together with economic factors and poverty, these conflicts lead to forced migration and open the door to human trafficking.

“This is a call to help the world live in peace and harmony,” and Jesuits must respond to it, together with others, he stated.

It may seem an impossible task - which Fr Sosa admitted - but when asked to explain this more, he repeated what he had said on 15 Oct in his first homily as Fr General at the

Mass of thanksgiving in the Church of the Gesù. He said Jesuits are called to trust in Jesus and “seek not only the improbable, but the impossible,



because nothing is impossible for God.” This too is “the mission of Christians,” he added. “It’s possible to have a world that is different, where people can live together in peace, have a home and education.” But to achieve the impossible “one needs faith, because without it one can do nothing.”

Together with this deep faith in Jesus, Fr Sosa said Jesuits need to have “intellectual depth” in order - as he said in his homily - “to think creatively about the ways in which our service to the mission of Christ Jesus can be more effective. To think about ways of deeply understanding the

unique moment of human history in which we are living, and to contribute to the search for alternatives for overcoming poverty, inequality and oppression.”

At the press conference, in the same hall where GC 36 is being held, Fr Sosa emphasized that it is “most important” for Jesuits to have this intellectual depth because it is “one of the biggest services we can give to the Church.” He drew attention to the fact that the Society of Jesus makes a major human resources investment in this field and is thus able to contribute to the church through its intellectual work and spiritual formation. This is an area he knows well; prior to his election, he was responsible for the Jesuits’ international houses in Rome: the Gregorian University, the Biblicum, the Orientale, and the Vatican Observatory. Before that, he helped reform a university in Venezuela.

It is in the intellectual field too that Jesuits today are making a real contribution in mainland China, he said. About a dozen Jesuits are working there as professors in universities, teaching English and economics. The Chinese authorities are fully aware that they are Jesuits. In addition to this, he said, they are also engaged in theological and spiritual formation in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

The hour-long press conference was chaired by Zambian-born Patrick Mulemi, SJ and attended by media representatives from all over the world, including *America’s* Matt Malone, SJ, and Jeremy Zipple, SJ. The former director of the Vatican Press Office and advisor to Adolfo

Nicolas, SJ, Federico Lombardi, SJ presented the new superior general and recalled that they had first met at GC 33, which accepted Pedro Arrupe's resignation and elected Peter-Hans Kolvenbach. Fr Sosa was then the youngest delegate, and has participated in all general congregations since then. Although the past three superior generals had worked most of their lives in Asia, they were nonetheless European. Fr Sosa is the first non-European and the first Latin American to head the order, Fr Lombardi said.

Asked about his relation to the first Jesuit Pope, Fr Sosa recalled that they too had first met at GC 33. "We sat facing each other," he said, and they got to know each other during that month-and-a-half long congregation. They also met several times in Buenos Aires when the Venezuelan visited a social analysis center in the Argentine metropolis, while Bergoglio was bishop there. Since coming to Rome, Fr Sosa revealed that he has met Pope Francis several times, including when he welcomed him to the international house when Francis visited the Gesù in September 2014. He received a phone call from the Pope to congratulate him after his election, but he has yet to meet him face-to-face as superior general.

When a journalist reminded him that at World Youth Day in Rio, July 2013, Pope Francis told young people from Argentina that they should "shake things up" (*Hagen lio!*) when they returned to their homeland, Fr Sosa, who showed great humor during the press conference, commented with a smile, "I have been doing that all my life!" He underlined the fact that Francis is telling not just the young but also Jesuits, "to not be afraid, but to commit themselves deeply for Jesus in their everyday life in the world, and not conform themselves to the situation that the world is in, and that the church is in."

Questioned as to how he first made contact with the Jesuits in Venezuela, Fr Sosa began by recalling that the Jesuits first came to Venezuela exactly 100 years ago to teach in a seminary. He said that some Jesuit brothers were teaching in the

high praise for his predecessor, Adolfo Nicolàs. He sincerely thanked him for his "dedicated service" to the Society of Jesus and for the "very great friendship" they shared. He revealed that Fr Nicolàs is now in Spain enjoying a well-deserved rest,

Fr Sosa was born in Caracas on 12 Nov 1948, and has spent most of his life in Venezuela, where as a political scientist he taught in universities and worked in a social research center. It came as no surprise to him that some questions were related to his homeland and the dramatic political crisis there. He recalled that as a political scientist he had spent much time seeking to understand the socio-political situation in the country and the church's role in it. He said it's impossible to understand this situation without taking into account that the country lives on the money it gets from petroleum, and that this industry is managed exclusively by the state - a fact that weighs heavily on the democracy in the country. Both Hugo Chavez and Nicolàs Maduro ruled this way. The opposition thinks along the same lines regarding petroleum and the state. Consequently, Fr Sosa said, "neither the government nor the opposition has a plan" to resolve the present crisis situation in the country. He believes that it is necessary "to build bridges" among all sectors of society so as to find a solution to the crisis, "because nobody wants any more violence in the country," he said.

The new superior general who is elected "for life," told the press that many times since his election, people have asked him how he will govern the society, and his response has been the same to everyone: "It's not yet clear to me!" Indeed, he added, "it couldn't be clear because the General Congregation - which is the supreme governing body of the Society of Jesus - is just beginning." It will elect four assistants to help him in the government of the order and, based on the input given from the different provinces across the world over the past two years, they will discuss and decide the way ahead. Apart from the major task of working for reconciliation in the world, he expects it to continue to focus on refugees and poverty, and to give attention to the role of the international Jesuit houses that are based in Rome.

school that he attended and he was "most impressed" by them. "I got my vocation more from the brothers than the priests. They have an incredible vocation," he said. He went on to praise the brothers and recalled that as Jesuit provincial in Venezuela (1996-2004) he gained a much deeper knowledge of them and admired "the depth of their spirituality." In knowing them, he said, "I knew saints. I knew contemplatives."

In his presentation to the press before question time, Fr Sosa had

but he said goodbye to Pope Francis and to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI before departing. After his sojourn in Spain, Fr Sosa said, his predecessor will return to the Philippines where he will continue to work, this time as spiritual father to the East Asian Pastoral Institute at the Ateneo de Manila, where he had worked for many years before his election to lead the Jesuits. "I am deeply touched by his freedom and his wish to continue working," he said. ■

Courtesy: America

BY MANI NEDUMATTAM, SJ

On Sunday, 25 September, a grand cultural program on the diocesan level was organized here in our St. Xavier's school in Jaipur to celebrate the canonization of our dear Mother St. Teresa. Mother Teresa of Calcutta was formally canonized by Pope Francis in Rome on 04 Sept '16 this year to the great joy of her admirers worldwide. The celebration made me recall Mother's first visit to Jaipur: on 14 March 1981.

In 1979 Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for her relentless efforts for the welfare of the poorest of the poor. This was a well-deserved recognition by the Nobel Committee of the self-sacrificing service offered by by Teresa and her 'Missionaries of Charity' for about 30 years. This was soon followed by the 'Bharat Ratna', the highest civilian award of India, conferred on her by the Government of India.

She took all these honors in her stride and went on with her hectic schedule of visiting her homes for the poor in different parts of the world. Her Sisters had come to Jaipur and started their services by then. The Rajasthan State government, headed by Chief Minister, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, decided to honor her as a 'State Guest' when they came to know of her proposed visit to Jaipur. But the government officials were not sure how to go about a reception for a Catholic nun. Jaipur was not a separate diocese then and hence there was no bishop here. So they approached us at St. Xavier's school to organize a fitting reception for her.

Fr. P.T. Augustine, Rector of St. Xavier's, and I, as the Principal, agreed to make the needed arrangements. Since we knew that a large number of people were eager to see Mother Teresa, we decided to set up a stage for her to be seated, on one side of the main school ground where the invited people – mostly of students and parents, including groups of students from our

Something beautiful for God



neighborhood schools – were gathered. The state government had deputed the minister of education, Ms Kamala Beniwal, to receive Mother at the airport on her arrival and to accompany her till the evening when she was to leave Jaipur. As the flight was delayed, a good crowd, including Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur, had already gathered inside the school gate near the church to receive the VIP visitor. I still remember the first thing Mother asked us when she arrived here: "Where is the chapel?"

After spending about five minutes praying in the church, she was ready to meet the people. We led this

diminutive, blue-bordered sari clad Mother to the stage to meet the people eagerly waiting to welcome her. She was officially welcomed by Ms Kamala on behalf of the State. Our school children sang a welcome song. Her short message was simple: "God loves all of us. See God in the poor and the suffering people around us. Love God by loving and serving his poor!"

She said she was happy to know that we communicate gospel values to our students through the various curricular and co-curricular activities provided for them – though most of them were Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Jains. In her brief message jotted down in the School 'Visitors' Book' too Mother Teresa stressed her constant theme of loving God through the loving service of his poor, suffering children. Mother was grateful to St. Xavier's for helping her Sisters to start a home for the suffering old people here in Jaipur. We had donated a plot of land adjacent to St Xavier's campus to them for this purpose.

The celebration, held to honour her memory and to rejoice over the Church's official recognition of her holiness, is sure to have inspired all those who were there to do 'something beautiful for God'.

Fr Mani Nedumattam, SJ works as Counsellor at St Xavier's School, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Apostleship of Prayer becomes The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

BY FIO MASCARENHAS, SJ

New name: The 'Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network' (PWPN) is the new name chosen by Pope Francis for the former Apostleship of Prayer, founded in 1844 in France. Becoming now a part of the Church's New Evangelization, it seeks to speak afresh to a world that has undergone great cultural changes in recent decades. The Pope continues to entrust the Society of Jesus with

God that they consecrate the whole of their day to the Lord, starting from the first waking hour. Its aim is to create a global network of prayer for the needs of the Church and the world. It is a simple and practical method for 'thinking with the Church' by means of prayer for the deep longings of the world with all its joys and sorrows. It makes of prayer a true service and an aid to those who are striving daily to face the world's challenges."

Way of the Heart: The spiritual content of the PWPN is a way of the heart. This pathway

Risen One, and to offer daily our readiness to collaborate with Him in his mission, as his apostles. "Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:39). The human heart is restless and needy. St Augustine said, "You made us for yourself, oh Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." We yearn for happiness and seek it in a multitude of ways. God gave us the capacity to love and to live generously. But many times we feel poor and lost, burdened with frustrations and deep desires, unable



The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

the re-creation and spreading of this prayer network.

Goal: The goal of the PWPN is to invite more and more people to pray with the Pope for the challenges he points out to us in his monthly prayer intentions. These intentions open us to the urgent needs of the Church and humanity, and which we ordinarily might not think about. In praying with these papal intentions, we extend our gaze onto the whole world and enter personally into the joys and hopes, the pains and sufferings of our brothers and sisters everywhere. According to Fr Nicolas, former Superior General of the Jesuits, "the PWPN proposes to the people of

leads us to identify with the mind, heart and projects of Jesus. The members are called to realize God's unlimited love for each one of us and for all humankind. This is what he is continuously saying to us and what we fathom in all he does for us each day: 'I love you'. Love is the way in which the Lord looks at us always, regardless of the course our life has taken--even if we have strayed away from him because of our sin. His love is unconditional, it is the principle and the foundation of our spiritual way. To acknowledge his love gives us the chance to love him in return.

So we are invited to live a personal love covenant with the

to solve our personal crisis and find inner peace. So PWPN proposes a pathway of faith, prayer and life for all who desire to receive Jesus Christ in their hearts.

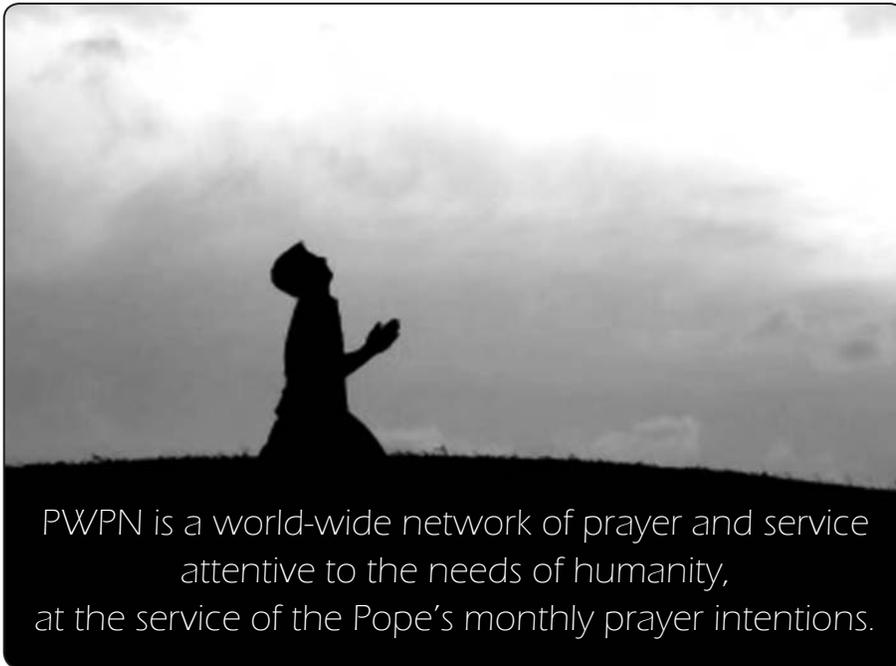
Therefore the PWPN is symbolized by the heart – the human heart and the Sacred Heart of Jesus – that in unison wish to respond to the needs of humanity today.

Daily Offering: The PWPN is formed by those who make themselves available to collaborate in Christ's mission through the daily offering of their lives, in any place or situation they may be, and by praying daily for the Pope's intentions. The call to the mission is the fire that makes us

apostles sent from the heart of the Father to the heart of the world. My daily prayer can have at least three specific moments. I will choose the form which inspires me most and helps me become more available to the Risen Lord. I can have in front of me an image of Jesus or a Crucifix. It can be in a special place in my house. I can recite a particular prayer. I can use digital means, etc.

Son Jesus' Heart, who continues to offer Himself in the Eucharist for the salvation of the world. May the Holy Spirit, Who guided Jesus, be my guide and my strength today so that I may witness to Your love. With Mary, the mother of our Lord and of the Church, I pray especially for this month's intentions as proposed by the Holy Father."

With Jesus during the day: In



PWPN is a world-wide network of prayer and service attentive to the needs of humanity, at the service of the Pope's monthly prayer intentions.

With Jesus in the morning:

As I begin my day, I will look for a moment of silence to become aware of the presence of the Risen Lord. I ask the Father to make me available to the mission of his Son, offering him what I am and possess. This offering can be done in my own words or in the words of the Daily Offering. I ask the Holy Spirit to open my heart to the needs and challenges that confront humanity and the mission of the Church, and I pray for them following the Pope's intentions for this month. Daily Offering: "*God, our Father, I offer You my day. I offer You my prayers, thoughts, words, actions, joys and sufferings in union with Your*

different moments along the day, on the road or on a stop, at home or at work, I make myself aware of being in the presence of the Lord and I renew my availability to "*to labor with him in the day and watch in the night*" (Sp. Ex. 93).

With Jesus at night: At the end of the day, in a moment of silence, I ask the Holy Spirit to show me in which ways Jesus has been with me during this day, and I thank him. I ask myself in which ways have I been available to his mission, and I thank him. I look at how I have been an obstacle to his work in me and I ask that in his mercy he may come and transform my heart. I ask him that

I may live the next day close to him. Jesus gives me his blessing.

First Friday: The PWPN especially encourages prayer on the First Friday of each month. This is a traditional day to remember the revelation of God's love on the cross and the love of his Sacred Heart for humanity. If possible, on this day I will participate in the Eucharist.

Open to all: Not merely Catholics, but also other Christians and with all the other peoples, even those from other religious traditions, who work for love, fellowship and justice in this world, can join this PWPN.

A mission of compassion: PWPN calls not merely to prayer but also to compassionate action.

God, the Father of Jesus and our Father, wishes to make his compassion present in the world in and through us, his disciples. We are invited to make our own the Father's loving gaze upon humanity and to act with the Heart of Jesus Christ. We are sent to the places where men and women are suffering injustice, to help heal and support the brokenhearted. Even if we are physically constrained or limited by illness, and even if we feel incapable of changing the unjust structures of society, we participate in this mission by doing whatever we can. Through both prayer and concrete actions, we can make our own contribution to address the sufferings of those most in need.

Prayer and service: Therefore PWPN is a world-wide network of prayer and service attentive to the needs of humanity, at the service of the Pope's monthly prayer intentions. We allow these intentions to orient our prayer and action each month.

Fr Fio Mascarenhas, SJ (BOM) is the Chairman of Catholic Bible Institute, Mumbai.

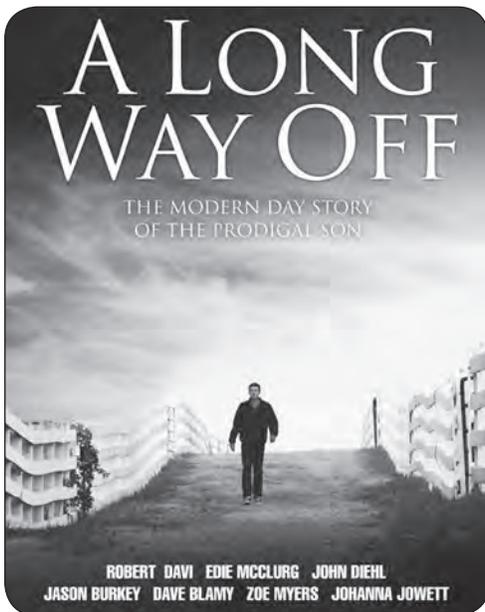


Today's Prodigal Son

A Long Way Off

A film by Michael Davis, John Errington

Starring Robert Davi, Edie McClurg, John Diehl...



A Long Way Off captures the timeless tale of a journey to humility, repentance, and reconciliation with both a loving earthly father and heavenly Father.

In this inspiring true story, based on the tale of The Prodigal Son taken from Luke 15:11-32 but set in modern times, Jacob leaves the family farm, shunning his father's religious and business ethics, to strike out on his own in the big city, poised to conquer the world in his own way - on his terms.

Surprised that his father actually obliges his request for an early inheritance, Jacob sets out for his own idea of fortune and fame, and proceeds to spend millions of dollars living the high life - only to find it come crashing down and learning vital life lessons, coming back a humbled, appreciative son, finally ready to reconcile with both his earthly and Heavenly Father.

The runner who rushed to help the victim



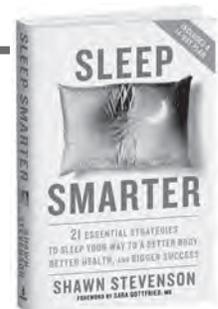
The avid runner, Kannan Sundararajan, was participating in the Bengaluru Marathon on 16 Oct '16. When he reached the 20 km mark near the Domlur flyover, a fellow runner told him about an accident on the other side of the flyover. Since Kannan is certified in first-aid/CPR, and is an advocate for road safety, he rushed to the accident spot to help. "After reaching the crowd what I saw was shocking. There was a young man seriously injured sitting in a pool of blood." The 22-year-old Kiran Yadav L had been knocked down from his bike, and a truck had run over his leg, smashing it completely. While some race volunteers and bystanders had already called for an ambulance, Kannan found that the first aid had not been taken care of properly. He tried to minimise the blood flow by keeping Kiran's leg elevated till the ambulance finally arrived.

Not stopping there, he further helped the injured youth raise money for his treatment. He discussed the situation with the marathon organisers, as well as fellow runners. Without waiting for anyone else's help, he decided to take upon himself the task of raising the money for Kiran's treatment.

Courtesy: www.thebetterindia.com

To sleep well

When it comes to health, there is one criminally overlooked element: sleep. Good sleep helps you shed fat for good, stave off disease, stay productive, and improve virtually every function of your mind and body. That's what Shawn Stevenson learned when a degenerative bone disease crushed his dream of becoming a professional athlete. Through better sleep and optimized nutrition, Stevenson healed his body and achieved fitness and business goals. In *Sleep Smarter*, Stevenson shares easy tips and tricks to discover the best sleep and best health of your life. He shares sleep nutrients and supplements and stress-reduction exercises and fitness tips.



Sleep Smarter:

By Shawn Stevenson

Published by Rodale Books

Pages: 288;

Price: Rs.1391/-

GC 36 & the Jesuit Response to the Francis Effect



BY RUDOLF C. HEREDIA, SJ

Our Jesuit Imagination

In his first homily after taking office the new General, Fr Arturo Sosa, SJ called for the audacity of faith to “seek not only the improbable, but the impossible, because nothing is impossible for God” (Luke 1:37).

The unifying thread through the various ups and downs, twists and turns of the Jesuit saga, I suggest, is the ‘Jesuit imagination’ that creatively expresses the inspiration of their spiritual vision and mission, contextualising it in the exigencies and practicalities of the situation into which the Jesuit is inserted, imagining

new possibilities and daring new ventures, projecting them into the future in anticipation of our mission today and tomorrow. When we renege on our Jesuit imagination, we lose this unifying thread; we lose the plot, and then what will be left of our mission? It easily becomes “a tale told by an idiot.. signifying nothing..”

A Prophetic Witness

Prophets witness by living out that inspiration in their lives rather than thundering against people in the market place from safe ivory towers or minarets. Prophets do the deeds that make their words credible. GC 35 put together a triptych: Identity, Mission, Community, and challenges us to a prophetic witness: “Our lives must provoke the questions: ‘who are

you, that you do these things ... and that you do them in this way?’” (GC 35: 3.2.10) This applies to our personal and community lives.

Moreover, in our complex, confusing world of networked organisations and interests, a prophetic witness is most effective when it is cooperative and corporate. Given our huge institutional investment in our various apostolates what is needed today is prophetic witnessing not just by charismatic individuals, but by our institutions as institutions as well. This is an enormous challenge but Pope Francis himself has not shied away from it. The *Economist* has aptly called him an “Operating Prophet”. (19 April 2014.)

Pope Francis's example challenges us to make a prophetic breakthrough with our contribution to society and the Church. Only discernment can show us how to respond. Furthermore we need to take this to another level with a prophetic institutional witness for today. For this we must read the signs of the times and build contrast-communities of solidarity in continuity with our faith, to be a sign of contradiction in the world, for the world. The Jesuits of Universidad Centroamericana (Central American University) in San Salvador did this by standing against the injustices of a brutal regime, and six Jesuits paid for this with their lives. Their martyrdom precipitated a nationwide peace process.

Bureaucratisation and professionalisation of our institutions may streamline our administration. Yet organisational structures are but means to fulfil the ends of our mission not merely institutional goals. Institutional efficiency must not replace prophetic effectiveness. Efficiency must serve effectiveness not vice versa. This holds good for both our institutional and personal witness. This is a dilemma that cannot be resolved, it must be lived. With our falling numbers in the Society, we need a collective discernment to make a breakthrough. And we must have the Ignatian courage, which is not different from Ignatian prudence, to pull down where necessary and build up as needed and where called. Rather than do better what others are doing, we need to discern what needs to be done and do it as well as we can. We would do well to exorcise the demons of fear and doubt that prevent us from doing this. Like Ignatius we need hearts to embrace the whole world.

A Defining Moment

In his first meeting with the

media on 16 March 2013, Pope Francis, referring to his choice of patron, sighed: "Oh, how I wish for a Church that is poor and for the poor!" This is a defining moment, a *kairos*, for the Church, and particularly pertinent in our consumerist and unequal society, that has forgotten how to care and share, even as multiple crises overtake us on all sides. Pope Francis's vision and mission have brought a paradigm shift for the Church. He has called the Church to be poor and for the poor; to witness to the joy of the good news

not at the service of the multitudes of the powerless, of the pursuit of self-referential individualistic goals not the common good of all.

We need to constantly contextualise our understanding of what it means to be poor for our Church today and every day. Who are the poor, the *anawim*, and how are they to be served today? What does the option for the poor mean in the wider context of our Jesuit tradition? How must this option be exercised in the communities and



What is needed today is prophetic witnessing not just by charismatic individuals, but by our institutions as well.

(*Evangelii Gaudium*); to be merciful as the precondition to reconciliation and harmony; to sustain and regenerate creation (*Laudatio Si*).

He challenges us to come out from our comfort zones. It is a call for a prophetic witness that contextualises our preferential option for the poor and the promotion of justice in solidarity with them. It is a radical and counter-cultural call for renewed priorities in a world of conspicuous consumption and desperate deprivation, of power as the instrument of the privileged few and

constituencies we serve? What sort of justice and reconciliation must this option promote? How do we develop an effective Christian praxis for the service of the faith and the promotion of justice? What are some of the implications for our apostolates and institutions of being a prophetic witness to the kingdom of God to which we are all called?

To address such questions, we must identify unjust structures and endeavour to dismantle and replace them with more just and egalitarian ones. This requires

collaboration among ourselves and with people of goodwill. Further, it demands a Christian praxis of action-reflection-action, for both process and product, for means and ends are both important and must not be compromised or corrupted. On the contrary, ad hocism may keep us busy but finally such improvisation repeats itself and eventually changes little, except to make do-gooders feel good as they mouth platitudes and shout slogans. Such an option for the poor becomes easily the refuge of scoundrels, for it does not impact

solidarity, of caring and sharing. It is the challenge Pope Francis gave the Society on the 200th anniversary of its restoration, 14 Sept, 2014. And it is emblazoned on the logo of GC 36: "Row out into deep water". (Lk 5: 4)

A Defining Response

Jesuits have been at the leading edge of controversies and conflicts and have ventured into difficult and dangerous terrain. They have read the signs of the times and have rearticulated contextualised our mission in response innovatively and daringly.

We pray that GC 36 will define our Society's response to the challenge of Pope Francis's vision and mission.



the status quo, either structurally or culturally, but rather perpetuate the need for such do-goodism.

Rather what is necessary is a viable socio-cultural analysis that will interrogate the terms of the discourse that dominate and stymie our well-intentioned endeavours with unintended effects. I believe this is the best contribution we can make to society and the Church today. It is a challenge we all are called to face together as a believing, prophetic, counter-cultural community of

Decree 4 of the GC 32 in 1974 articulated "Our Mission Today" as "the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. ... for the reconciliation of men and women among themselves, which is the reconciliation God demands, must be based on justice." (No. 2) GC 34 in 1995 in decree 2 on "Servants of Christ's Mission" (No.19) broadened this mission of faith and justice to include culture and dialogue, spelling out the interrelationship between the

four. GC 35 in 2008, in decree 3 on "Challenges to Our Mission Today" calls us to "promote reconciliation and peace", (No 18) with God (No. 18) with one another, (No. 25) with creation, (No. 31) "and to witness to the reconciliation in solidarity of all the children of God." (No. 43).

Now we need to reaffirm and live the integration of all these six: a *faith* that does *justice*, sensitive to *culture*, committed to *dialogue*, sustained by *reconciliation* and *peace*, reaching out in forgiveness, culminating in harmony, anticipating the kingdom of God, already now but not fully yet.

We pray that GC 36 will define our Society's response to the challenge of Pope Francis's vision and mission: to set our heart on fire so we can set other hearts on fire; to call us out of our comfort zones and to live the magis; to challenge us to be men of God and men in the world; to be mystics for God and prophets in the world, "seeking God in all things and all things in God"; to have that audacity of faith to "seek not only the improbable, but the impossible, because nothing is impossible for God" (Luke 1:37), as Fr General Arturo Susa urged in his homily at the Thanksgiving Mass on the day after his election.

After Vatican II, the Arrupe effect reset the Society of Jesus on this trajectory that stretched out to new frontiers and beyond. We now need the Pope Francis effect to bring a tsunami of the Spirit in the Society to take us to new horizons and beyond. Let us then row out into the deep water and pray for the Spirit to be able to read, discern and respond to the signs of the times and define a committed and effective response. Surely being true to our Ignatian charism demands no less. ■

Fr Rudi C. Heredia, SJ (BOM) is a writer and independent researcher. He resides at Campion Jesuit Residence, Mumbai.

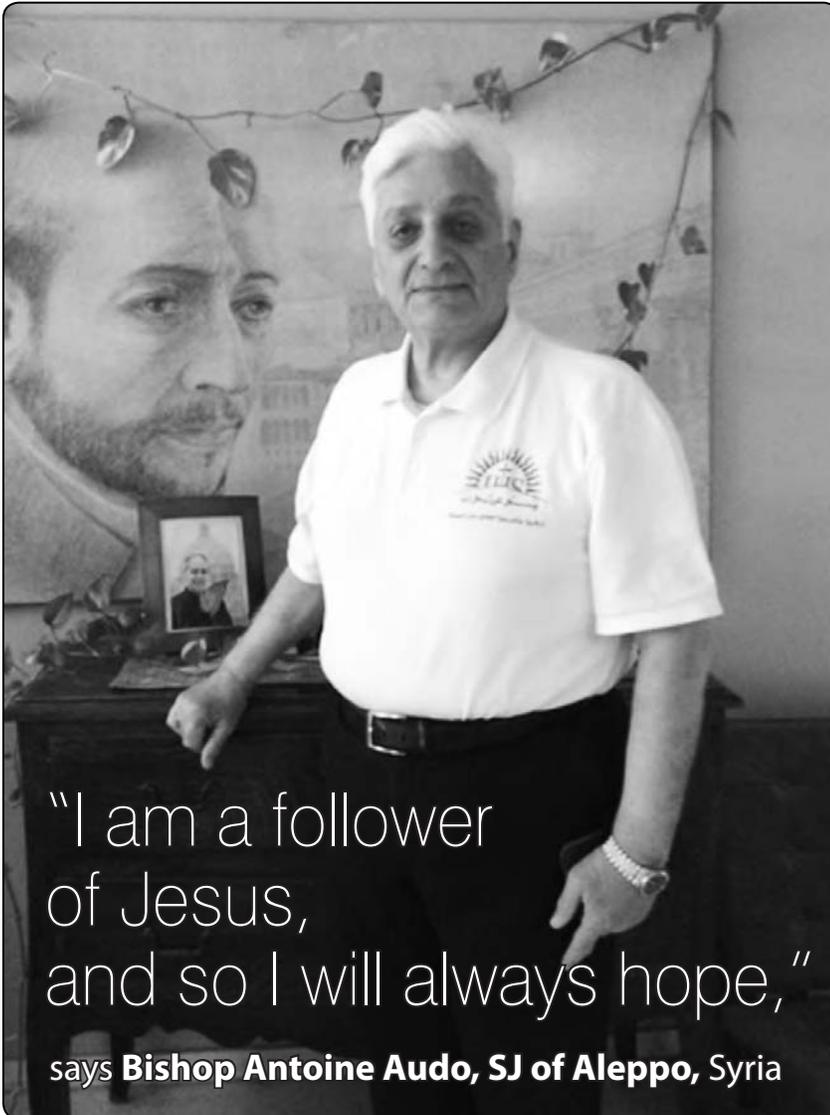
Christmas

BY ABIGAIL HOUSEMANS

*Christmas list
 and Christmas wish
 all a part of the Christmas theme
 without any of it its like there is no meaning
 but I'm here to tell
 I'm here to yell
 that Christmas is not all about you
 may Christmas get you in the spirit for what you need to do
 help the poor
 help the needy
 help the ones that don't get this or that
 help the ones that have that and this
 Christmas is not all about you
 if I need to yell or scream
 to tell you what Christmas means
 I will
 I promise
 because Christmas is not all about me
 it's not all about you
 just what you need to do.*



Courtesy: www.poemhunter.com



“I am a follower of Jesus, and so I will always hope,”

says **Bishop Antoine Audo, SJ of Aleppo, Syria**

Pope Francis, while addressing the Vatican's charitable dicastery, the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, on 29 Sep '16, said, “What our brothers and sisters in Syria and Iraq want today more than anything else is peace!” Among the several who were attentively listening to what the Holy Father was saying was **Jesuit Bishop Antoine Audo of Aleppo, Syria**; and Bishop Audo certainly agrees with his Jesuit companion.

Seventy-year old Bishop Audo, who belongs to the Chaldean rite and is a Syrian native, has been the Bishop of Aleppo for almost 25 years now (since 1992). Aleppo has been in the eye of the storm in recent weeks, with heavy bombardments on the rebel strongholds which have killed thousands of people. The war in Syria is in its sixth year. Bishop Audo, living in Aleppo, in the midst of the war, has experienced it all! In the face of much hostility and many difficulties, he has proved to the world that he is a profile in courage, a Jesuit on a mission, a Shepherd who strives for unity and peace. For the last several years he is also the President of Caritas Syria, a responsibility, which he has been carrying out with finesse.

*In an exhaustive interview to Jivan given at the Jesuit Residence in Beirut, Bishop Antoine Audo spoke to **Fr Cedric Prakash, SJ**:*

Bishop Audo, kindly describe the present reality of Syria and particularly of Aleppo, today?

The situation in several parts of Syria, and particularly in Aleppo is really very bad! There are bombings all around us. Thousands have been killed, and many more affected in several different ways. The war which is in its sixth year – has affected most parts of Syria. Aleppo, a once flourishing city, is totally devastated. We hear the thunder of bombs and the rattle of gunfire all the time; we often don't know what is happening. It's hard to describe how chaotic, terrifying and psychologically difficult it is when you have no idea what will happen next, or where the next bomb will fall. Today most people here are unemployed: and without work daily life lacks a purpose. In several places people have no access to water: neither to drink nor to bathe. The clothes people wear are dirty and ragged. We have almost no electricity. The cost of essential commodities has gone up tremendously. Most families have very little or nothing to eat. There is practically no medicare or hospitals they can go to. The people are suffering very much; despair and depression reigns. It is all very tragic!

A terrible and sad situation indeed! Why do you think all this has happened?

A very difficult question. Why has all this happened? There are no clear or direct answers. Syria has never been like this. Syrians lived together for many years as a country, as a civilisation and a culture without hate or violence. Most people are not interested in sectarian divisions. We just want to work and live as we did before the war, when people of all faiths co-existed peacefully. Somehow, about six years ago life began to change dramatically and very tragically for us. External powers and other

forces are certainly responsible. Our problems are often referred to as a 'civil war' – but everyone is aware of the involvement of many others.

may have been contributory factors as to why our city is the epicentre of the war in Syria today. Many of the rebels live in the eastern parts of the city. The

Syria. Those who have remained are mostly the poorer families and the very elderly. In Aleppo, most of the Christians population still lives in areas controlled by the government

The people in the Western world, specially the Christians, must speak up for Syria. They must challenge their Governments.



Why is Aleppo targeted?

Again there are several reasons. For centuries, Aleppo was Syria's largest city, the capital of the northern areas and a fairly industrialised one. After Constantinople and Cairo, it was the third largest city of the Ottoman Empire. The history and culture of this great city goes back to the 6th millennium BC – making it one of the oldest inhabited cities of the world. The old city of Aleppo –was a UNESCO world heritage site; unfortunately, all that is gone today; the old city, the soul of the country, is destroyed. Aleppo, once upon a time, was situated at the crossroads of civilization and trade; half way between the Mediterranean Sea and modern day Iraq (earlier called Mesopotamia). Its proximity to the Turkish border and the fact it is a stronghold of the Sunni Muslims,

western side (which is Government-controlled) is not as badly affected.

What about Christians in Syria? In Aleppo?

When the war began in 2011, Syria was still a bastion of Christianity in the Middle East. Because of the conflict, the Christian population in Syria has been reduced to half: from 1.5 million to only about 750,000 today. Though we have about 45 Churches in Aleppo, the total Christian population is today just about one-third from 160,000 in 2011 to less than 40,000 today. Like elsewhere in the Middle East, Christians have to face persecution from Islamic extremists. The richer Christians who could afford to leave, have fled to Lebanon, to Europe, to the US, Canada and other countries. Several of the middle-class moved to Latakia and other safer areas in

What has been the response of the Churches and the Christians to the war?

As Christians and as Churches, all we want is peace! We believe that violence is not a solution. There are non-violent ways of addressing the crisis. Most of those who are affected, who are displaced, are Muslims. That is an undeniable fact.

As President of Caritas in Syria, we have provided humanitarian help to hundreds of thousands affected people without distinction. Jesus wanted us to serve all. We do so very gladly. Our approach is inclusive. Help is given to those who desperately lack food, medical care and shelter. We work in areas held both by the government and by armed opposition groups. We have many centres where people come to receive aid, and our volunteers go out to find those too weak, sick and old to help themselves. We work in close collaboration with other Church agencies, like the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). JRS does creditable work in Aleppo, Homs, Damascus and other parts of Syria. There is unity and good rapport among the different Churches. I also have to admit that there are difficulties – and sometimes it is really not easy! The situation would have been more tragic in Syria, were it not for the humanitarian interventions by the Christian community. Besides, a large percentage of the help we receive come from the Caritas organizations in the west and other Christian organizations.

In the context of the current conflict how do you see the role of Pope Francis?

Pope Francis has been a source of inspiration and strength to me and, in fact, for all the Christians of Syria and other parts of the Middle East. He has been consistent and very vocal in his stand for the refugees and the IDPs. He has been a world leader and a true Shepherd.

At every opportunity he has condemned the role of the arms and ammunition industry, and of how they are responsible for creating the culture of death. He told the U.S. Congress that this industry has “blood on their hands”. Very recently when speaking to the Papal nuncios he told them that ‘they must be aware of the faces of danger that threaten their flocks’ and he pointed to the situation of so many

Christians in the Middle East who are threatened with extinction because of the complicit silence of many. Pope Francis continues the way of Jesus; he exudes mercy, compassion and fatherly care. He is a man of prayer, who is concerned about the poor. It is wonderful that he is our Pope today!

Bishop Audo, what are some of your major concerns today?

There are several concerns and wishes which I have. I would like the war and the violence to stop immediately. We want peace as a condition to life. We need it more than anything else, at this moment. The people in the Western world, specially the Christians, must

speak out; they must challenge their Governments. We are all aware of the genesis of this war: the countries and powers responsible. We in the Middle East have our own cultural heritage; many are unable to understand the Arab and Muslim world. We have the capacity to deal with our issues. The arms and ammunition industry needs to be stopped. Many, including

I have already referred to the JRS. The Province too has begun to reflect and act with regard to the current crisis. I look forward to our GC 36, to our new Superior General and the new directions which will emerge from the Congregation.

Have you ever felt your own life is at risk?

Well, in any war, there is always a big risk! But I am not afraid! I have to be careful walking around the city because of the risk of snipers and kidnapping. The fate of two priests snatched on the road from Aleppo to Damascus remains unknown. There are several who fear for my safety and tell me to discard my bishop’s robes or to go into hiding. But I need to be on the streets to understand the situation and I have to be in the midst of my people to understand their suffering. But, thank

God, I am sustained by the prayers and daily acts of solidarity of my brothers and sisters from around the world.

Do you have hope for the future?

Yes, of course, I do have hope! I am a follower of Jesus- so naturally I will always hope. That is why I continue relentlessly. My hope is that this war stops immediately; that peace and reconciliation return to Syria and that all of us in our beloved country will once again be able to live in dignity, with respect for one another and in harmony. In this ‘Year of Mercy’ I pray to Jesus that this becomes a reality very soon! ■



“My hope is that this war stops immediately; that peace and reconciliation return to Syria.”

the human traffickers and smugglers, are profiteering from this war, from innocent lives. This has to be stopped too! We have to put the human person at the centre of all our efforts, everywhere. This is the message and spirit of Vatican II.

And what do you feel as a Jesuit today?

I have always taken great pride in being a Jesuit! I entered the Society in 1969, and I have been shaped and groomed by the Spiritual Exercises and by our Ignatian way of proceeding. My Jesuit companions of the Proche-Orient and Maghreb Province have done and continue to do remarkable work. They have been very supportive.

To an Unknown Soldier

(who will become the General tomorrow)

BY DERMOT PRESTON, SJ

Dear Brother in Christ,
I do not know who you are.

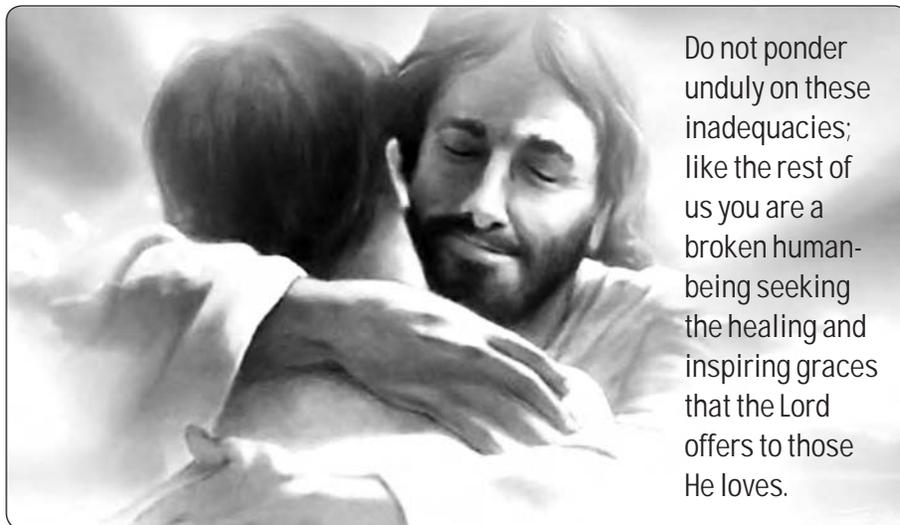
I write this on Thursday and you will be elected as Father General on Friday. Whether you are old or young, or whether I know you well, or whether we have only exchanged a smile and a few words in these last days, I will speak.

Firstly, the days of murmuration will have been gruelling for your soul: as the hours have unfolded, you will have grown aware that people

St Ignatius.

Yet, as others have been probing, you also (perhaps unwillingly) will have been forced to probe deeply and explore the ambiguities of your own personality, history and spiritual life; and almost certainly you will have perceived much within that is amiss – the failures of love, the compromises with life, the sins of omission and commission. These will be high on your agenda, even if others don't appear to have seen them.

So, when you take your seat as General and look out over the Aula, almost certainly, at some level, you will feel yourself to be a fraud and not

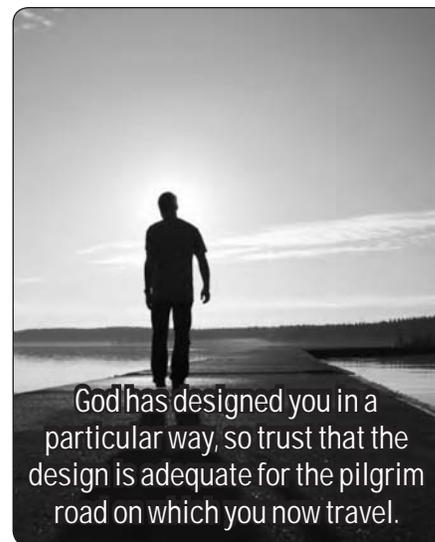


Do not ponder unduly on these inadequacies; like the rest of us you are a broken human-being seeking the healing and inspiring graces that the Lord offers to those He loves.

have been inquiring about you and scrutinising you, and those people who know you. For any sane person this scrutiny will have been near-intolerable: it will have invaded your inner space, broken into your precious time of prayer and cut across your discernment as you, too, looked into our midst for a possible successor to

fit to untie the sandals of any of the Generals who have preceded you and inspired you.

Please do not ponder unduly on these inadequacies; like the rest of us you are a broken human-being seeking the healing and inspiring graces that the Lord offers to those He loves. God will provide those graces in



God has designed you in a particular way, so trust that the design is adequate for the pilgrim road on which you now travel.

so many ways – directly through the heart, certainly; but also indirectly through the very imperfect structures of the Church and the Society of Jesus which, as Ignatius knew, would hold and protect its General and allow him graciously to do great things for God.

Secondly, continue to learn who you are, and then be who you are; don't brood about what you are not. That might seem a rather simple instruction, but it is imperative and will either lead to an inner contentment or a huge frustration.

Thus, if God has designed you as a Land Rover, do not try to persuade yourself that you are a Ferrari. Likewise, if you are a Ferrari, don't try to put on all-weather tyres and drive across country in the snow! God has designed you in a particular way, so trust that the design is adequate for the pilgrim road on which you now travel.

True humility is seeing yourself as God sees you – with all your strengths and weaknesses, lights and shadows. The more you realise how God sees you, and the more you delight in that realisation, then God will rejoice in your uniqueness and, working through you, will Make All Things New. ■

Courtesy: www.gc36.org

BY SEAN SALAI, SJ

Gabrielle Earnshaw is founding curator of the Henri J.M. Nouwen Archives and Research Center at the University of Toronto's St. Michael's College, a position she held for 16 years. She oversees the collected writings of the well-known spiritual writer who spent many years living with the mentally disabled at L'Arche Daybreak in Toronto. She also directs the Henri Nouwen Oral History Program. Ms. Earnshaw is co-editor of *Turning the Wheel: Henri Nouwen and Our Search for God* and editor of a forthcoming book of daily meditations by Henri Nouwen.

Ms. Earnshaw recently edited the new book, *Love, Henri: Letters on the Spiritual Life*, by Henri J. M. Nouwen (Convergent Books). In this collection of more than 200 unpublished letters, Fr Nouwen seeks to shed light on the sacred longings of the human heart.

On 06 Sep '16, I interviewed Ms. Earnshaw by email about the new book. Excerpts from the interview published by the American Jesuit magazine, America:

How did you come to know Fr Nouwen?

I first got to know Henri through his papers. More than half a football field in length, they span his lifetime and include correspondence, drafts of his books and articles, his teaching notes, administrative files as well as the minutiae of his life: his passport applications, a postcard collection, credit card statements and more. You get to know someone intimately when you are going through their archival records! Henri preserved every aspect of his life with great care ...and this made my work of preserving his archival legacy relatively easy.

By the end of his life he had more than 16,000 letters in his filing cabinets! It took a decade to catalogue these letters. As I worked through the files I learned of his enormous impact on a broad spectrum of humanity, many of



Love, Henri The Spirituality of Henri Nouwen

whom wrote to him echoing my own experience: "How do you know me so well?"

Another way I have come to know Henri is through his friends. Sue Mosteller has worked side by side with me for all these years, infusing me with her passion and dedication to continue Henri's ministry. She inspired me to try and build a "Living Archives" at St. Michael's - a new model for archival collections within an academic setting - meaning, to keep the archives "alive" through continued collecting (like letters, oral history interviews) and to offer classes, workshops, conferences that are inspired by the archives and in turn feed into it.

Another important person is his brother Laurent Nouwen. During my sabbatical in 2011-2012, I spent three months getting to know Henri's home country, his family and his Dutch friends. I spent many hours in conversation with Laurent learning

about Henri's life in Holland.

The collection of letters that you edited is titled *Love, Henri*. Where did you get this name and what does it mean?

I think it is because if I were to summarize Henri in one word, it would be love. He wrote about love, he talked about love, he gave all he had to live in a loving way. Everything, when you get down to it, including his book, *The Prodigal Son*, is in some way or another about love— especially God's love (or as Henri puts "the first love").

It is a risky title because it can be read as saccharine, which would be a mistake. As readers will see, Henri is not a sweet, slight, "feel good" thinker. As Brené Brown, who wrote the introduction, put it, he can be "fierce." He gave everything he had to his "adventure with God." He followed spiritual disciplines and made choices that led to anguish, loneliness and hardship. In his letters, he asks the same of his correspondents. He asks them to walk the "narrow road;" to be faithful to choices made, wait when it would be easier to run, pray when it would be easier to do, love when we'd rather hate, move into pain instead of away from it, be present instead of distracted, etc. His letters are as challenging as they are comforting.

So, what does this title mean? I think it means that Henri is your spiritual friend who listens carefully to your pain and is not scandalized by it. He stays with you, a faithful presence, calling you to see your pain and suffering as thresholds to love - love of God, love of others and of yourself. He is a friend of the heart.

Who is your audience for this book?

The book is meant for anyone wrestling with the big questions: Who am I? Who is God? How do I be "good?" What is the meaning of my life? It is also a book for people who need a wise and compassionate friend to help them find their way through a difficult relationship, decision or passage of life. I think it is the kind of book that can be given to a friend when words escape us.

It will be a book that people come back and dip into when they need it.

This book is also for people who have given up on religion. It is for young people, living in a “disposable” culture, wondering if religion has any relevance. I came across this quote about a mature religion in his first book, *Intimacy*, which he published in 1969: “A mature religious man is very close to the agnostic, and often we have difficulty in deciding which name expresses our state of mind: agnostic or searching believer. Perhaps they are closer than we tend to think.”

I believe one of the reasons he is still so relevant today - some 20 years since his death - is that he speaks to the 21st century seeker’s soul.

What do you hope readers will take away from the letters in this book?

As much as Henri spoke about love, he spoke about freedom. He was speaking about an inner freedom that is the ultimate state of love and the absence of fear. In this book, through his own lived example, he offers the spiritual vision that true freedom is possible and that love can flourish not in spite of difficulties but because of them.

One of my favorite books by Henri is *Can You Drink the Cup?* In it he challenges us to “drink” all aspects of our lives - the painful as well as the joyful, the curse as well as the blessing. We see that if we can do this we are free from self-doubt, bitterness and resentment. Our lives can be ones of creativity, compassion and peace. My hope is that readers will become ready and able to take on the challenge of making choices that lead to peace in their personal lives as well as in the larger world. My hope, with the risk of sounding grandiose, is that this book will lead to a revolution of peace!

Fr Nouwen lived for many years at L’Arche Daybreak in Toronto. What role does that experience play in these letters?

The letters span a twenty-two year period beginning in December of 1973 and concluding in 1996 with

Henri’s death. I divided the book based on significant chapters in Henri’s life. Two of the three chapters are about the L’Arche years. Henri was always in search of home, for a place that he belonged. He searched in academia, the barrios of Peru, the front lines of nuclear protests, but ultimately found it when he was 54 years old - at L’Arche. L’Arche is about recognizing the gifts of people with mental handicaps. It is a message of downward mobility - where the last become first. Henri was speaking and writing about these themes long before his move to L’Arche.

What one sees in the letters is how Henri’s pre-L’Arche teachings on weakness, wounds, suffering, vulnerability are put into practice. It was not initially easy. After to moving to L’Arche Henri suffered the worst depression of his life. He wrote to a friend: “There is something about L’Arche that makes us suffer immensely. I never suffered so much and intensely as since I came to Daybreak.... Somehow L’Arche opens up our deepest hungers, our deepest loneliness and our deepest sensitivities. I have never felt so at home and so lonely at the same time. I never felt such a need for love while being so surrounded by loving people. It seems that L’Arche leads us to the inner place where we most deeply experience our immense desire for communion and at the same time the total impossibility to see that desire fulfilled in the place where we live. In L’Arche - at least for me - the extremes touch each other. Loneliness and joy; depression and ecstasy; communion and alienation (“Letter to Marcus,” 20 Jan 1990).

The depression went on for the better part of a year. His letters during this time are emotional and raw. However, what these letters allow us to see is how he responds to his pain, how he lives it, and ultimately how it becomes the reason he could write *The Prodigal Son* and say with such conviction: “All I want to say to you is that you are the Beloved Sons and Daughters of God.” He came to this deep knowing of God’s unconditional, merciful love because of L’Arche.

What were some surprises you experienced as you researched Fr Nouwen’s previously-unpublished letters?

If there was one surprise for me it was how deep his anguish was. On one day during the selection process I seemed to find every letter he wrote about his anguished loneliness. It was the most difficult day of the project.

On a personal level, what resonates most strongly for you in the life and writing of Fr Nouwen?

I think it is the way he lived his life that is most powerful for me. Henri is a man who struggled to live an authentic life and succeeded. A recurring theme in his life and letters is faithfulness. Our world doesn’t value faithfulness. It values fresh, new, the latest - but Henri has helped me come to see that living with integrity requires discipline, faithfulness and daily attentiveness to the deeper Mystery of which we are part.

Henri has also taught me the importance of where I put my attention. Many letters talk about “asking the right questions” or “shifting our gaze from this to that.” Henri was a master at unmasking illusions. He liked to describe “the social milieu” and its effect on the spiritual life. He challenges us to be counter-cultural: to seek silence when the world is clamoring for attention, to opt for downward mobility instead of success, and to be true to ourselves even at the risk of unpopularity. God is the still, small voice. We must be attentive to hear it.

If you could say one thing to Pope Francis about Fr Henri Nouwen, what would it be?

I have heard that Pope Francis has a copy of Henri Nouwen’s book *The Return of the Prodigal Son* on his bedside table, so I assume he is already familiar with Henri Nouwen.

On a recent trip to France, I saw on banners in every Catholic Church copies of Rembrandt’s painting of this parable to announce the Year of Mercy. I believe Pope Francis and Henri Nouwen are kindred spirits. Both believe in the unconditional love of a merciful God.

Courtesy: America

ALPHONSE CRASTA, SJ

(CCU) 1935 - 2016



Fr Crasta, born in Palimar in the diocese of Mangalore, completed his school education in 1955 from the government school in Mulki, a town near Mangalore. It is a Catholic centre, made famous now by the S.V.D. Fathers, who established a popular Retreat Centre. After his S.S.L.C. he went to St. Aloysius College, Mangalore as a candidate for the Calcutta Mission to finish his intermediate studies. He joined the Novitiate in Sitagarha, Hazaribagh in 1957. After 2 years of novitiate and a year of Juniorate, Fr. Crasta in 1960 went to De Nobili College, Pune to pursue his philosophical studies at JDV. He did his regency at North Point School, Darjeeling and then at St. Xavier's, Durgapur. His Jesuit companion in Durgapur was Fr. Dubois and both of them worked in tandem to build up the infant school, just begun. From 1967 to 1971 he was at St. Mary's College, Kurseong for his theological studies. He was ordained a priest in 1970 in Jeppu Seminary, Mangalore.

Fr Crasta did his M.A. in English at the Karnataka University, Dharwar, Later while serving as Headmaster of St. Xavier's, Durgapur he completed his B. Ed. at the Calcutta University.

He served as the Headmaster of St. Xavier's School, Burdwan for 10 years, from 1973 to 1983. Then he was transferred to St. Xavier's School, Durgapur to be its Headmaster. That lasted for 5 years (1983-1988). Then it was felt by the Superiors that Fr Crasta should make full use of his talents for teaching. Accordingly he was transferred to St. Xavier's Collegiate School, Calcutta to be a full-time teacher. After two years of teaching (1988-1990) he was called to be the Province Treasurer. Though Fr Crasta had no formal training in Accountancy, the Superiors were impressed by the way he managed the accounts of St. Xavier's School, Durgapur. After serving as Province Treasurer for two years (1990-1992), he became a full-time teacher again at St. Xavier's School, Haldia, where he stayed for 15 years (1992-2007). He was transferred in 2007 to St. Lawrence High School, where he was given the responsibility of teaching and looking after the spiritual training of candidates who desired to join the Calcutta Province, and were studying in the Higher Secondary School. He was also teaching Catechism to the Catholic students of the school.

For one year he was appointed the Spiritual Father and teacher of the seminarians of the Minor Seminary of Baruiipur Diocese. He stayed in the Seminary on weekdays, and would return to St. Lawrence on weekends for his other commitments, principally his spiritual ministry to Brothers of the Missionaries of Charity.

Fr. Crasta was a deeply spiritual man, who had a zeal for spiritual ministries. All those who know him well will testify that he was a committed Jesuit, pleasant companion with a sense of humour and a hearty laughter.

- K. C. Jacob, SJ

JOSEPH MANI, SJ

(CCU) 1959 - 2016



Fr. Joseph Mani was fondly known as Mani. God sent him to us on 10 June, 1959, born of Mr. Selvaraj and Mrs. Pitchaimmal of Trichy, Tamil Nadu. After his schooling at Trichy and Salem, while doing PUC at St Joseph's, Trichy, he heard the Lord calling him in the person of a young Jesuit scholastic, Felix Raj. He joined the Calcutta Jesuits in 1977. On 01 Jan 1980, he pronounced his First Vows. After some Bengali studies in Shanti Nir, he was in Patna for his Juniorate. Then he started his B.Com in St Xavier's, Calcutta. From 84 to 86 he did his Philosophy in Pune, his regency in the Pre-Novitiate at PJG and Theology in V J, Delhi from 87 to 90. On 15 May, 1990 he was ordained a priest in Salem.

Fr. Mani was a pastor at Basanti (90-91), Minister and Treasurer at St Lawrence (91-94), and Minister and Prefect in SXS, Durgapur (94-99). He did his Tertianship in Shembagh ('99) and returned to Durgapur as Superior (2000-2003). he made his Final Vows on 08 Dec 2001. In 2003 he came to SXS, Burdwan as Minister and Prefect. He was also the Convener of the Province Land & Building Commission. He was transferred to SXC, Calcutta as his expertise and loving service were needed as the Minister of this Major House. With his usual smile he catered to all. After serving for 10 long years he was transferred to Durgapur and then to Bankura. Diagnosed with cancer, he underwent treatment in Thakurpukur Cancer Hospital. He touched everyone with his warmth, affection and concern. With his childlike heart he welcomed all with his sweet, warm, genuine smile and attended to their needs, whatever hour of the day or night. Available at anytime, he saw to the comfort and needs of guests. He was an able administrator, Superior, Minister, Prefect and he served all with dedication, He never waited for any one's 'thanks'. He was not so gifted academically but God blessed him with technical mind and practical wisdom. Many religious and others, sought his help in matters concerning construction, electronic instruments and electrical things. He usually did a marvelous job. Most of the times he himself worked and taught the support staff.

As a Jesuit, he followed his Lord and his way of the Cross very faithfully. He nourished himself spiritually with regular Eucharists and trusted his Master fully. He had a tender loving devotion for Mary who was very close to his heart. He had a soft corner for the rural missions and went out of his way to support them. He loved his friends in the Lord and enjoyed their company. He tried to bring joy and happiness in their lives.

During his sickness, he endured the unbearable pain in a quiet and dignified manner, not a word of complaint was ever heard from him, showing his total dependence on the Lord and giving us an example of how to bear unbearable suffering. He surrendered himself fully, saying often in his last days, "Let the Lord take me soon." He had his warm but painful smile on him till the last. With that smile and trust in the Lord, he said good-bye to us on 15 Sep at Thakurpukur Cancer Hospital. Whoever heard of Mani's untimely death at the age of 57, of which he spent 39 years as a Jesuit, felt that we have lost a very good, warm, loving, concerned priest and a friend of the poor.

- Dominic Savio, SJ

KARIKAMPALLI C. GEORGE, SJ
(MDU) 1930 - 2016



Fr Karikampalli George, called Fr K.C., was born in 1930 at Chekkidikadu, Edathua, Kerala. He joined the novitiate in May 1954, and after his formation, was ordained in 1965. He did his Master's in Social

Work and joined the M.S.W. Department of Loyola College, Chennai that offered ample avenues for his passion for serving the poor in the slums of Chennai. He travelled tirelessly despite his physical handicap. He went on to take a law degree and did his doctoral studies in Social Work. He shuttled between Arul Anandar College and Loyola College. Later he was called to serve LIBA. He has had an enviable record as Principal of colleges such as Arul Anandar College (8 years), St Joseph's College, Nagaland (1 year) and Mar Gregorios College, Chennai (Principal & Director for 13 years). He returned to his first love, Arul Anandar College, to be a spiritual guide from 2008 to 2014. Fr K.C. George came to Beschi Illam as an ailing man recovering from T.B. He would make visits to the Blessed Sacrament twice a day. In the last eight months his health took a turn for the worse as he began to lose his appetite and to be dispirited. He lost his cheerfulness and became irritable. Sr Sahayam, who was looking after him with loving concern, tried to improve his appetite and blood count. A bone marrow test done at Meenakshi Mission Hospital, Madurai revealed he was suffering from bone marrow dysfunction. Later the tests confirmed he had leukemia. His demise on 19 Sep cast a pall of gloom in the Beschi community. Syro-Malankara Bishop Joshua Mar Ignatius of Mavelikara and Fr Sebastia L. Raj, the Provincial, were the main celebrants at his funeral Mass on 20 Sep. Fr Francis Vazhapilly, in his homily, stressed his loving, committed service to the poor and to his students and staff. Bishop Joshua and others paid him rich tributes for the way he had lived and served the students and the poor.

- Leo A. Tagore, SJ

MARIA LOUIS, SJ
(MDU) 1927 - 2016



Fr Maria Louis was born at Rayappanpatti in Madurai district in 1927. After his studies and a short stint as a teacher at St Mary's Elementary School, Madurai, he joined the Jesuit Novitiate at Shenbaganur in December, 1951. He did his B.A. (Hons) in Economics and Politics in the Madras Presidency College as a Jesuit scholastic. After his priestly formation he was ordained in 1963 and later was sent for his Ph. D in Sociology in the U.S. in 1965 and for biennium in Rome in 1966. After his return from Rome he was assigned to St Paul's Seminary, Trichy in 1968. He was the Rector as well as Dean of Studies for the Philosophers and taught philosophy at St Paul's and later at Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur and then at its new avatar, Satya Nilayam, Chennai from 1975 to 1995. He was very popular as a professor, and very humane in his approach to those under his care. He was a voracious reader and therefore he was quite up-to-date in the subjects he taught.

From 1995 to 1999 he was Socius to the Provincial, Fr Donatus Jeyaraj. After a year's break, he was appointed the Spiritual Director of the scholastics at Arul Kadal, Chennai. He spent a couple of years at Sivagangai Bishop's House as confessor. From 2004 to 2007 he was the resident chaplain at Boys' Town, Pulluthu, Madurai. He moved to LTI, Madurai in the year 2007.

His movements became restricted because of Parkinson's and a paralytic stroke that he suffered. In May 2014 he was shifted to Beschi Illam, Dindigul where he lived till the end came suddenly on 16 Sep. The funeral at 4 00 p.m. on 17 Sep was attended by a sizable number of people. The Mass was presided over by Fr Joe Antony, the Socius, in the absence of the Provincial. Fr Maria Singarayar, in his homily, referred to his simplicity, magnanimity, detachment from his family, gentlemanliness and his great love for the poor and needy. The prayer of commendation was said by Fr Arokiaraj, Rector, St Paul's Seminary and the final committal rite was performed by Fr Boniface Panna of Satya Niayam.

- Leo A. Tagore, SJ

WALTER ALBUQUERQUE, SJ
(KAR) 1923 - 2016

Born: 08-12-1923;
Entered SJ: 10-06-1944;
Ordained: 27-04-1957;
Professed: 15-08-1978;
Died: 07-10-2016



Born on the feast of Immaculate Conception, died on the feast of our Lady of Rosary – that summarises the life and mission of Fr Walter Albuquerque, both in terms of his tender devotion to the Blessed Mother and his own fiat. Born in Bejai, Mangalore, he joined the Society at the age of 21, after his graduation. His apostolic engagements included teaching in SAC, Mangalore and IHS, Bangalore, St Joseph's Seminary, Mangalore, Socius and Minister at Mt St Joseph, and then 25 long years in Mangalore as Director of Sangeetalaya and teaching music in the Seminary. He logged to improve Konkani Liturgical singing. He spent 9 years in Kohima Region endearing himself to hundreds and finally another 13 years in Mangalore in the service of sacred music. Many of us nicknamed him 'Nathaniel', a true Jesuit without any guile. He lived and breathed music. Riding a two wheeler in cassock, with an accordion on his back, he visited parishes, convents and schools after Vatican II reforms of liturgy. Walter pioneered the renewal of Konkani liturgical music earning the well-deserved epithet, 'White Nightingale.' Composing new hymns, translating the old and borrowing from other languages, his one mission was 'to sing to the Lord and make music to him.' He was a mentor to hundreds of budding musicians, lay and religious. He produced and helped others to produce Cassettes and CDs – sacred and secular. To train people of meagre means in music he opened the Music School, Sangeethalaya, at Fatima Retreat House. At a ripe old age, he brought out a CD with old, traditional heritage Konkani devotional songs in order to preserve them for posterity. He was also very much a part of Kohima Region, where he is fondly remembered by hundreds of aspirants, pre-novices, novices and Sisters of various religious congregations in the North East for his music ministry. God blessed Walter with a long life and he sang to him till the very end.

- Jerome D'Souza, SJ

No right to criticize

The BJP government is planning to bring in a Uniform Civil Code that will be binding on all Indians, including Muslims and Christians. Some non-Muslims (Christians included) criticize the Muslims for practicing polygamy, talaq etc. We criticize the Muslims for polygamy, for Talaq, but many of us have neither polygamy nor monogamy. We have done away with the institution of marriage and would prefer live-in-relationships. We either produce one child or do not produce children at all. What right do we have to criticize others?

- William Mawan, SJ
Vadodara, Gujarat - 390 002

What is wrong with the NEP?

It has been noted, in the context of today's India, that the Draft of the New Education Policy 2016 (NEP) seems to give excessive importance to the 'guru-shishya parampara' of Vedic times. It also gives Sanskrit, a very great but not-so-practical language for today, even more importance than a highly useful international language like English. We need to remember that the Vedic System as well as Sanskrit, were both highly elitist, being restricted only to the sons of kings, rich and high-caste people, for many centuries. Women, the poor low-caste masses, adivasis and tribals were all strictly excluded from this system. Thus, with all its merits, Sanskrit contributed little or nothing towards universalization of education, education of women, rural and urban development, industrialization, and the scientific and technological progress of the country. The giant strides made by the country in these fields, both before and after Independence, have been due to the Western System of education, introduced first by the Christian missionaries in the 16th century, and spread by them, as well as by our governments, ever since. Historians of Education and all the post-independence Commissions, appointed by the Government of India, have acknowledged the immense contribution of this Model. How then can it be ignored and bypassed now? In what direction do we wish to take the country?

If we truly desire to take the country forward, on the way towards development ('sabke saat, sabka vikas') and 'achhe din', our present policy-makers would do a great service to the country by consolidating this system, adapting it to more recent developments in electronics and social communications, and integrate into it only those few cultural elements from Vedic times which would enrich it. We must realize that it is

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the Western Model that is prevalent all over the world, and is the basis for the evaluation and rating of schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions, internationally. The English language too, undoubtedly, has the maximum reach and influence today. It has helped to unify the country, enhanced job opportunities inside and outside the country, and given an impetus to industrial and scientific progress. No wonder, even our poorest people, in the remotest villages, clamour for English. Therefore, it needs to be given top priority in the NEP. This does not mean that other Indian languages, including Sanskrit, should be neglected. In order to preserve our own national identity, they too must be promoted.

- Joseph M. Dias, SJ
Mumbai - 400 069

Green institutions

'Green Cover' that appears in every issue of *Jivan* is an invitation to care for our mother Earth, as Pope Francis called us to do through his famous encyclical. Let us have community gardens, terrace gradens, kitchen gardens and herbal gardens in our schools and colleges, so that they become green institutions.

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

Inspired me

I would like to thank *Jivan* for giving us a rich variety of information and insights regarding our GC 36, through a series of articles over the past few months by some eminent Jesuits. These articles have helped budding Jesuits like me to brace up for such a great event as this GC.

Fr Cedric Prakash's reminiscences on Fr Frans van der Lugt in the Oct '16 issue were really an eye-opener. It inspired me to be more daring, resolute and compassionate in times of crisis. It was also an invitation to pray for the millions of citizens of Syria, whose lives have been ravaged by senseless violence unleashed by the forces of evil.

- Ivin Tomy, SJ
Trivandrum, Kerala - 695 586

P.G. DIPLOMA in IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

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

Lessons for Life

I've learned from Rome...

BY PAUL ROLPHY PINTO, SJ

See life as a gift: This is a basic and fundamental Ignatian insight. I realised it here easily in Italy. Things I took for granted in my own country were not so obvious in a new country. Yet I lacked nothing. When I realised it, I was drawn to look at reality with the eyes of God.

Trust in God alone: When you see life as a gift from God, you are able to trust in him. Tough times are never lacking in life. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Though fragile, I could attain things I thought were beyond me. This realisation made me humble and encouraged me to place my trust, time and again, in God. This humbling experience has led me to be faithful to my daily prayer.

Enjoy the fruits of obedience: One chooses to obey, not trusting in oneself but trusting in what God can do in and through those whom he places over us. Though I felt that I was not made to do what was asked of me, the fruits of obedience have been marvellous in my life.

Study hard: Academic rigour is an integral part of the Jesuit vocation, inculcated in the life of a Jesuit right from the time of novitiate. I realised the importance of and the wisdom behind this demand more intensely in the mission of academic apostolate given to me.

Remember you are part of the universal Society: Already in the novitiate I was instructed that I was not joining the Gujarat province but the universal Society. I was hardly aware of what it actually meant. The opportunity to live in Rome is a privilege. My consciousness of being a part of the universal Society has grown over the years in Rome.

Celebrate diversity: Diversity is a gift of the Spirit.

Fr Paul Rolphy Pinto, SJ, who belongs to the Gujarat Jesuit Province, teaches at the Institute of Spirituality in the Gregorian, Rome.



It is indeed a beautiful theological insight. Having to live with people of over 25 nationalities under the same roof is not always pleasant or beautiful. But I have learned to shed my cultural prejudices in order to celebrate the diversity of cultures.

Celebrate persons: Persons are complex. Persons are a mystery. Shedding one's cultural prejudices is a prerequisite to discover the uniqueness of the other. Or else, one ends up labelling persons. In a world that promotes an individualistic culture, I have learned to take initiatives, insufficient though, to celebrate persons, especially Jesuits around me, irrespective of their national and cultural backgrounds



Preserve self-identity: "In Rome do as the Romans do". That is practical wisdom. Yet, do not be what the "Romans" are. Knowledge comes through differentiation. So is self-knowledge. I have grown in self-knowledge through encounters with people who are different from me. This has led me to celebrate my own uniqueness and identity. For instance, when

appropriate I make it a point to dress in a kurta.

Seek true happiness: I am surrounded by a culture of material abundance. But I have learned that material abundance is not proportionate to happiness, though the temptation to believe in the contrary always lurks around. I have learned that I can be happy with a little.

Be aware that you are a co-pilgrim: The stay in Rome gives me frequent opportunities to accompany spiritually, people from many walks of life, coming from different countries. My faith has grown witnessing the faith journey of all these people, who too are journeying along with me though I felt that I was not made to do what was asked of me.. It demands that I grow constantly toward authenticity and integrity of life. ■

GREEN COVER

MAGIS Eco-Workshop



GJEM (Gujarat Jesuit Ecology Mission) recently organized an Ecology workshop for Adivasi youth in a MAGIS programme. The workshop was to inform and inspire the youth about their responsibility to take care of Mother Earth, by getting involved in environmental activities. We linked the presentations with practical demonstrations and indoor sessions were reinforced by outdoor activities.

We began with a session on global warming, climate change and pollution. In the evening, the youth conducted an energy survey in the village, to show the link of energy with environment. The boys and girls in groups visited 86 families and gathered information about the energy they use for cooking. The majority use only firewood. Some complained about respiratory, eye and other health problems from smoke inhalation. None used solar energy in their homes. Traditional attitudes, income constraints and ignorance contribute to the widespread use of firewood for cooking, destroying trees and suffering health problems.

Early next morning a trek of 90 minutes took us to the Adivasi Shrine of Kansari forest. There we conducted a series of activities such as meditation, activities to experience nature through our senses and earth art. In five teams they created earth-art using materials from the forest. It enabled them to engage with the forest, and be creative in their expression.

In the spirit of Magis program, the participants were helped to develop a spiritual communion with the environment through prayers and meditation in the forest. In the Magis circle the participants shared their experiences freely. Before returning, the youth cleaned up a huge amount of litter and plastics around the Shrine.

In the afternoon, we visited the watershed program at Mariadog hill. In collaboration with the village people, the Mandal Parish had transformed the denuded hillock into a thriving green forest, through check dams and trenches. As a result, soil erosion was stopped, rain water seeped into the soil and nurtured trees, and wells in the villages around were recharged for the whole year. The villagers could cultivate 2 or 3 crops. The day ended with the Eucharist in God's own Cathedral, with a starry roof. On the final day, after explaining the harm caused by pesticides, organic cultivation was explained to them.

The participants realised the great ecological damage our life-style today inflicts on Mother Earth. They made a commitment to get involved in improving the environmental situation in their families and villages.

- Jothi Xavier & Rappai Poothokaren, SJ



*"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind.
To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy,
is to have the real spirit of Christmas."*

- Calvin Coolidge