

# JIVAN

News and Views of Jesuits in India

April 2016

S.P.M.

MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY  
54A ACHARYA J. CHANDRA BOSE  
CALCUTTA 700016, INDIA

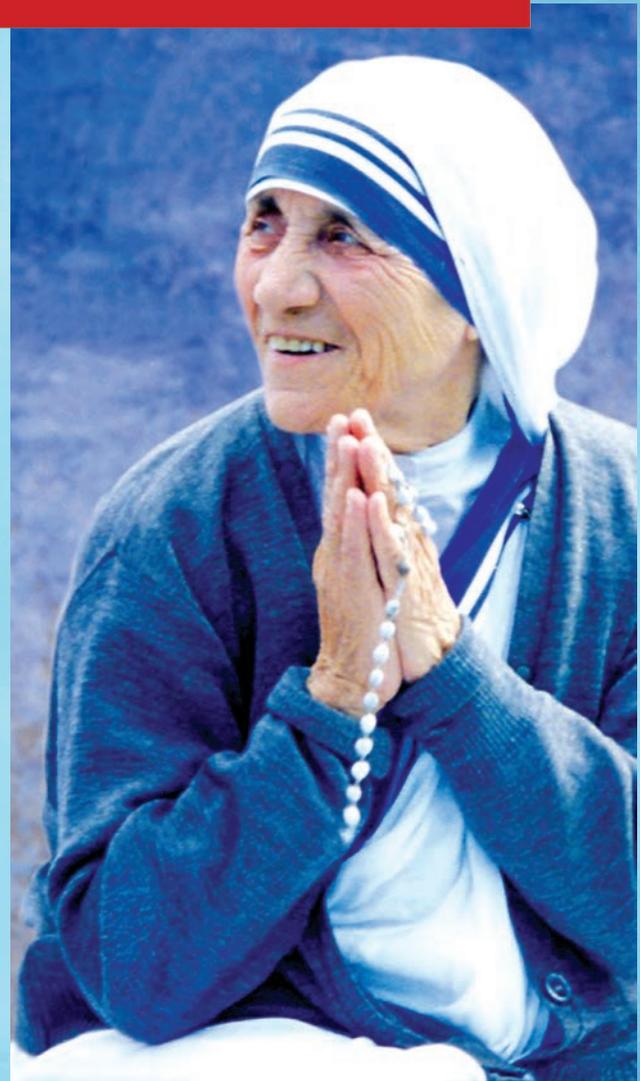
29-8-90

Dear Fr. Th. Pullenkar,

Nearly every Missionary of Charity owes deep gratitude to the Society of Jesus for allowing their priest to take care of our spiritual formation and growth in holiness.

Our deep gratitude to each one of them all over the world especially Calcutta is our prayer that the Society of Jesus may give many Saints to the Mother Church. Let us pray.

God bless you  
Lu Teresa



## Mother Teresa & the Jesuits

**Jivan Awards**

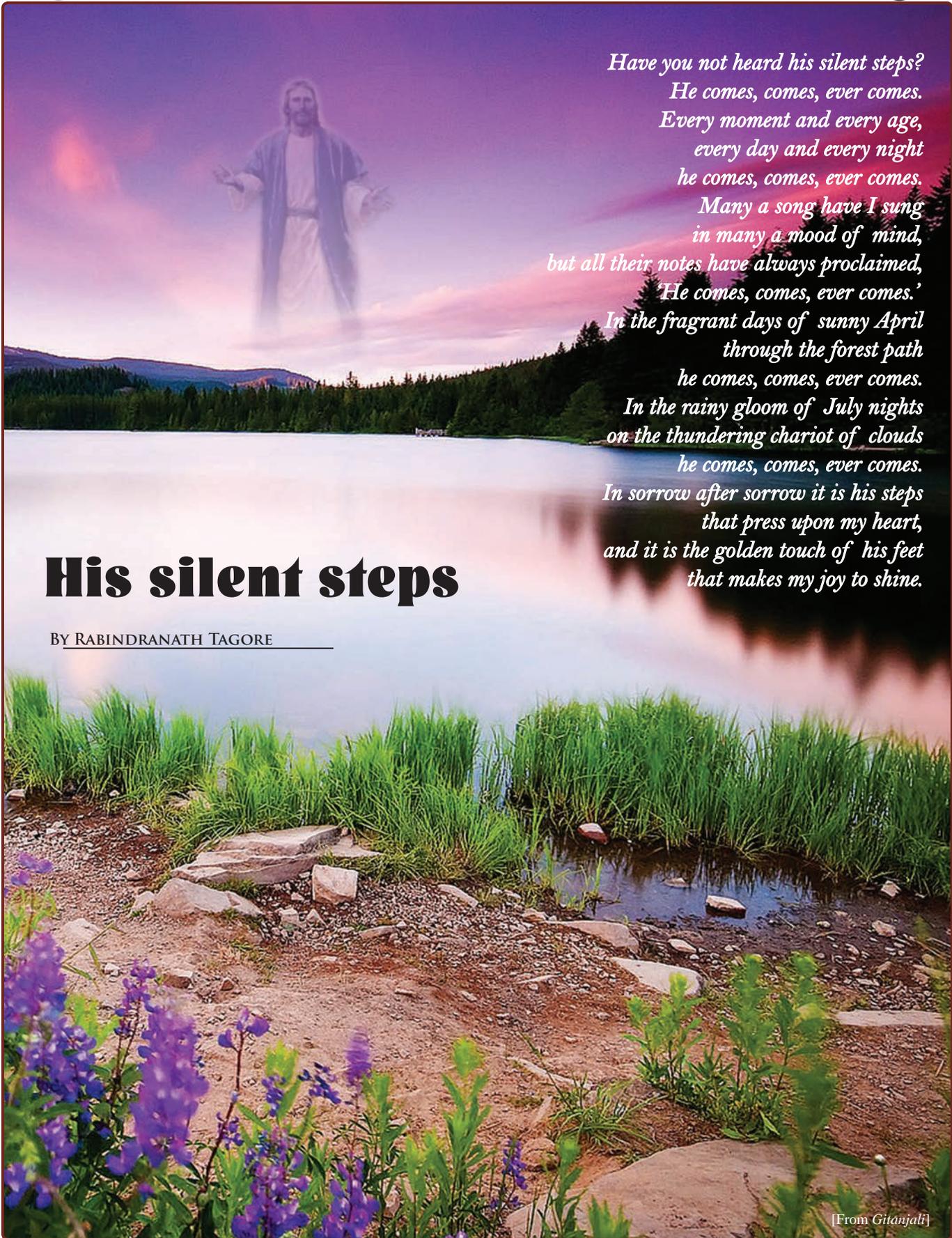
Winners

**Fr General's visit**

to 3 Indian Provinces

**Pope's letters**

to children



## His silent steps

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Have you not heard his silent steps?  
He comes, comes, ever comes.  
Every moment and every age,  
every day and every night  
he comes, comes, ever comes.  
Many a song have I sung  
in many a mood of mind,  
but all their notes have always proclaimed,  
'He comes, comes, ever comes.'  
In the fragrant days of sunny April  
through the forest path  
he comes, comes, ever comes.  
In the rainy gloom of July nights  
on the thundering chariot of clouds  
he comes, comes, ever comes.  
In sorrow after sorrow it is his steps  
that press upon my heart,  
and it is the golden touch of his feet  
that makes my joy to shine.*

[From *Gitanjali*]

APRIL 2016

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

He is, in a way, my namesake. But he is not a Christian. The

brief note about him says that Tony Joseph, who bears a Christian name, "ceased to be a believer of any religion in his early 20s and considers himself an atheist with a liking for the original teachings of the Buddha." But Tony Joseph has done for the Christian community in India and all Indians who stand for a united, secular, democratic India something truly laudable that - to my limited knowledge - no other Indian Christian has been able to do.

His well-researched and well-written article, titled, 'A Religion that Lost the Race', was published a year ago by *Outlook* (15 April 2015). It probes what the hard core right wing Hindutva outfits and their leaders have been asserting repeatedly for quite some time: 'Christianity is posing a growing and serious demographic threat to Hinduism by converting large numbers of Hindus through aggressive proselytising. This effort is heavily funded by Christian organisations in the West that see India as being ripe for large scale conversions. Since proselytising and conversions are not part of Hindu tradition... the playing field is tilted against Hinduism, and this is causing serious societal friction. This sometimes leads to spontaneous and violent reactions.'

In his article, Tony Joseph takes the four assertions in that allegation and puts them to the test of data and historical evidence.

The first one is the most important one: Christianity poses a serious threat to Hinduism. He says Christianity has tried for nearly 2,000 years to spread its message in India. But what has it achieved? "Almost zilch - somewhere between two and three per cent of the population. And that number is on the way down, not up - from 2.6 per cent in 1971 to 2.3 per cent in 2001. The census figures for 2011 have not been officially released yet, but leaked figures suggest that there may have been another small decline."

While Christianity in India is on a steady decline, Hindus in the U.K. are now over 5 per cent - more than twice as big as the presence of Christians in India. That is the case everywhere else.

But why has Christianity failed to

expand in India? "Christianity, probably for the first time, came up against a philosophy and culture that did not feel the need to persecute other faiths, did not find the Christian messiah and his teachings either objectionable or exceptional, and therefore, didn't see why anyone should convert either. This embrace-cum-rejection was such a novel experience for it that Christianity probably didn't know quite how to respond."

Tony Joseph quotes the British Sanskrit scholar Monier Williams, who wrote in 1878: "The chief impediment to Christianity among Indians is not only the pride they feel in their own religion, but the very nature of that religion. For pantheism is a most subtle, plausible, and all-embracing system, which may profess to include Christianity itself as one of the phenomena of the universe."

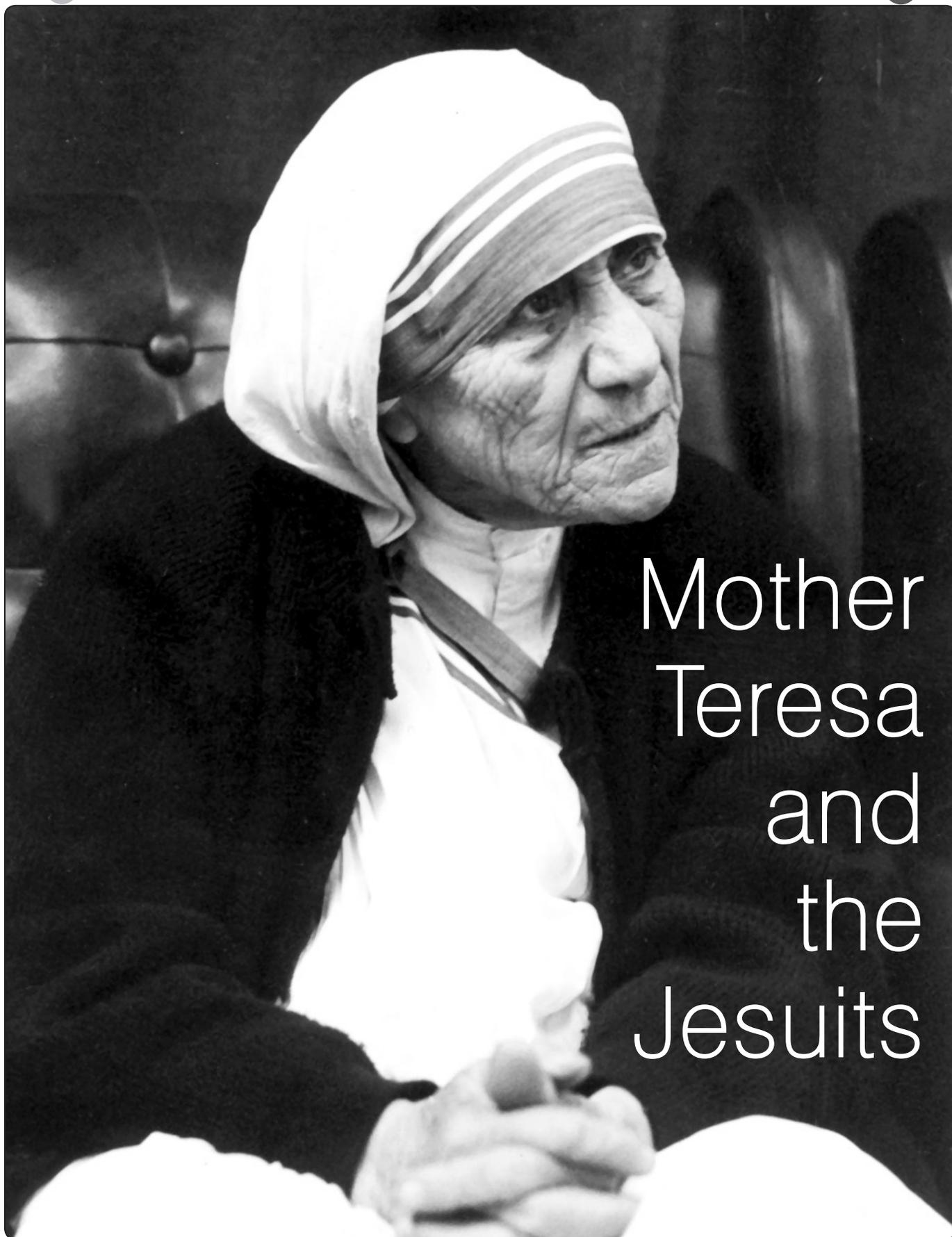
This is why, he points out, even those Hindu intellectuals who had taken a particular liking for the teachings of Jesus found no reason to give up Hinduism and embrace Christianity. Think of Mahatma Gandhi or Swami Vivekananda.

"So the next time you see a Hindutva right-winger painting a scary picture of Christianity posing a growing serious threat to Hinduism, you have to assume one of only two possibilities: One, he or she has not taken the slightest effort to know the facts, or two, he or she knows the facts, but doesn't want them to get in the way of a good, well-running hate campaign."

In other words, hate-mongers don't bother to find out the facts or deliberately ignore the facts and use blatant lies to run a hate-campaign.

Tony Joseph goes on to show that the other three assertions are equally baseless. But he has something very important to tell the mainstream Catholic and Protestant Churches too: Do whatever possible to stop the aggressive proselytisation efforts of a few new evangelical churches. If that is not possible, at least create a public distance between yourselves and these misguided and often money-minded groups.

Jesuits in India and their friends and collaborators everywhere should publicize these facts far and wide. In this media age facts and data are the weapons you need for the battle against bigotry. - M.A.J.A.



Mother  
Teresa  
and  
the  
Jesuits

BY JULIAN S. DAS, SJ

**A**s the 'saint of the gutters' is to be raised to the altar on 04 September 2016, bookshops and e-marts on the digital platform are filled with literature on the making of Mother Teresa. Though much of the literature is far from authentic, with facts and data verified by reliable sources, many of those who author both biographies and research-based books on Mother Teresa might have the least idea about where much of the inspiration of Mother Teresa originated from, and who helped her to reach the spiritual heights she is applauded for.

Though it was God, who in his wondrous design, chose Mother Teresa to be the agent of love and peace in a world that was being torn apart by violence, bloodshed, apathy and misery, there were great providential moments which transformed the little lady of Skopje into a woman who will decorate our altars soon as St Teresa of Kolkata. It was the happy mixture of Ignatian spirituality and Ignatius' men that helped Mother Teresa to establish the empire of the poorest of the poor in our world.

#### SCHOOLED IN IGNATIAN TRADITION

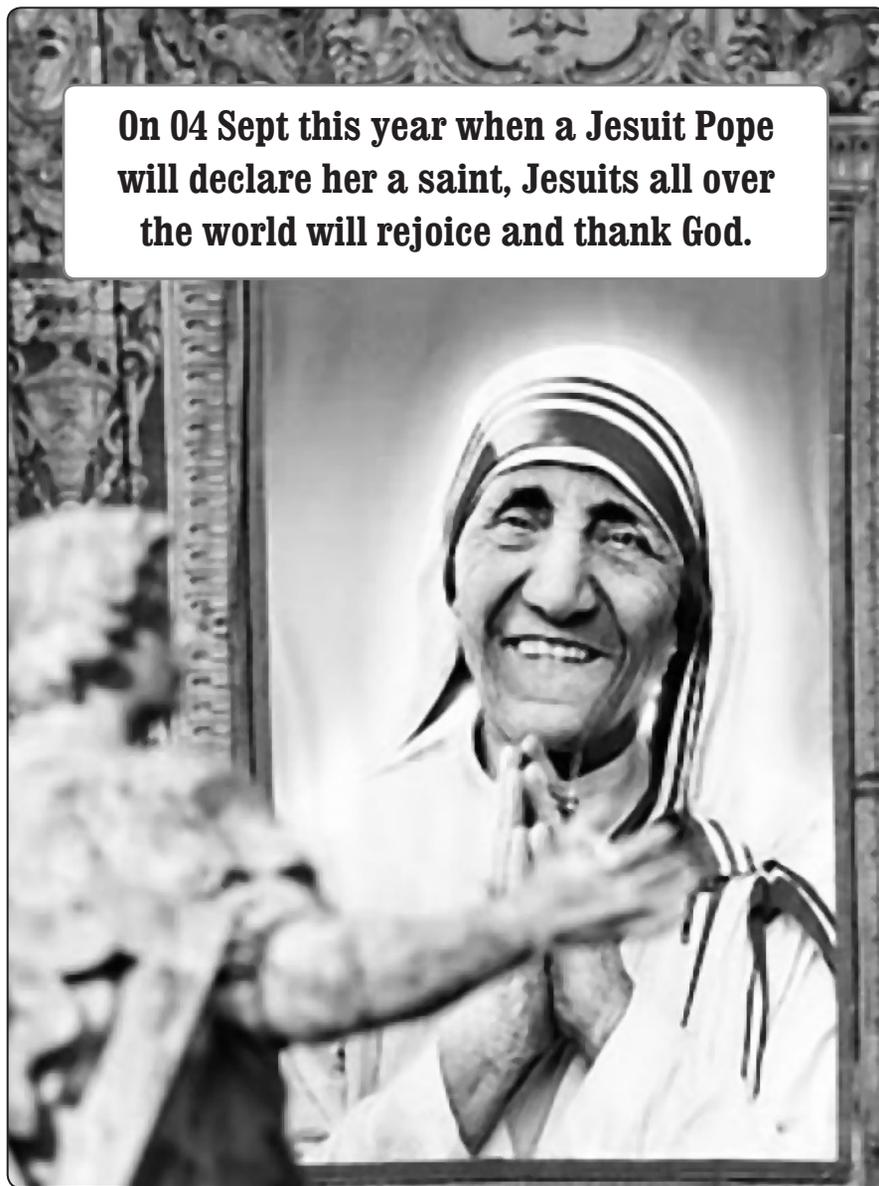
As a young girl, studying at her hometown Skopje in the present day Macedonia, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu had come in touch with a Jesuit priest, Fr Franjo Jambrekovic (1890-1969), who happened to be the parish priest of Sacred Heart Church in Skopje, the parish she belonged to. It is said that it was the inspiration that Fr Franjo instilled in the hearts and minds of the youth who attended his Marian Sodality, which could have ignited in Gonxha the fire of love.

Her contact with Fr Franjo continued even after she joined the Ireland-based Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, popularly known as the Loreto Sisters, and became Sr Mary

Teresa who volunteered to work in the State of West Bengal. She to her former confessor about the joys and the challenges of living a religious life in Bengal. It is also to Fr Franjo that she first disclosed some of the darkest corners of her heart, the dark night of the soul that engulfed her for many years.

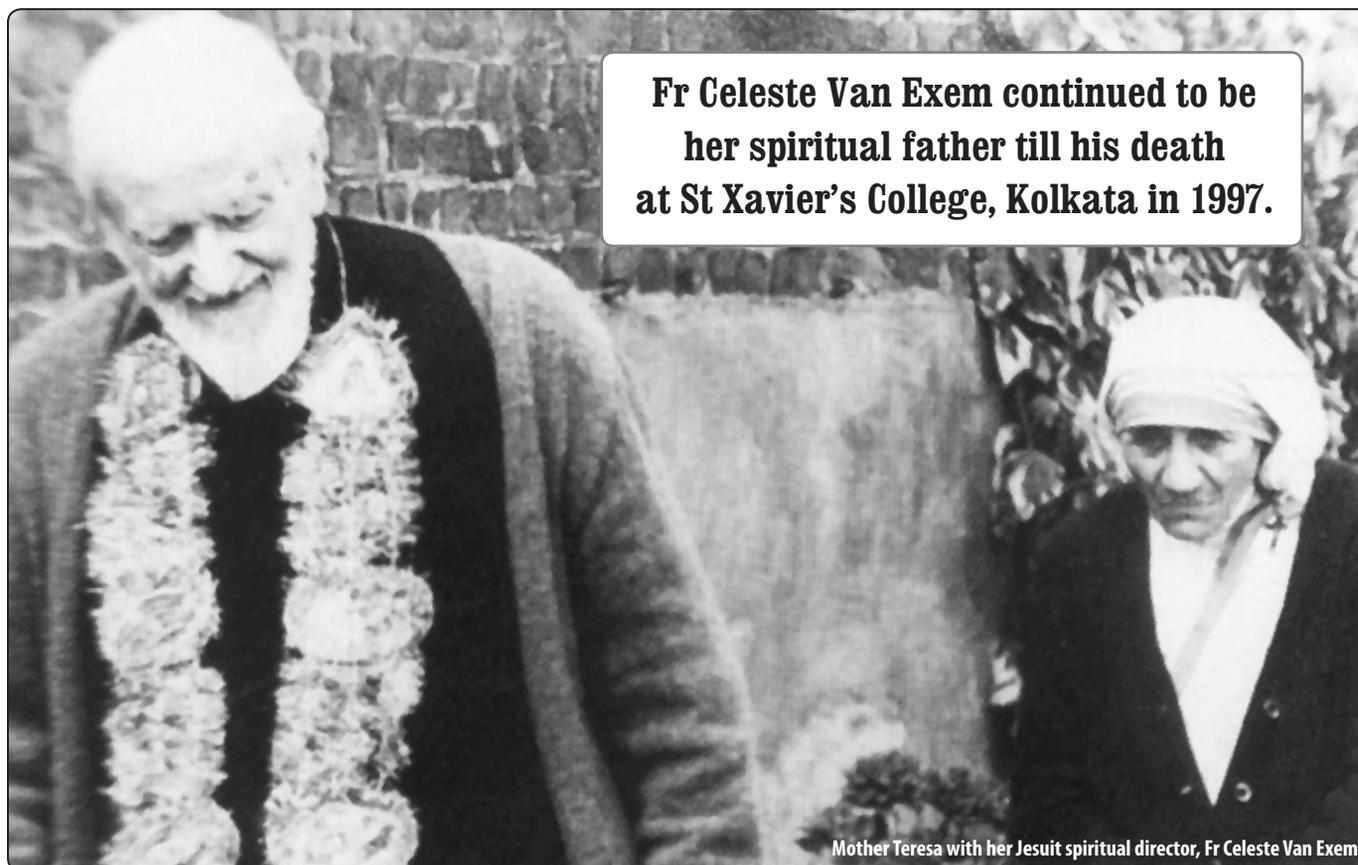
The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters) is a congregation that is deemed to be an Ignatian congregation. Mary Ward, its foundress, desired that her Sisters follow the Ignatian spirituality in letter and deed. Therefore Sr Teresa was introduced to the treasure troves of the Ignatian spirituality. She began to think, speak and act as one who has been thoroughly schooled in the nitty-gritties of the Ignatian spirituality. In fact, as one goes through the numerous personal notes that she maintained in the form of a

**On 04 Sept this year when a Jesuit Pope will declare her a saint, Jesuits all over the world will rejoice and thank God.**



spiritual diary, and other correspondence with Jesuits, one finds the writings of Mother Teresa replete with Ignatian jargon - phrases and expressions.

As a Loreto nun, Mother Teresa also went through the month-long Spiritual Exercises during her novitiate at Darjeeling, from 1929-31, at the end of which she pronounced her first vows. The customary annual eight-



**Fr Celeste Van Exem continued to be her spiritual father till his death at St Xavier's College, Kolkata in 1997.**

Mother Teresa with her Jesuit spiritual director, Fr Celeste Van Exem

day retreat for the Loreto nuns also included the Ignatian retreat. Thus one can safely say that Mother Teresa was steeped in Ignatian ideas and ideals, which helped her not to be content with the status quo, but to look for the *magis*. It was the quest for the *magis* that took her beyond the cozy confinements of the Loreto Convent at Entally and made her walk into the dingy, dangerous holes of the poor in the slums of Calcutta.

She became so familiar with the Ignatian spirituality that she practised - like many Jesuits - quite a few Ignatian traditions. Some of her letters begin with the Jesuit motto - AMDG (*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* - For the greater glory of God). These were not mere words for her. Mother Teresa sought deliberately what would bring greater honor and glory to God. At the end of the first draft of the Rules of her congregation, she wrote, "For the greater glory of God", echoing the spirit of Ignatius and his sons.

The 'Principle and Foundation' of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius finds a place, albeit indirectly, in the aim of the new congregation that she founded in 1950, the Missionaries of Charity. "The General End of the Missionaries of Charity is to satiate the thirst of Jesus Christ on the Cross for Love and Souls." Anyone who is familiar with the Principle and Foundation in the Exercises would immediately recognise how similar her words sound to those of St Ignatius. She would articulate the same idea in another place as, "to bring God to Souls and Souls to God."

As a means of obtaining this end, Mother Teresa chooses poverty, the poverty of the Cross, but she peppers it with the Franciscan poverty and Benedict's labour. She is ready to venture into the path of 'absolute poverty'. But after she presents the case to her spiritual father, Jesuit Fr Celeste Van Exem and through him to Jesuit Archbishop Ferdinand Perier

of Calcutta, in the true Ignatian sense, she tries to distance herself from their decision, though often struggling to be 'indifferent' to whatever might seem conducive to the will of God. She went through a discernment process - difficult and painful - since she was certain that it was the Lord who was calling her to leave the Loreto congregation and get into the dark holes of the poor in the slums. Fr Van Exem supported her inclination, but not Archbishop Perier, who waited to be certain that the inspiration came from God, before giving the much-needed green signal to Mother Teresa.

What her Sisters now call the 'Day of Inspiration' came on 10 Sept 1946. Mother Teresa got several opportunities to put into practice what she had meditated and prayed for, during the eight-day retreats she went through soon after that day - to accept all insults, affronts and not to refuse anything that he might give her. Thus

the Call of the Eternal King became a reality for her, when she was accused of an illicit affair with her spiritual father and transferred without any explanation to Asansol.

Later she was accused of losing her level-headedness, for leaving when she left the secure Loreto Convent. Thus the 'call within a call' was the starting point for her to practice what she had always prayed for – poverty, not only spiritual but also actual, insults and humiliations and humility.

From the beginning Mother Teresa intended that all her ministries and services would be offered to the poor freely, a notion which was also a part of the Jesuit tradition. She trusted more on the divine providence than on the movable or immovable assets of the congregation.

While outlining her future course of action, Mother Teresa informed Archbishop Perier that she wanted to start the work at Cossipore at 'the Boys own home' in northern Calcutta, though she had never seen it, and so had no idea about the place. It appears that this is what she had contemplated using the 'Application of the Senses' during her Ignatian retreat, and thus could see, touch, feel and smell the entire place. Mother Teresa was prepared to walk where the Lord led her, wherever it was.

As she pursued her call within the call, she was determined to carry out whatever her call demanded of her. She wrote to her spiritual father, Fr Van Exem: "The life I want to live with my sisters, I know, will be a difficult one – both for European and Indian sisters. – But nothing is difficult to one who loves." It was her love for the Lord which gave her the strength to cross all the hurdles and follow her path to find a way of loving and serving Him in the poorest of the poor.

#### **MEN WHO MADE MOTHER TERESA**

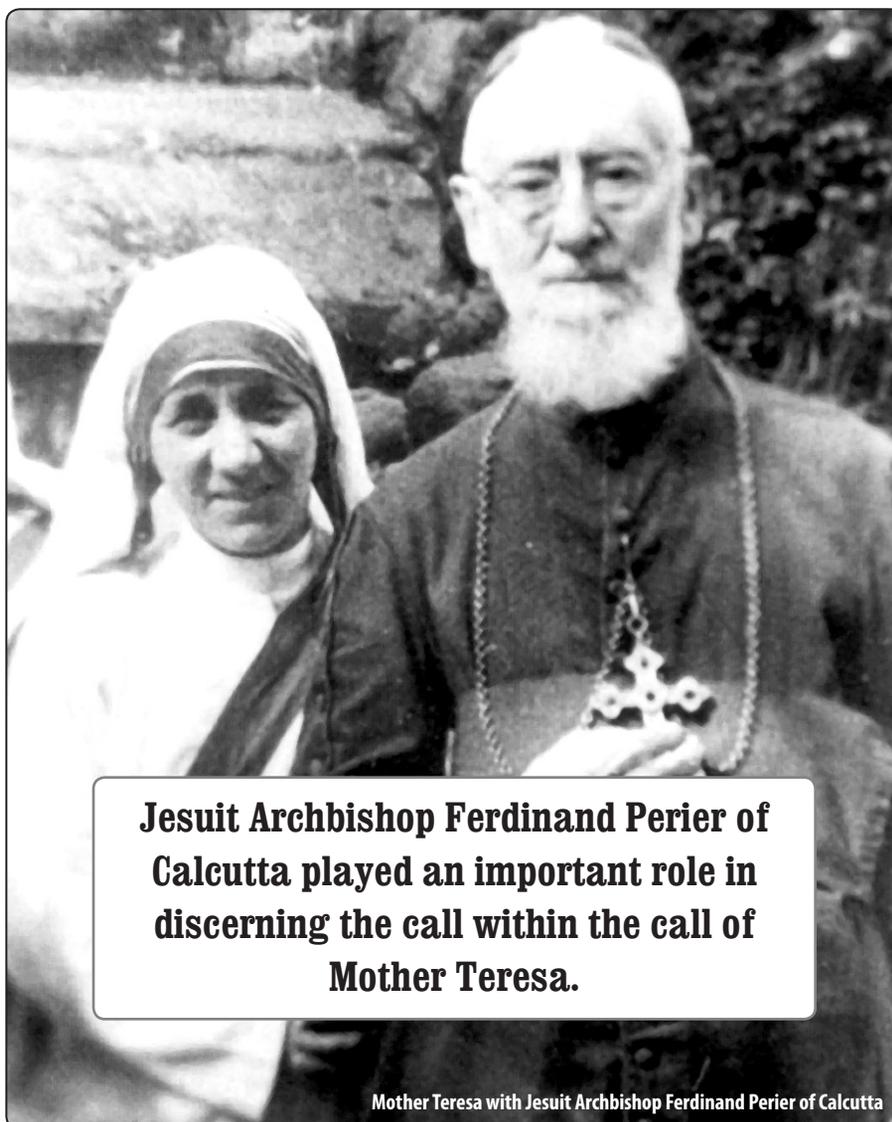
From the beginning of discerning her vocation to work in India to serve the poor till she founded in 1950 the Missionaries of Charity, Mother Teresa

was under the protective and loving care of the Jesuits. Since she depended on the help she got from them, some authors claim that if not for the Jesuits, there might not be a Mother Teresa. This might be an exaggeration, but no one can underestimate the pivotal and indispensable role Jesuits played

like a house built on a rock.

Here is a brief list of the Jesuits who had played a significant role in the life of Mother Teresa:

**Fr Franjo Jambrekovic** had ignited the missionary spirit in the heart of Agnes Gonxha, who was attending the Marian Sodality that he



**Jesuit Archbishop Ferdinand Perier of Calcutta played an important role in discerning the call within the call of Mother Teresa.**

Mother Teresa with Jesuit Archbishop Ferdinand Perier of Calcutta

in her life - right from the time when she discerned her vocation, at the age of 15-18. It was again Jesuits who supported her when, as a 36-year old Loreto Sister, she responded to a new call to reach out to the poorest of the poor and satiate the thirst of Jesus for love and souls. It was the Jesuits who helped her set her new congregation on a strong footing, so that it could last

founded in 1925 at Skopje. It was he who helped her discern her vocation at that young age, so that she might make the hard decision of leaving her mother, sister and brother and her beloved country once and for all, in order to serve the poor of India. Fr Franjo continued to support her, even after her Final Profession, when she shared with him her spiritual

experiences through letters.

**Fr Celeste Van Exem** first met Mother Teresa in 1946, when Loreto Convent, Entally and the adjoining St Mary's School were occupied by the British army and converted into a civilian hospital during the time of World War II, and Mother was staying at a temporary rented house in Convent Road. He continued to be her spiritual father till his death at St

it to Rome. When Missionaries of Charity was founded on 07 Sept 1950, it was Fr Van Exem who read out the Papal decree approving the new Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity.

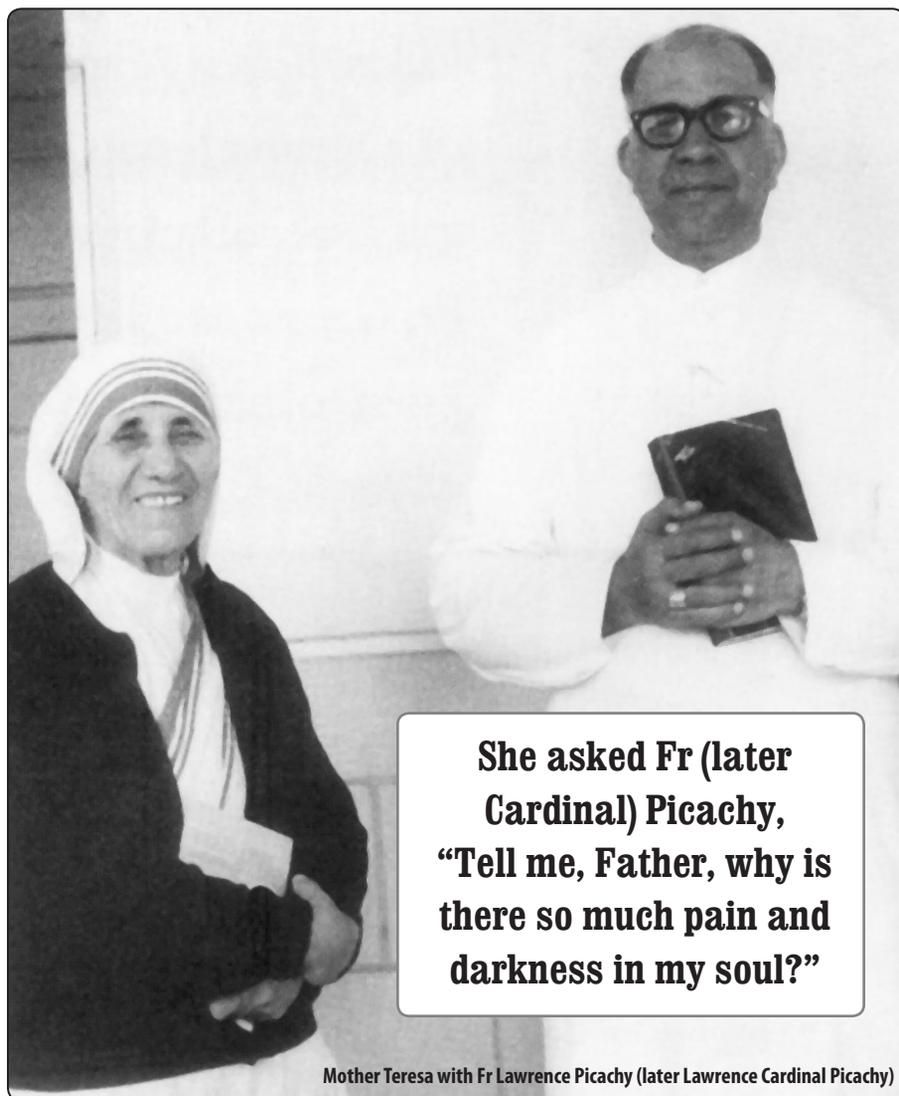
Jesuit **Archbishop Ferdinand Perier** of Calcutta played an important role in discerning the call within the call of Mother Teresa and supporting her once he was sure that the call had

in 1950. Though initially cautious in handling the 'inspiration' and 'voices', he tempered the haste of Mother Teresa. He remained an admirer and supporter of Mother till the end of his life.

**Fr Julien Henry** had come to Calcutta with the purpose of serving the people of Bengal on an emergency basis and spent most of his years at St Theresa's Church, Moulali in Calcutta. The Belgian priest had a tender love for the poor and so helped Mother establish her 'first school' at Motijhil slum. When it was started, he blessed it. He prayed for the 'Mother of the Poor', so that she may get a green signal from Archbishop Perier to start her work for the poor. Together with Fr Van Exem, he went throughout Calcutta on a bicycle looking for a place for Mother Teresa to stay after she left the Loreto Sisters. When he realized that Mother Teresa's Sisters did not have enough to feed the tuberculosis patients they were caring for, he devised the 'handful of rice' campaign at his parish to support Mother Teresa Sisters. He was the one that Mother Teresa called for any help she needed to get going.

**Lawrence Cardinal Trever Picachy** was also the spiritual director for Mother Teresa for some years and whose retreat she attended in April 1959. She wrote before the retreat, "My heart is so empty. – I am afraid the retreat will be one long suffering." She kept in close touch with him till he was made the Bishop of Jamshedpur. Being young, spiritual and insightful, Teresa disclosed much of the darkness, the interior suffering she experienced to Fr Picachy. She asked him, "Tell me, Father, why is there so much pain and darkness in my soul?" After he was made a bishop, she felt she could not take much of his time and so turned to other Jesuits.

**Fr Joseph Neuner** came late into the life of Mother Teresa, but had an important role to play when Mother Teresa was going through an inner battle with a painful darkness



**She asked Fr (later Cardinal) Picachy, "Tell me, Father, why is there so much pain and darkness in my soul?"**

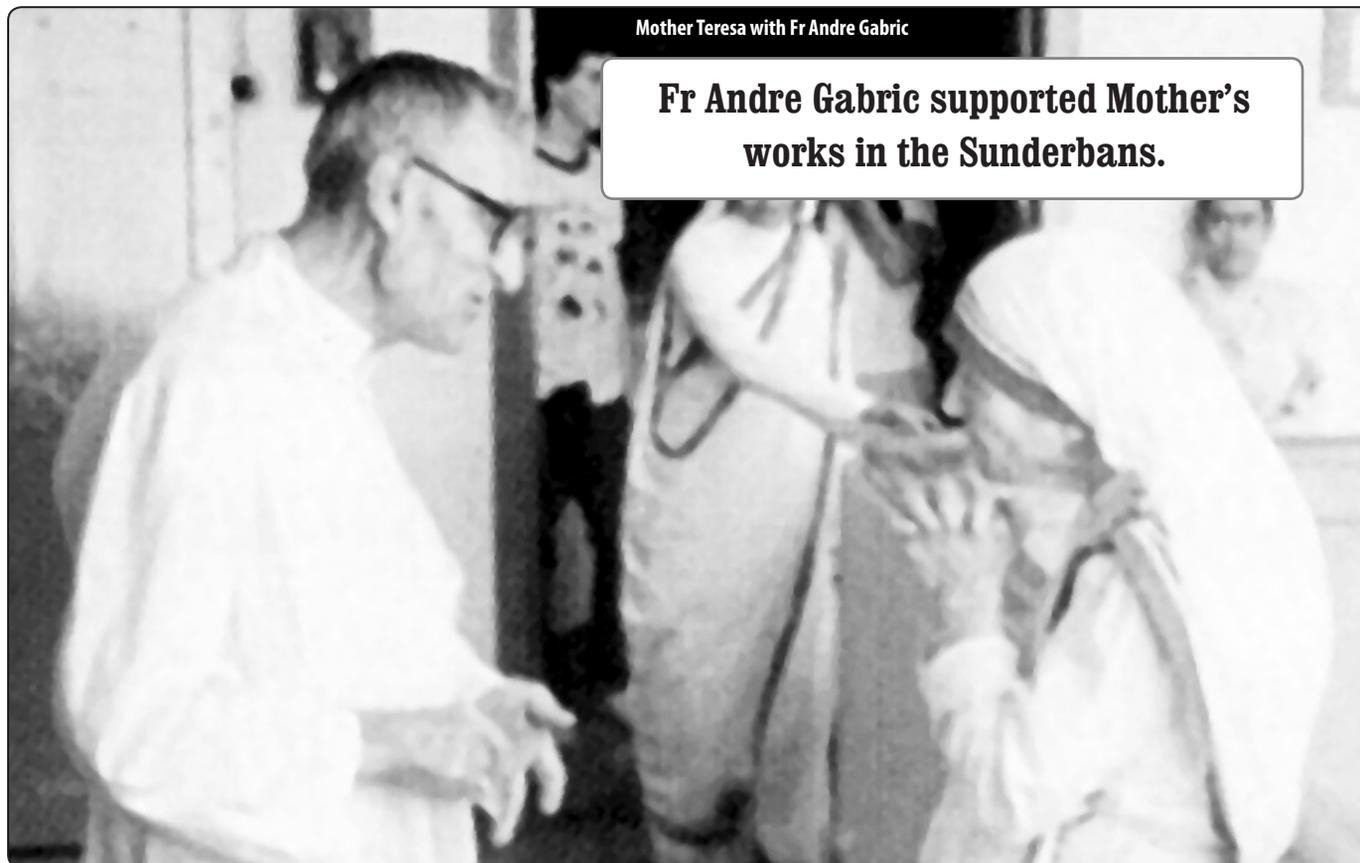
Mother Teresa with Fr Lawrence Picachy (later Lawrence Cardinal Picachy)

Xavier's College, Kolkata in 1997. It was Fr Van Exem who helped Mother Teresa to discern her "call within the call" and presented her case to Archbishop Perier. As a Canon Lawyer, it was he, who helped Mother Teresa in the drafting of the Constitutions of the Missionaries of Charity and presented

come from God. He recommended Mother Teresa to Rome telling them that he had known Mother Teresa ever since she reached Calcutta, and so supported her heartily. He also blessed the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity at a rented house on 14 Creek Lane, near Sealdah

Mother Teresa with Fr Andre Gabric

### Fr Andre Gabric supported Mother's works in the Sunderbans.



of the soul. It is to Fr Neuner that she confided her darkness and sought his help. Following the Ignatian tradition of discernment of spirits, he helped her understand that it was a privileged stage she was going through much like other spiritually enlightened persons as St Theresa of Avila or St John of the Cross. Though teaching theology at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapith, Pune, Fr Neuner visited Calcutta to spend a few days with Mother Teresa and support her during the painful phases of her life.

There are several other Jesuits of Calcutta province, who contributed to the foundation of the Missionaries of Charity on firm ground and helped Mother Teresa to seek God's will in all things: Fr Andre Bruylants, Fr Albert Huart, Fr Camille Bouche and Fr Christian Mignon. But two Jesuits had a special link with Mother Teresa because of their native land: Fr Josef Cukale from Slovenia and

Fr Andre Gabric from Yugoslavia. Fr Josef was invited to accompany the first group of Missionaries of Charity Sisters on a mission to Russia, and Fr Andre supported Mother's works in the Sunderbans. Another great gift of the Society of Jesus to Mother Teresa was the Hazaribagh Jesuit, Fr Ian Travers-Ball, who took the name of Brother Andrew to co-found the Missionaries of Charity Brothers on 25 March 1963.

#### UNENDING SAGA OF GRATITUDE

Mother Teresa was ever grateful to the Society of Jesus, which had been extremely generous in offering spiritual accompaniment not only for her, but for her numerous Sisters. In a handwritten note dated 29 Aug 1990, on the occasion of the Triple Jubilee celebrations in the Society of Jesus, Mother Teresa observed : "Nearly every Missionary of Charity owes deep gratitude to the Society of Jesus for allowing their priests to take care

of our spiritual formation and growth in holiness. Our deep gratitude to each one of them all over the world, especially Calcutta. It is our prayer that the Society of Jesus may give many saints to the Mother Church. Let us pray. God bless you."

The strong bond of collaboration between the Missionaries of Charity and the Society of Jesus continues - several years after Mother Teresa has gone for her eternal reward. The Society can be proud of this long standing collaboration with a heroic, saintly nun who sought to satiate Jesus' thirst for love and souls by serving the poorest of the poor. On 04 Sept this year when a Jesuit Pope will declare her a saint, Jesuits all over the world will rejoice and sing, "Te Deum..." ■

*Fr Julian S. Das, SJ (CCU), Acting Socius to the Provincial of Calcutta, is a former editor of Kolkata-based Catholic weekly, The Herald. He can be contacted at: juliansdas@gmail.com*

## Chennai Mission celebrates Silver Jubilee

The Silver Jubilee celebrations of Chennai Mission (CM) commenced on 08 Aug '15 at the cemetery of Frs. Pierre Mauduyt and Maximilieu de Courberville, French Jesuit missionaries who were poisoned to death in 1711 near Karuveppampoundimadam near Malligapuram parish in the diocese of Chengalpattu (Chingleput), Tamil Nadu. Bishop Neethinathan of Chengalpattu, presided over the Eucharist concelebrated by Fr Sebastia L.Raj, the Provincial, and Fr Jebamalai Raja, the Chennai Mission Superior and the former Mission superior and Mission coordinators.



As part of the Silver Jubilee celebration, CM organized a series of gatherings of Lay-Partners (09 Jan '16 at Pathai), Religious working in CM (24 Jan at Kuppayanallur), Young Jesuits and Scholastics (26 Jan at LICET) and of Senior Jesuits (30, 31 Jan at Maduralaya) - all on the common theme of 'Endearing people and Enduring mission'.

The lay partners from different centres felt happy to be part of CM activities. They were grateful to the Jesuits for their daring involvement among the marginalized. They pointed out the particular contribution to the uprising of Dalits in the northern part of Tamilnadu. They were worried about our lackadaisical approach to social action and social movements at present. They asked about the process of making CM a region and then a province. They wanted to know the internal blocks in doing it. While expressing happiness about the admissions and appointments of Dalits in our institutions, they recommended to streamline the procedures.

The women and men religious working in CM area expressed happiness that the Jesuits were available at any time for spiritual sharing, formation of young religious, counseling and guidance, guiding chapters, supporting in the revision of constitutions, renewing policies, and readiness to spend time and resources for their welfare. They were particularly pleased with the pioneering involvement among the Dalits, Migrants, Tribals and Gypsies. They also expected the Jesuits to encourage collaborative ventures such as PALMERA and JRS. They expressed concern over the declining political awareness among the youth today and the empowerment programmes for the marginalised.

Scholastics and young priests listened to the stories of grassroots people. The speakers asked them to look at the changes from cultural perspectives. At the final gathering more than 100 Jesuits listened to resource persons, Mr. Pava Chelladurai and Mr. Ramesh Babu who invited the Jesuits to understand the perspectives of the victims of casteism and take a stand for victims.

Fr Alphonse Manickam offered a panoramic view of the history of the Madurai Province and Fr Dominic Jayakumar described the development that has taken place in the past 25

years. Fr Jebamalai Raja, CM Superior, summarised the collective responses of the participants of the various gatherings and said they motivate us to deepen our commitment of preferential option for Dalits and other marginalized groups such as tribals, migrants, refugees, third gender, and unorganised youth.

- **Dominic Jayakumar, SJ & Henry Jerome, SJ**

## 'Jesuits in Science' meet

The Jesuits engaged in the fields of science and technology from South Asia gathered together on 12 and 13 March 2016 at Loyola College, Chennai. Twenty eight participants belonging to various provinces from all over India and Sri Lanka attended the meeting.

The POSA had sent his greetings through a letter in which he appreciated the mission of the members of this forum to carry on the Society's mandate and God's creative work.

Prof. Ilango, Director, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Southern Circle, Chennai inaugurated the meeting. He spoke on the role of ZSI in preserving the biodiversity and linked it to the call of Pope Francis through his encyclical



*Laudato Si* in which the Pope highlights the importance of biodiversity and the dangers associated with its loss.

Later the participants shared their contributions through the fields of science and technology in the respective missions they were carrying out. Various themes related to environment, energy, biotechnology, biochemistry, ethnopharmacology, mathematics and computer science were deliberated.

Some ideas related to developing natural mosquito repellents, natural dyes for solar cells, natural absorbents of pollutants, and nanoparticles using natural sources were very useful to carry forward further work in these areas.

It was heartening to note that many of our men carrying out research projects for their Master's degree or doctoral degree were taking up problems related to our people's needs. The others engaged in active research were also working in various fields of healthcare, agriculture, energy and networking with a direct link to people's requirements.

The participants felt energized to carry on with their dedicated works. The meeting also decided to promote all relevant activities related to the call of *Laudato Si* in our communities, institutions and mission stations. Loyola College, Chennai has taken initiatives to treat sewage and to manage solid waste with treatment plants. It was suggested that other Jesuit institutions can follow this. The forum also recommended to the Provincials to encourage interested Jesuits to take up full time science and technology mission.

- **S. Ignacimuthu, SJ**

# The awards go to...

## Jivan awards for Creative Writing - 2015



Leo Tagore, SJ

**H**ere are the results of the Jivan Creative Writing Contest - 2015. The contest elicited short stories from 24 young writers, from all the different regions of India.

*Jivan* thanks all the Rectors and Principals of our Formation Houses, and Colleges who helped by encouraging their wards to participate.

The short stories had to be set in today's India, highlighting people, events or trends that offer us hope for the future of India.

The two-member Jury this year were **Fr Leo Tagore, SJ**, a former professor of English Literature and National Director of AICUF. At present he is the Superior of Beschi Illam, Dindigul. The other one was **Fr M.A. Emmanuel Arockiam, SJ**, who has a Master's degree in English Literature from Madras Christian College and a Ph.D. in Counselling Psychology from Marquette University, Milwaukee, U.S. At present he is the Director of JESCCO, the new Counselling Centre started by MDU Province at LTI, Madurai.

The first prize of Rs 5,000 goes to **Sch Sumit D'Souza, SJ**, of Bombay

Province. He has completed his Masters in Management Studies (MMS) from Mumbai University. He is currently doing his Juniorate Studies at Xavier Training College, Belgaum, Karnataka.

The second prize (Rs 2,000) goes to **Fr Vincent Pereppadan, SJ (KER)**. He is the editor and director of *Sneha Sena* and *Tik-Tik Life*, value orientation monthly magazines for children in Malayalam and English respectively.

**Ms Joyeeta Majumdar** wins the third prize (Rs 1,000). She is a first year student of English Honours, Loreto college, Kolkata.

On the top on the 'meritorious' list is 'They laid him there' written by Benedict Santosh, SJ. The others in this category are stories written by Fr Caridade Drago, SJ and Ms Annapoorani Hariharan. They will be published in *Jivan*.

We recall with gratitude what makes these awards possible every year - the thoughtful grant made by the Mascarenhas brothers - Fio and Frazer, SJ - in memory of their dear parents, Francis and Flora Mascarenhas.

- Editor



Sumit D'Souza, SJ



Vincent Pereppadan, SJ



Joyeeta Majumdar



Emmanuel Arockiam, SJ

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## Pre-Novitiate Directors and Vocation Promoters meet

The meeting of the Vocation Promoters and the Pre-Novitiate Directors of the South Asian Assistancy was held at Satyodayam, Secunderabad 03-09 Feb '16. The Provincial of Andhra Province, Fr P.S. Amalraj, welcomed warmly the Vocation Promoters and highlighted the important role of vocation promoters in bringing in new recruits to the Society.

On 04 Feb the Vocation Promoters shared their experiences, and the new methods and strategies they used for vocation promotion, their concerns and future plans.

On 05 February Fr. Raj Irudaya, ADF made a power point presentation the genesis and process of 'Restructuring in the Assistancy for Greater Apostolic Effectiveness' to the Vocation Promoters and Pre-Novitiate Directors. He pointed out the context in which the world is forging ahead especially the advances in science and technology, the impact of globalization, the depletion



of ecology, religious fundamentalism, discrimination based on caste and race, majoritarianism, developed and underdeveloped countries, the plight of the marginalized and our response to the context through renewed awareness of our universal mission, our universal vocation, our way of governance and reorienting formation.

Then there was a zonal sharing of the Vocation Promoters and the Pre-Novitiate Directors. We thought of bringing together all the pre-novices of a particular zone and offer courses which would help them understand the universality of the Society of Jesus. The Vocation Promoters left in the afternoon on 05 Feb.

On 06 Feb the Pre-Novitiate Directors shared their experiences, implementation of the Graded Syllabus and their concerns in their respective Pre-Novitiates. The predominant strengths of our pre-novices are open-mindedness, availability, sense of belonging to the Society and eagerness to learn English. The major concerns are maintaining the rule of language i.e. English, the emotional fragility of the candidates and the difficulty in making them learn or unlearn behaviour.

From 06 afternoon to 09 evening we had a seminar on 'Counselling and Guidance' by Frs. M. A. Emmanuel SJ, Dinesh Braganza SJ and Sr. Jessy SMMI. In this seminar the resource persons dealt in detail with the simple techniques that could be used for counselling and guidance of the Pre-Novices like listening, summarizing, clarifying, probing, reframing, self-disclosure, hunches, paradoxical questions, etc.

Fr ADF gave us a presentation on "Assessing Candidates for Religious Life: An Observation Method." The presentation comprised of two parts: desirable and contra-indicative characteristics among candidates and assessment procedures towards evaluating the suitability of candidates. In both the parts the stress was on Personal Functioning, Interpersonal

Functioning and the Spiritual Functioning of the candidates. He consulted us on the professional assessment of the pre-novices through a battery of psychological tests by experts before they enter the Novitiate. Self-assessment, Assessment by the Pre-Novitiate Staff through observation method, professional assessment and four-sheet information will be put in place for an effective selection of the pre-novices to the Novitiate.

The local co-ordinators of the meet, Frs. Sundar and Leo, and the local community did a wonderful job of organizing it. The personal care of Fr Amal, the Andhra Provincial, was inspiring. We also visited two Jesuit communities whose hospitality was commendable.

- Antony Robinson, SJ

## North Zone's animation programme for 'Restructuring'

The North Zone Spiritual Animation Program (SAP) on 'Restructuring in view of Greater Apostolic Effectiveness' was held at Navjivan, New Delhi, in the first week of March under the able guidance of Fr. Julian Fernandes, SJ and Fr. R. C. Chacko, SJ. As envisaged and planned by the North Zone participants, at the end of the second stage of the SAP at Dhyana Ashram, Kolkatta, six representatives from each of the six provinces and regions of the North Zone, including the delegate for the Assam region participated in this spiritual process for two full days.

The resource persons Frs. Julian and Chacko, reminded the participants that this was a spiritual process of prayer, reflection and discernment on the relevant letters of Fr. General, for restructuring in the Society of Jesus, as mandated by GC 35. The 38 participants spent two fruitful days of personal prayer, group



sharing and general sessions on the letters of Fr General, the Phesama Statement of JCSA, the letter of POSA, and other relevant documents on restructuring for greater apostolic effectiveness.

Fr Michael Alosnai, through his experiential sharing of the story of Ignatius and companions, led the group to a re-capturing experience of our tradition and heritage to listen to the call of the Eternal King in the present day context. The spiritual process also focussed on delving with the obstacles and resistances from within toward the universal understanding of our mission.

The 'fruit-gathering' at the end of the process was rich as it was varied. Each province has drawn up a plan of action to take this spiritual animation process to their respective provinces and involve as many Jesuits as possible. The warm hospitality and the facilities at Navjivan, within the beautiful St. Xavier's School Campus, made the two-day exercise a happy and fruitful experience.

- Donald Miranda, SJ

BY RACHANS LUKOSE, SJ

**F**or me this classical painting (see pic) is a wonderful and apt symbol of God-experience. As I go on contemplating this painting, it unfolds layers of meaning about God-experience. First of all this masterpiece is the result of the painter's own God-experience.

The hand of God in the painting is shown as stretching forward. God takes the initiative to reach out to human beings. Humankind is free to respond to this open

invitation. The left hand, representing humankind, is not as straight as the hand of God. It could point to the inertia or indifference of humans towards the free gift of God-experience. The convergence of both the fingers leads to the God-experience - union of right hand and left hand, union of the divine and human.

I want to draw your attention to the gap between both fingers, it is the 'gap or space' between the finite and the Infinite. With the 'original fall' the gap began. God took initiatives to fill the gap - to bring humans back to Him. In the fullness of time He sent his own dear son to proclaim his constant and unconditional love for us. The mission of Jesus brought us back to God, our creator and source of life. Another moment of such convergence was at the time of Pentecost.

Due to the limitations of our human nature we often lose this union and convergence. But filling the gap between the human and the divine is the goal of our life and it should be the vocation of everyone.

If we try we can have many moments of convergence of our being and the divine. The intensity of convergence - the filling of the 'gap' - will vary from person to person. In trying to describe such experiences we can see the limitations of language. Since this experience takes place in the realm of love, the authentic language of such mystical experiences can only be the language of love.

According to Martin Velasco 'experience is a synthesis of presence and interpretation'. Spirituality emerges from our experience of God's presence and our



## *We need to fill the gap*

efforts to express it, to interpret it. Although God's presence is always and equally available and accessible to all human beings, because of our limitations we may not be able to experience him, or we can misinterpret our experience.

If we are fully alive and attentive to God's presence we will understand that at every moment we are in union with

God. Even in the process of breathing - breathing in and breathing out - we come in contact with Him. In the breathing process of inhaling and exhaling there is a fraction of a second when we do not inhale or exhale. This fraction of a second is the gap - the 'little space' when we lose the union. It is a moment of death, that is, the death of our ego or *aham*.

Adam and Eve in the paradise, before their fall, were fully in the presence of God and in constant experience of God. They were just themselves - naked before God. They lost this presence of God because of sin. They refused the free gift of God's presence. When they realized they had lost the presence of God, they began to cover themselves with leaves.

When we lose the presence of God, we too, like Adam and Eve, cover ourselves with various leaves - culture, education, morality, rules and regulations etc. We are not able to access God's presence that is freely available due to various layers of leaves we have acquired through our history and culture. Our original, pure form is tarnished by many factors, and so we are unable to easily get in touch with His presence in our daily life.

But we need to regain the lost garden of paradise. We need to fill the gap and experience His presence every moment - not merely the moments that are joy-filled, but also moments of pain and sorrow. For He is as present in the darkness as in the light. ■

*Fr Rachans Lukose, SJ (KER) is the director of pre-novices at Xavier Training Centre, Wayanad, Kerala.*

## Gujarat Jesuits respond to eco challenges

Gujarat Jesuits Creatively Responding to Ecological Challenges was the theme of the Eco workshop organized by GJEM (Gujarat Jesuit Ecological Mission). It brought together 58 participants consisting of Jesuits and friends at Nadiad pastoral Centre on 26-28 Feb '16.



Archbishop Thomas Macwan of Gandhinagar, who inaugurated the workshop, told the participants that in order to bring positive changes in the environment it was important to change our perspectives and attitudes. Fr Robert Athickal, Director, Tarumitra, Patna, delivered the key-note address. He stressed the importance of finding God in all things including in Nature, as opposed to a God who is transcendental and external to ourselves. Having internalized the spirituality of St Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola and Teilhardde Chardin, he reminded the audience of the need to revisit the history of eco-spirituality, and reinterpret the Catholic scriptures. His presentation proved to be a solid foundation for the rest of the workshop.

The GJEM team, consisting of Frs Lancy D, Vincent M, Rappai P, Lucas R, Jothi X and Francis M, - wanting to communicate Gujarat Jesuits' Eco involvement to all the participants, screened a documentary film, titled, *The spirit of GJEM*. The film presented the 'three pillars' of GJEM: Transforming Attitudes, Practices and Public Policies. Fr Lancy and Jothi presented the activity report of GJEM, enriched with infographs, photos and narrative report. Two professional external evaluators of the GJEM's work stated that the GJEM's programs were well-conceptualized and executed, and it has made remarkable interventions in a short period of 15 months. They added that if those activities are consolidated and continued in the coming years, then significant ecological transformations could be brought about in Gujarat and that many would be inspired and helped to emulate the model.

On the second day the team members elaborated on the topics introduced on the first day: Fr Rappai on eco-spirituality; Fr Lucas and Jothi on Eco education; Fr LancyD'Cruz, Francisbhai and Himmatbhai on medicinal plants, organic farming and Biodiversity respectively; Frs Vincent Moonu and Rappai spoke on alternative energy and sustainable eco-solutions for our institutions. The speakers explained the background and process of their initiatives the pedagogy they followed and the challenges

they faced. There were also videos of personal experiences of people who had participated in GJEM's programs. and discussions after each session. A discussion in groups was held, soliciting suggestions to strengthen further GJEM's programs. We plan to take up some of their important suggestions in the next three-year phase of our programs.

Mr. Mahesh Pandya, who gave a broad picture of environmental problems in Gujarat. exhorted us to get involved in order to make a positive impact at various levels. Fr Simon Fernandes, SJ, speaking from the Goan context, narrated his insights and experience on eco-advocacy, and how they fought together against the proposed SEZ. Mr Umesh Rathod from NABARD and Mr. Vijay Parmar enlisted the opportunities and challenges of fund-raising for ecological programs.

At the end all the participants, symbolically expressing their commitment to Mother Earth, planted a Sita Ashok tree in the campus.  
- Jothi Xavier, SJ

## DNC brings Tribals together

In the month of February the Santal Ministry group of De Nobili College (DNC), Pune, organized for the Santal people in and around Pune 'Baha Porob' celebration of the flowers festival. It began with a meaningful eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr Thomas Kattathara, SJ and concelebrated by Frs V.M. Jose, SJ, Jisu Raj, SJ, Gyan Hembrom, SJ, James Dungdung and Deacon Christopher Dungdung, SJ.



For lighting of the ceremonial lamps distinguished guests representing different regions and states were invited. The traditional ritual offering of flowers to Maran Guru was performed by Nake Baba Fr Gyan Hembrom, SJ. The main purpose of this annual gathering was to bring Santals together and provide them a forum to display their talents and to build solidarity among them, so that they help one another.

Fr Edward Mudavaserry, SJ, Rector, DNC spoke on how the rich culture and traditions of the tribal people could be preserved despite the negative influences of the city.

Fr Thomas Kattathara, SJ spoke highly of the ancestors of the Santal community for having handed down this beautiful tradition which is being carried out by the succeeding generations over the years. He emphasized the need for preserving our culture and imbibing the beautiful meaning and religious significance of such festivals. The celebration ended with cultural programmes that included vibrant dances. The participants thanked the Jesuits for a well-organized programme which they greatly appreciated.  
- Sudhir Ekka, SJ

# He came, he saw...

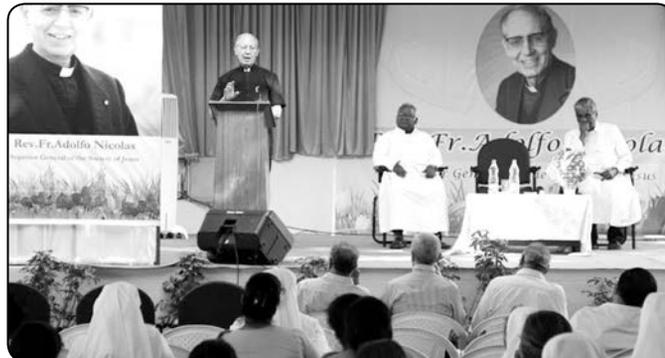
## *Fr General's visit to India*

### ANDHRA PROVINCE

**F**r. General's visit to the Andhra Jesuit Province was a moment of joy and grace for all of us. Fr General, Fr. Lisbert D'Souza and Fr Antoine Kerhuel were welcomed on 19 Feb at Vijayawada's Gannavaram airport by Fr P.S. Amalraj, the Provincial, Rector, Loyola College and others. He was given the traditional welcome with Purnakumbam and recitation of Vedic Mantras.

Before Fr General addressed a gathering of about 5000 students and staff at 3 pm in the football stadium, he was introduced to each Jesuit community. He insisted on the importance of research and magis in education. He also celebrated

airport. The boys from THARA welcomed him at Sathyodayam with flowers. The Sathyodayam community and Fathers from different Jesuit communities also welcomed him. He met the commission coordinators that morning. In his interaction with the Jesuits, he shared about the preparation of the GC 36 and his vision for the future Society. On 22 Feb he joined the Eucharist celebrated by Fr Lisbert and Antoine Kerhuel for the lay community. The Loyola Academy community was happy to have him that morning where he met the staff and students and the senior Jesuits in the community. In the afternoon the collaborators - Religious and clergy of the twin cities - interacted with him and he responded to



Mass for the Jesuits that evening followed by dinner. For the Novices it was an awesome experience when they listened to him on 20 Feb at the Novitiate. Fr General, who had indicated his priority to visit the Jesuit formation houses, had a session with the formation commission members and a session with the alumni at Loyola college where he was felicitated by the alumni of the different Jesuit institutions in Andhra. A postal cover and a postal stamp with his portrait were released in his honour. Local clergy and Religious joined us for evening prayer that was followed by dinner.

On 21 Feb he was warmly received at Secunderabad

their questions. Fr General's answers to the questions revealed his depth of understanding of the situation and never fumbled for ideas or words. He insisted on collaboration and cooperation, saying that we are all "cooperators working for God's mission and not for personal mission."

What stands out in the minds of the province-men and others is his simplicity and sense of humor, and his grasp of situations and awareness of the happenings in Andhra Province and around the world. His words of appreciation and encouragement energized us to work with greater commitment to carry out the mission of the Society. ■

## MADURAI PROVINCE

Fr General's visit to Madurai province began with his arrival on Friday night, 26 Feb, at Chennai metro's international airport. He was welcomed by a team led by Fr Sebastia L. Raj, Provincial, and Fr Jebamalai Raja, Chennai Mission Superior. Next morning he prayed at the renovated house chapel squatting in the zen posture. After breakfast Fr Provincial and Fr Mission Superior accompanied him to the Archbishop's house at Mylapore for a courtesy visit.

Fr General addressed the Jesuits gathered in the LICET auditorium from 10:30 am to 11:55 am. The focus of Fr General's talk was the current preparation for and salient features of GC 36. The two important themes in Fr General's message were: our renewed Life in Mission and Renewal of Governance Structures for Mission. Fr General answered the questions from Jesuits with wit and humour. There was a concelebrated Mass at 12:00 noon at the Center of Peace at LICET in which Fr General focused on our collaboration with the poor and the marginalized. After lunch he made a short visit to the Chennai Mission Office and met those who have been guiding the Mission for the past 25 years. Then he went to Bertram Hall at 2.30 pm to address about 1,000 lay collaborators – mostly staff of the four academic institutions in the Loyola Campus and representatives of our target people in mission. He shared with our lay collaborators how to exemplify a zealot commitment to the mission and purpose. Later he went to Satya Nilayam to address the big Jesuit community there and then proceeded to the airport to catch a flight to Trichy.

That night after arriving at St Joseph's, Trichy, he had an informal chat with some Jesuits and retired to bed. On 28 Feb at 8.45 am Fr General addressed the staff and alumni of St Joseph's institutions at the Lawley Hall. In his address, Fr General lavished praise on all the staff and thanked them for sharing the responsibility of Jesuits' mission. He drew attention to the need of helping our students to become wise, not merely intelligent; it is the change of heart, he said, that mattered more than acquiring just knowledge. Acknowledging the presence of alumni in the hall, he said that it was important to invite alumni back to Jesuit institutions as often as we could to get their help in connecting with the real world.

After a photograph with Jesuits in front of Arrupe Library, he spoke at length to Jesuits from different communities gathered in SAIL auditorium. He talked of the ongoing process leading to GC 36 that will begin in October 2016 in Rome. At the end of his talk, he answered questions from Jesuits. After that he celebrated Mass with the Jesuits in the College Church. On his way to Maduralaya, Dindigul, Fr General met Bishop Tony Devotta of Trichy. When they arrived at Maduralaya around 5.40 pm, they were welcomed with cheers and applause. After 10 minutes of rest, they were ready for the visit to the Beschi cemetery. Fr Antoine was eager to see the tombs of so many of his heroic countrymen who had served and died in this province. At 6.30 pm Fr General met the formators. Twenty Jesuits representing every stage of formation spoke of their joys and challenges. Fr General addressed them and answered their questions.

Next morning, 29 Feb, he went to Beschi to celebrate the Mass attended by more than 80 Jesuits. After a group photograph and breakfast he went back to Maduralaya for an important meeting at 9.00 am attended by the Co-ordinators, Consultors and Rectors appointed by Fr General. Fr General listened while the Co-ordinators, led by Fr A.J. Christie, Co-ordinator of Ministries, presented, with help of slides, the strengths and challenges of



their sector. At 11 a.m. Fr General met the novices. At 11.35 a.m. Fr General went to the new Arrupe Bhavan and inaugurated the renovated Arrupe Bhavan, the newly constructed annexe to the Infirmary. He had his lunch at Maduralaya and at 2.30 pm he left for Madurai.

After meeting Bishop Susai Manickam of Sivagangai and Archbishop Antony Pappusamy of Madurai at the Archbishop's House, Fr General arrived at St Mary's, Madurai at 5.15 p.m. His meeting with the Jesuits began at 6.30 p.m. His sharing centered around the preparation for GC 36 and Jesuits taking up administrative responsibilities in the Church. After supper and a night's rest, early on 01 March, Fr General and his team left for the Madurai airport to go to Ahmedabad via Chennai. ■

## GUJARAT PROVINCE

Perhaps the most inspiring message Fr General left behind during his visit to Gujarat province was not so much his words but his "silence" as he doggedly ploughed



through the schedule despite 3 hairline fractured ribs, a result of a fall in Premal Jyoti, Ahmedabad. Without even a passing reference, this 80-year old Jesuit General showed a remarkable resilience. Not so much perhaps due to his stoic Zen posture as his love for Jesuits whom he wanted to be with. This with an unassuming air coupled with an impish sense of humour was a heady mix that charmed all.

While Fr. General touched on a vast spectrum of significant issues there were 2 that deserve a special mention. The first was about what the Pope expected from the Jesuits: to be proficient in three areas of their lives. A deepening of their interior life. Reaching out to the marginalized, And the Jesuit Refugee Service which is slowly becoming a global concern and a priority today. The second was understanding the wider and deeper perspective of "frontiers" - breaking new creative paths within the new as well as the existing works of the Society. "We are entering an era of the 'Globalization of superficiality,'" he remarked, "inundated by a flood of information. We are often lost in it without knowing how to analyze and select what is important." We are called to be

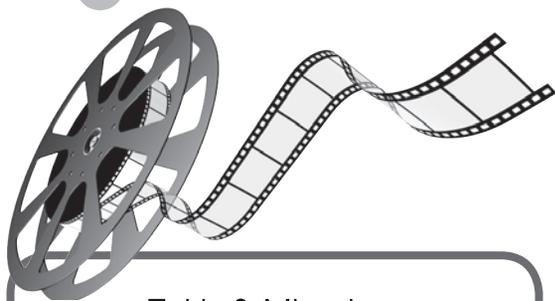
pioneers in urgent and challenging issues that the world is crying for.

Sensing the signs of the times as people get disillusioned with formal religion, the General felt that the challenge for the Society today is to get major mainstream religions together and work towards one 'Universal call to Mystery' or Spirituality beyond the confined spaces of religion. "The Church will need India in the future," he said. Pope Francis would like the Jesuits to usher in a culture of learning to "journey on the way" together rather than dogmatically cling to an exclusive patent to "the Truth".

The third challenging issue where we need to be pioneers is opening alternative paradigms of evangelization. We should move away from the western mindset of "either or" and learn the "inclusive" oriental way of "both and". In Japan many draw spiritual fruit from one tradition and are comfortable by adopting practices from another tradition. "Both traditions help me and that matters to me."



Most Jesuits remarked that the General's visit was "A moment of Grace," for the whole Province. With gratitude we take the gift of this moment of grace on our journey, inspired and strengthened by our beloved General, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, SJ. ■



## Faith & Miracles

*Miracles from Heaven*

A film by Patricia Riggen

Starring Jennifer Garner, Kylie Rogers, Martin Henderson...



Until it delivers an eye-rolling scene near the end, *Miracles From Heaven* is an unexpectedly effective tear-jerker. More surprising still, that late diversion doesn't negate much of the movie's early sincerity. *Miracles From Heaven* is based on "the incredible true story" of the Beam family. Anna (Kylie Rogers), the middle child of three daughters of Christy (Jennifer Garner) and Kevin (Martin Henderson), begins experiencing pain that worsens until the cause - a rare and potentially fatal intestinal disorder - is diagnosed.

Christy proves to be a determined mother, flying with Anna from their Texas home to implore a specialist in Boston to treat the girl. Yet despite Christy's Christian faith, she begins to doubt God as Anna's condition worsens.

Adapted by Randy Brown from Christy Beam's memoir, the film, directed by Patricia Riggen, focuses much more on the family's love and sacrifices than on its specific creed. Even scenes set in a church look to uplift viewers rather than convert them. The stresses of parenthood and illness and rediscovering of faith are the main emphasis here.

## She was on the streets and yet...

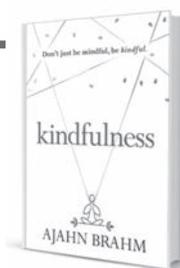


When 16-year-old Hepsiba boarded her first flight from Chennai last week, she could hardly hold her excitement down. She was flying to Rio, Brazil, to participate in the Street Child Games, along with her team. She made India proud by winning a gold for the 100 metre dash, a silver for 400 metre girls' run, and a bronze for the 100 metre hurdles race. Two of her five teammates also won medals. They spent two weeks there, interacting with children from other cultures, learning about them and sharing stories. Hepsiba lived with her mother, a widower, on the same street as the Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai. Soon, their lives were disrupted when they were sent away from the street. They had to seek refuge at a shelter for the homeless. It was while she was here that she was discovered to have great potential as a sprinter by the NGO, Karunalaya. The NGO had organised a local sports competition, and Paul Sunder Singh realised that these children were natural athletes. After they trained with a coach, Singh decided to take her and the four other street children to the Street Child Games. While they funded a part of the trip, the organisers, Street Child United, pitched in for the rest. However, getting them a passport was quite a challenge, as none of them had a permanent address. Yet, they persisted and won.

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

## Kindfulness

Go beyond mindfulness - practice kindness! In this book Ajahn Brahm introduces a new kind of meditation: kindness. Kindness is the cause of relaxation. It brings ease to the body, to the mind, and to the world. Kindness allows healing to happen. So don't just be mindful, be kind! With his trademark knack for telling engaging stories paired with step-by-step anyone-can-do-it instructions, Brahm brings alive and makes accessible powerful tools of transformation. This slim, beautifully designed volume is a quick start guide for living a life of joy and compassion.



### **Kindfulness**

By Ajahn Brahm  
Published by Wisdom  
Publications  
Pages: 184; Price: Rs.594

## “We are on your side, Pope Francis. Can you hear us?”

BY TINA BEATTIE

When it comes to the rift in Catholicism between worried conservatives and liberalizing progressives, Pope Francis' nuanced positions make him impossible to pigeonhole.

Doctrinally, he is conservative. He has not substantially changed church teaching. He is, however, revolutionizing its interpretation and application, emphasizing mercy and healing over dogma and discipline. He clearly recognizes the importance of discernment and patience in the process of transforming lives and challenging injustices. But his condemnation of global capitalism and environmental destruction, and his ability to bring the voices of the world's poorest and most marginalized people to global politics, make him a radical leader of the world's 1.2 billion Roman Catholics.

At the very least, Francis is having a transformative effect on the church's mission. Yet where are the women?

Francis has repeatedly acknowledged the need for greater involvement of women at all levels of church life, barring ordination. With the door on that question closed, as Francis has said, it's fair to ask what greater involvement means. So far, the pope could be doing much more to promote women's participation.

Francis could have insisted that women have a real role in the Synod on the Family. Thirty women were appointed as 'auditors' to this second churchwide meeting of bishops called by Francis to discuss the challenges

facing Catholics with regard to family life. It is ludicrous that these women can neither speak nor vote while nearly 300 celibate men - bishops and cardinals - will make far-reaching decisions affecting the lives of so many families on the planet.

The Catholic Women's Network, an online forum of more than 900 women, has published *Catholic Women Speak: Bringing Our Gifts to the Table*. It offers reflections by leading female theologians and personal stories related to issues such as contraception, divorce, same-sex relationships and interchurch unions, as well as poverty, violence and the religious life. In most cases, the women's stories don't - and can't - match strict doctrine.

Contributors to the book hope to open a significant dialogue between the church hierarchy and women seeking to live faithfully in difficult times and diverse contexts.

There is an urgent need for more communication between the Catholic hierarchy and women. For example, because Francis is serious about creating a church of the poor, he cannot ignore what has been described as "the feminization of poverty." An estimated 800 of the world's poorest women die every day of causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, and it is scandalous that the question of maternal mortality remains unaddressed in Catholic social teaching. The international community's attempts to promote women's sexual and reproductive rights repeatedly founder on opposition spearheaded by the Holy See acting as a mouthpiece for religious conservatives.

At the grass-roots, the Catholic Church is a force for good in poor communities. Books by Nicholas Kristof

and Sheryl WuDunn, and by Robert Calderisi, describe congregations and Catholic nongovernmental organizations in the forefront of providing education and healthcare for the world's poorest women and girls. These efforts rarely allow edicts from Rome to dictate their response to the need for contraceptive advice and post-abortion care, but they are constantly under threat from powerful conservative forces.

Francis repeatedly insists that realities should come before ideas. He says he wants a messy church that is a "field hospital" for the wounded. To that end, he could challenge the church's culture of censorship on many women's issues. The bishops who represent Africa at the synod, for example, tend to gloss over the harsh circumstances of poor women's lives in their countries in order to present a united moral front against so-called Western decadence on issues such as women's reproductive rights.

And what about that "closed door" with regard to ordination? This issue will not go away.

The Catholic Church risks becoming increasingly isolated in its marginalization of women's voices. There is an urgent need for more communication between the Catholic hierarchy and women, including lay theologians. The church needs to hear women speak out, without fear of censorship and harsh disciplinary measures.

Francis is a potent and prophetic voice of late modernity. His greatest potential allies are the women who make up more than half the church. We are on your side, Pope Francis. Can you hear us?

Courtesy: <http://www.latimes.com>

# Memoirs of a revolutionary Jesuit, Fernando Cardenal

Instead of cozying up to the rich and powerful, Jesuit Fr Fernando Cardenal, (1934-2016) who died on 20 Feb '16 fought for the poor and oppressed. This memoir, which focuses on the 1970s to the 1990s, is a sometimes searing, always deeply-felt record of his efforts.

First published in 2009 as *Junto A Mi Pueblo Con Su Revolucion, Memorias*, the book has recently been released in English with the somewhat perfunctory title of *Faith & Joy, Memoirs of a Revolutionary Priest*. But the book's Spanish title (*Together With My People In Their Revolution*) is more suggestive of Cardenal's palpable love for the poor.

Early on, it occurred to Cardenal that Jesus taught the "Our Father" not just as a list of petitions, but as a reminder. We have, Cardenal insists, an obligation to make God's kingdom come - with our own commitment and efforts. If we ask for the kingdom to come, it's because it hasn't come. So what does one need to do to make it come? His answer: Do as Jesus would do.

Jesus would not be the priest in the fine robes, the bishop with his mitre, or the cardinal living in opulence. Jesus who came to bring the merciful love of God for his people - especially the poor - would be the Good Samaritan, Cardenal wrote.

If this sounds like the message of Pope Francis, it pretty much is. Francis has been saying something similar since he took office in 2013. He recently shook up the status quo in Mexico when he told the priests and bishops to care for the poor and fight injustice. It's arguable whether Francis was influenced by Cardenal, but their visions are certainly similar.

Cardenal lived for nine months in an impoverished neighborhood in Medellin, Columbia. The people's suffering changed his perception of God as harsh, ruthless, and far away. He began to see God instead as imminent in the person of Jesus Christ and as a bringer of mercy. Cardenal felt an intense, irresistible desire to have close

contact with this God via the poor.

He decided to dedicate his work to liberating people from conditions of extreme poverty. He became a proponent of Liberation Theology, a social movement that tries to better the circumstances of the poor and teaches that Christians have an obligation toward the oppressed. The poor of Nicaragua had barely enough food, no jobs, no schools, no access to healthcare. Cardenal saw people scrounging for food scraps in the Jesuits' garbage can, young women leaving town to work as prostitutes in the city, children begging for bread that he carried home from a nearby bakery. How could he say that this bread was

meant for the holy priests who were studying? So, he gave the bread away. As he describes it, "Their [poor's] suffering became enormously difficult for me to bear."

In 1970, soon after he was ordained, he sided with students at the Jesuit University of Central America who were protesting the university president's repressive policies. At about the same time, Cardenal joined protests against Nicaraguan dictator, Anastasio Somoza's

imprisonment and torture of those who came out against the dictatorship.

As part of the protest, he and a group of students and priests took over the Leon Cathedral, which called down the wrath of Somoza's government - to say nothing of the bishop and of Rome. One of the memoir's most evocative scenes occurs during this time as Cardenal lies prostrate and prays before the altar asking for forgiveness of his sins and for divine direction. He's expecting that he will be removed from the cathedral under a hail of bullets.

Cardenal, who began his priesthood as someone who was afraid to be confrontational, later joined the Nicaraguan guerilla movement and took part in the Sandinista National Liberation Front in the 1970s. He secretly met guerrilla leaders. Every time he appeared on the street, he had to avoid the National Guard, which was trying to assassinate him. The stress

## Faith & Joy

*Memoirs of a Revolutionary Priest*

Fernando Cardenal, SJ

Orbis Books, Price Building, Box 302,  
Maryknoll, New York 10545-0302

Pages: 254; Price: Rs.1825

made him sick with colitis, gastritis, and continual headaches.

When in 1976, he asked U.S. Congress to cut off military aid to Nicaragua and listed the atrocities committed by the Somoza regime, his headaches intensified. But he had won, convincing President Jimmy Carter to stop sending aid to the Nicaraguan government, and a year or so later, the Somoza dictatorship was ousted.

Cardenal accepted positions from the Sandinista government and became director of the literacy crusade and later minister of education from 1984-19990. For his efforts, the Vatican had him expelled from the Jesuit order. But after the Sandinista government was replaced by a new government, Cardenal left politics, and the Jesuits invited him to return. (In a sense he had never left, since he continued to reside in the Jesuit house.) He took his final vows in 2004.

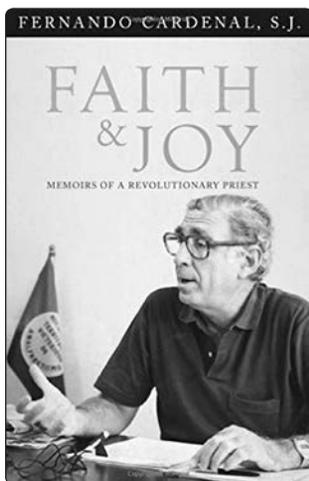
Cardenal wrote that he is not the point of this book. His readers and what they do for the poor and how they work to alleviate misery are the point. Cardenal didn't want to write a history of the Nicaraguan revolution with its significant events, like the taking over of the National Palace of Culture or the Final Insurrection. He wanted to share what he "saw, experienced, and witnessed."

Although this book takes readers inside the front lines of Latin American history, it also presents the inner workings of a man of great faith and humility. More importantly, it shows readers what it's like for to love Jesus Christ more than anyone else including oneself.

This book grew from lectures that Cardenal delivered at Jesuit universities worldwide where he was asked to discuss his role in the Sandinista revolution. He admitted the writing is workmanlike and has nothing of the resonance of the work by his brother, Fr. Ernesto Cardenal, a well-known Latino poet-priest. Yet in his defense, one must say that Cardenal's devotion to Christ and the poor lifts the memoir, if not to the level of poetry, then certainly to moments of prayer.

- Diane Scharper

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



*'Dear Pope Francis' is a delightful little book recently published by Loyola Press, Chicago in collaboration with GSP, Anand, India. Jesuit priests gathered 259 letters with questions and drawings from children from all parts of the world. Out of these Pope Francis responded to 30 of them in an interview given to Antonio Spadaro, SJ. Here are 5 of those responses - insightful and at the same time accessible to children.*

# Dear Pope Francis

The Pope Answers Letters from Children Around the World



By Pope Francis

*Dear Pope Francis,*

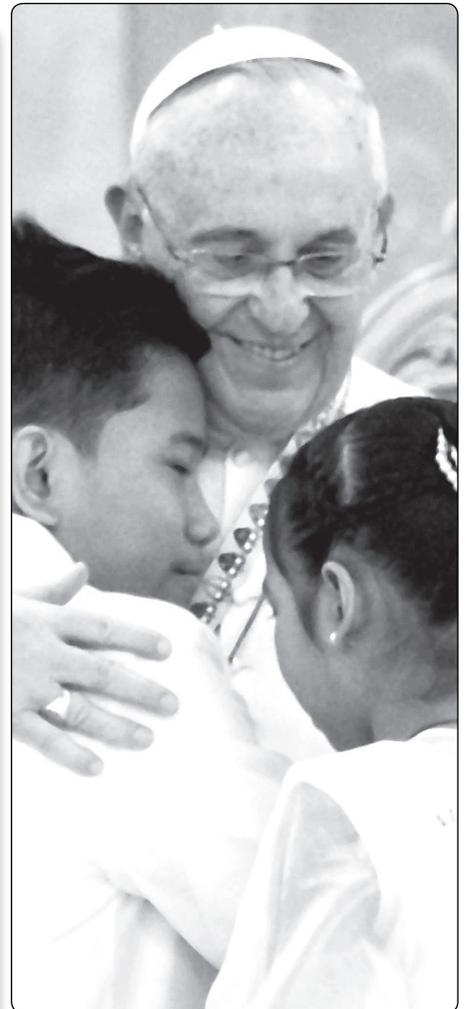
*Why did Jesus choose those 12 apostles and not others?*

*- from Juan Pablo, Argentina*

Great question, dear Juan Pablo!

Why does Jesus choose this person or that one? Look, Jesus doesn't choose a crowd. He chooses each person, one by one. So he chose the first twelve as his apostles. But we – you and I – are also chosen, with a first name and a family name. I have been chosen as Jorge Mario and you as Juan Pablo. We have been chosen to be Jesus' friends and to do something in life.

We are all chosen by the love of Jesus. But each of us is chosen in a personal way – we are not all chosen in a single common way. Jesus' love makes us feel chosen. But if you feel shut out of this love, then you have to face up to it and ask yourself why you feel that way. Jesus never excludes anyone from his heart. The red heart you drew is beautiful!



*Dear Pope Francis,*

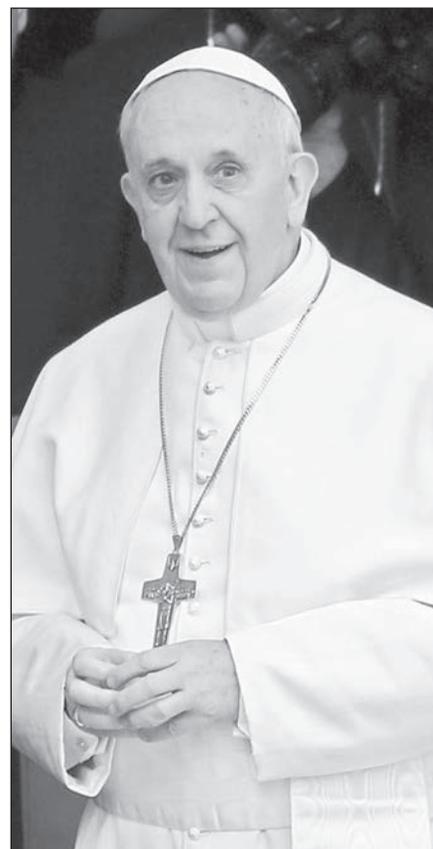
*You are not very young anymore, and you have already done many things. What more do you want to do in your life to make the world more beautiful and fair?*

*- from Hannes & Lidewij, Netherlands*

Dear Hannes and Lidewij,

There are so many things I would like to do. I would like to smile always – smile at God first of all to thank him for all the good he does for people. I would like to thank God for his patience. Have you ever thought about how much patience God has? God is very patient. God waits and waits for us.

I want to help the people who suffer. I would like to make sure that there are no more injustices or at least that there are not so many of them. I want to help children get to know Jesus. I wish there were no longer any slaves in the world. There are still many slaves in this world – so many. I desire to do all this, but I am old and I have very little thread left in the spool so... God will tell...



*Dear Pope Francis,*

*When you were a child, did you like dancing?*

*- from Prajla, Albania*

Very much, dear Prajla,

Really a lot! I enjoyed being with other children, playing Ring around the Rosie, but also dancing our traditional dances from Argentina. I really had so much fun! Then, as a young man, I liked to dance the tango. I really like the tango. You know, dancing expresses joy and happiness. When you are sad, you can't dance. Usually, young people have one great resource: being happy. And for this reason, when you are young, you dance and express the joy in your heart.

Even the great King David danced. He made Jerusalem the Holy City and brought the Ark of the Covenant there in a solemn procession. And King David began to dance in front of the Ark. He didn't worry about formality. He forgot to behave as a king, and he began to dance like a little child! But when his wife, Michal, saw him jumping and dancing, she criticized David and scorned him in her heart. She was sick with too much seriousness, what I call the "Michal Syndrome." People who can't express joy are always serious. Dance now, children, so you won't be too serious when you grow up!

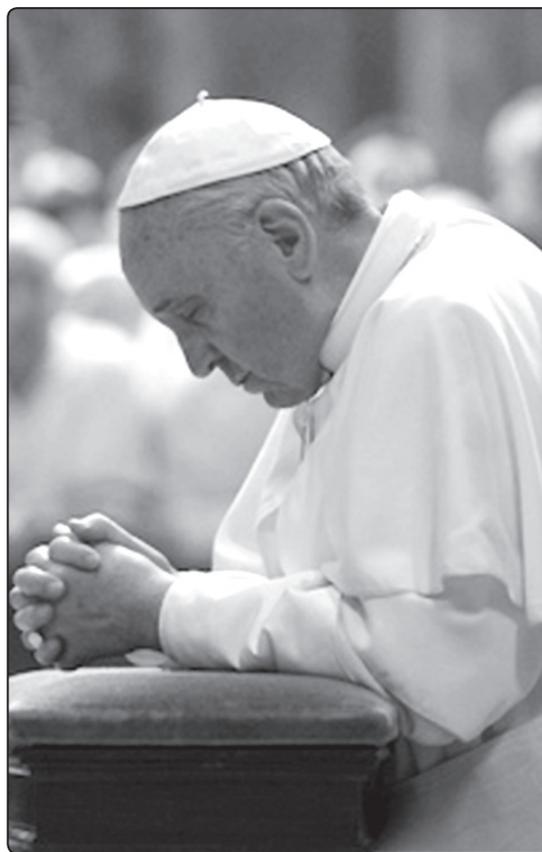
*Dear Pope Francis,*

*Where is your favourite place to pray, and why?*

*- from Josephine, United Kingdom*

Dear Josephine,

You know, I like to pray everywhere. I can even pray at my desk or in my armchair in the living room. Many times in the evening I'm tired, so I don't go down to the chapel but stay in my room and pray. I love to be in church in front of the Most Blessed Sacrament. I do that often. I very much like to go there and sit in silence before God. But I can also pray while walking, or even when I go to the dentist. I find God everywhere.



*Dear Pope Francis,*

*What makes you happy in your work as pope?*

*- from Judith, Belgium*

Dear Judith,

It makes me happy to be with people. That is what makes me happy. If I cannot be with people, I spend time with Jesus and talk to him about people. I can't imagine myself alone. Judith, I like you drawing. I think of myself as you have drawn me: hand in hand with you and your friends. Being together with others brings me joy. And as the pope, I think I ought to be with people.



# When life throws lemons at you...

BY SUMIT D'SOUZA, SJ



I had not expected much from working in a hospital. Little did I know that I would learn something very profound in a place which fixed human bodies. It was here that I encountered the strength of the human spirit.

It was my turn in the 'D' Ward of the hospital. I was secretly hoping that this day would never come. My two companions who were with me had rechristened this ward as 'Danger Ward' as it hosted all the serious cases. I gingerly walked towards the ward office, a small room which just about fitted the ten young nurses who gave me a very pleasant smile. Disarmed, I completely forgot all about the 'Danger'. This seemed more like a 'Divine Ward'. My companions had deceived me I thought. I put on my face mask and played second fiddle to a nurse who guided me in all the routine works of bed making and assisting in preparing the injections, etc.

It was then that the horror began to sink in. I was seeing ghastly

sights everywhere; gangrene, burn patients, suicide cases. With every passing room the scenes were getting scarier. I decided to escape quietly. I stood for a minute in the long corridor filled with visiting relatives of the patients, trying to make sense of the situation. Everything around me was moving at a frantic speed. Visitors walked in and out of the rooms, nurses bustled around with the medicines, random screeches and shouts. Where was I? What did I get into?

The last room at the end of the corridor caught my eye. It was silent. I hurriedly made my way to it hoping to escape the horrors that surrounded me. This room had only two beds. On one of them was Ramesh, around 25 years old, smiling away blissfully looking at me. I greeted him. He smiled more radiantly. He mistook me for a doctor and asked, "How much longer do I have to be here?" He spoke a local dialect of Marathi which was difficult for me to follow. A lady's voice emanated from the background, "Why are you worrying doctor sahib?" I turned and noticed an elderly woman entering the room with a plastic bag full of medicines. She said, "My son has been here for the past 3 months since having fallen from the tree..." she trailed off into muttering something indistinctly. Must be a fracture I thought. Another

nurse came in and began preparing his bandage. She approached the bed and lifted up his blanket. Staring up at me were the largest and the ugliest bed sores I had ever seen. I almost felt like throwing up. The nurse coolly said, "Paralysis below the waist, the earlier hospital didn't treat him properly."

I waited back and spent some time with him. He kept on asking me all about my life, about God and about prayer. The accident had put a severe strain on his family's financial condition and the future was very grim for them all. On enquiring further, he very reluctantly mentioned about his wife. He had got married just three months before the accident. On hearing about his paralysis his wife went back to her maternal home and had never called him since or even visited him in the hospital. All he had now was his old mother. I could sense a feeling of betrayal and helplessness in his voice. I was too stunned to say anything. Lost in thought, I asked his leave. The smile never left his face. How could someone smile when they have lost all in life? I rued the state of human life and the superficiality of human relationships. Perhaps he is smiling because he is too traumatized, or so I thought till I met Radhika.

Radhika, a young nurse of

not more than 25 years worked in the department of social outreach. She was very beautiful and had an infectious energy about her. She would start laughing at the drop of a hat, and would go on till somebody actually scolded her into stopping. Just before the end of the shift, the nurses of that department organized a small samosa party. We all began chitchatting and enjoying the samosas. A tall man walked in with a kettle in his hand. He had a slight limp in his gait. He was stuttering around almost like a drunk person. Another nurse mentioned, "That

*She was very beautiful and had an infectious energy about her. She would start laughing at the drop of a hat, and would go on till somebody actually scolded her into stopping.*

is Radhika's husband." I almost spit out the tea from my mouth. What a cruel way to pull someone's leg I felt! But something was amiss. No one laughed or sneered.

After the party I took my chance and hesitatingly approached Radhika and asked her what the comment was all about. Her eyes moistened, "He is my husband," she said. I looked at her pretty face dumbstruck. She began recounting her life to me interspersed with sobs and the choking of her voice.

"I married immediately after having completed school. I was only 16 then. I loved my husband very much. The first baby came along soon. While expecting my second child, disaster struck my nearly perfect life. A serious accident rendered my husband bed ridden with brain damage. I had the young baby and also my husband now to look after. I was

in a

state

of

shock and

utter despair.

All were telling

me to abandon my

husband and to

get remarried.

But I loved my

husband and

I did not get

married to him

to leave him."

I was left

completely

speechless in

front of the

love and strength of this woman.

Life was not going to be a bed

of roses however for Radhika. There

were medical bills to be paid and

there was no money for the household

expenses. "It was at this juncture

that my mother encouraged me to

study further and she volunteered

to help in looking after the children,"

said Radhika beginning now to

smile a little. "For the next one year and a half I pursued the Auxiliary Nursing Midwifery (ANM)

course. To keep the

household running

I began working as

a domestic help in

other peoples' houses.

For the entire duration

of the course and the

subsequent internship, I

followed the daily routine

of attending college

in the morning,

coming back

home to feed the

children, going

off to work again

in the afternoon

and then

coming back

in the night

to look after

my family."

Her efforts were

rewarded. Her husband

began to recover, though

his memory was affected

and he was not able to

gain complete control

over his posture. "We

have started a small

canteen where my

husband now works,

and our children are

going to an English

medium school!" said Radhika,

once again filling the room with her

laughter and energy.

Ramesh and Radhika taught me

something I didn't learn from books.

They taught me to smile at life. They

had learnt to make lemonade. ■

*Sch Sumit D'Souza, SJ (BOM), is currently doing his Juniorate Studies at Xavier Training College, Belgaum, Karnataka*

## A treasure for Jesuit Collaborators

*In Good Company*

*Information and Insights for Jesuit Collaborators*

**Hedwig Lewis SJ**

Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand / booksgsp@gmail.com / order@gspbooks.in

Pages: 60; Price: Rs. 35

A felt-need for material on Ignatian Spirituality for our collaborators has now been fulfilled. *In Good Company*, a JCSA undertaking, authored by Fr Hedwig Lewis, SJ, has been published by GSP, which has already sold more than 5,000 copies.

George Pattery SJ, POSA highlights the importance of this booklet in his foreword: "We need the compass to discover this labouring God, at work even in the darkest of realities. This tool is now made available to Jesuit family members of South Asia in a simple, attractive and easy style, through the concerted efforts of Hedwig, the author and JEPASA."

The 60-page booklet has an instant appeal for several reasons:

attractive presentation, remarkable layout on glossy paper, classy printing, eye-catching art-work and sidebars and pleasant colour-combinations. The pages are strewn with Ignatian gems: anecdotes, articles and applications.

This treasury of Ignatian spirituality is unique as it deals directly with Ignatian spirituality in a style and approach that provides – as the subtitle has it – "information and insight for Jesuit collaborators".

Each chapter is structured for information-reflection-action on topics such as AMDG, Finding God in All Things, Ecology, Magis, Discernment, Service-Leadership, Self-discipline, Examen, and Jesuit Identity, in a non-technical and user-friendly language.

It has several practical uses. The need for this kind of book was much felt and Fr Hedwig Lewis SJ was chosen as the Jesuit most competent for this task. Besides being a popular author with a row of bestsellers, Hedwig is an Ignatian scholar whose language and style make his writings accessible to all.

Our collaborators are the focus of the book. They "include people who are in one way or another, associated with the members of the Society of Jesus and their institutions: as employees, collaborators or partners, benefactors and supporters, agencies at home and abroad, as well as the beneficiaries of their services in organizations and in the field".

It is a book worth placing in the hands of every one of our collaborators, including our staff, students, alumni, parishioners, benefactors, and well-wishers.



## JRS South Asia's tribute to Fr Prem and Afghan girls

*Stepping Out of the Shadows*

**Ed. by Catarina Figueiredo & Danielle Vella**

JRS, South Asia

Pages: 55



This is a classy, well-edited booklet published by JRS South Asia. Meant to be a tribute to Fr Alexis Premkumar, who was kidnapped when he served as the Director of JRS Afghanistan, this beautiful booklet presents touching and inspiring testimonies from Afghan girls that JRS tries to educate.

In his 'Introduction' Fr Stan Fernandes, SJ, Director, JRS, South Asia says, "In Afghanistan, JRS offers education program to 7,500 children... This mission of mercy is sorely needed. Thirty long years of war and occupation have scarred every aspect of life in Afghanistan. The consequent disruption in the education of a whole generation is one of the most devastating setbacks for the country.

"Girls suffered especially as the Taliban forbade them to go to school and today they are given priority in JRS programs.

"We have decided to publish the inspiring short stories of some of them as a tribute to their passion for learning and their resolute determination to step out of the shadows. Their writings open a window onto a dark world of hopelessness and subordination, of frustration and helplessness; but they also reveal the unwavering flame of their hopes and dreams and their resistance against oppressive forces.

"In February 2015, we asked Prem Kumar, SJ, to give a message to thousands of JRS students in Afghanistan. This was a very special message, the first since the release of Fr Prem, who used to be director of JRS in Afghanistan, until he was kidnapped in Sohadat township in Herat on 2 June 2014. Those reached by JRS in Afghanistan prayed earnestly and worked tirelessly for his safe release, which came about eight months and 20 days later, in February 2015.

"It is with heartfelt gratitude and appreciation that we dedicate the stories of our motivated, dynamic and bright female students to Fr Prem for his enduring commitment to provide quality education in Afghanistan. And we cannot forget the rest of our JRS teams, Jesuits and volunteers, who pioneered, nurtured and take forward this mission of mercy; for blazing trails and breaking new ground even in challenging times of heightened insecurity.

"This collection of stories is dedicated also to the students themselves, especially girls and young women, who keep the flame of hope alive and inspire many others to follow their dreams for peace and a better future."

## ANTHONY SCERRI, SJ

(GOA) 1927 - 2016



Fr. Anthony Scerri and I are from the same town in Malta and from the same street. He was born on 06 June 1927, the third among ten children. We fondly called him Twanny. We were all members of a lay association called 'The Catholic Action.' We used to hear a lot about this mission and we all were very enthusiastic to join the Jesuits and come to the Jesuit mission among the Santals.

Twanny joined the Jesuit Novitiate at Loyola House, Naxxar Malta on 12 Sept 1946. The good example of Anthony inspired six of his younger brothers to join the Society. The Holy Father honoured Twanny's mother for offering 7 of her children to serve the Lord in His vineyard with the 'Bene Merenti' medal. Twanny landed at Kolkata in December 1950. He was first sent to Ranchi to learn Hindi and after his formation at DNC, Pune and Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, St. Xavier's School, Kolkata. He was ordained at the Cathedral of the Most Holy Rosary, Kolkata on 21 March 1959.

The new priest spent three years teaching at St. John Berchmans' Middle school, Mundli. He was also looking after the hostel. Acknowledging his enthusiasm and effectiveness of his teaching, his Superior sent him to Fordham University, New York where he secured a Master's Degree in Education. He made his last vows on 02 Feb 1964. He was teacher or headmaster at Tinpahar, and at Guhijajori.

After his retirement, he was called to be a the Dean of the Juniorate at Sitagarha for two years. He wanted to be fully involved in pastoral ministry. He was Administrator and Co-Pastor at Mariampahar, then at Majlispur. His missionary zeal urged him to start a new mission at Nichamari. As eventually his age started taking its toll on him, he was sent to St. Xavier's school, Sahibganj where he started teaching again. He was also a very good fund raiser.

Fr. Scerri was a very generous person. He always helped those in need. He had a very cheerful character. He had a very peaceful and painless crossing over to meet His Master.

- Joseph Gauci Sacco, SJ

## DENIS COELHO, SJ

(KAR) 1926 - 2016



Born: 29-01-1926;  
Entered SJ: 24-06-1946;  
Ordained: 19-03-1958;  
Professed: 15-08-1963;  
Died: 11-02-2016.

On 29 Jan '16, Fr Denis Coelho celebrated his 90th birthday. A good number of his near and dear ones were present, grateful to God for the rich long life. He had returned from St Philomena's Hospital just a few days before, having had his left foot amputated, so as to prevent it from gangrenous infection. He carried with him these feelings of joy and thanksgiving as he left for the hospital again on 08 Feb and on 11 Feb, feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, he commended his spirit to the Lord. To those who knew him, Denis was conscious of having lived a full life of holiness - in fidelity to his religious life, his priestly calling and his zealous spiritual ministry.

Born in Mangalore in the devout Coelho family, and brought up in the vicinity of St Aloysius College, Denis had imbibed from his childhood a fascination for spiritual things and the Society of Jesus - a fascination he shared with his brothers Stany and John who both became Jesuits. and led the way for Denis to join the Society of Jesus. Denis joined the novitiate in Christ Hall Calicut in 1946, was ordained a priest in 1958, and made his final profession on 15 Aug 1963. But he had already been appointed Rector of Mount St Joseph even before he pronounced his last vows. Later the Province placed him in new and challenging ministries - such as CSU Chaplain in Mysore, Asst. Director of Dhayanashrama in Bangalore, Principal, later Rector, of St Joseph's Indian High School, Principal of St Joseph's Boys High School, Minister of St Joseph's College, Teacher in St Joseph's Hassan, Librarian and Spiritual Father in Satya Nilayam, Chennai, Teacher in St Paul's Institute in Kohima, Missionary in Chittapur in Gulbarga Diocese, Chaplain in Lourdes Hospital, Dharwad.

Wherever he went and whatever he did, Denis came across to people as a deeply spiritual man, a warm and affectionate friend, an understanding spiritual director, and a compassionate confessor.

- Pradeep Sequeira, SJ

## PAUL VALIAKANDATHIL, SJ

(KER) 1938 - 2016

Fr Paul Valiakandathil went for his heavenly reward at the early hours of 14 Feb '16 at the Nirmala Hospital, Kozhikode. after nearly 78 years of life, rich in blessings and intense in sufferings.



Fr Paul had lost almost all his memory for the last few years. We, sometimes, become romantic about forgetfulness. We make remarks like, 'if you cannot forget, you cannot live.' Nietzsche is said to have remarked that 'forgetfulness makes us enjoy good things many times'. Kahlil Gibran said, 'forgetfulness is another dimension of freedom'.

But for Fr Paul his loss of memory was a real punishment. For a man who loved books, for whom reading, reflection and writing made the core of his living, loss of memory of words, of language, meant the loss of the riches of a lifetime of search. His own achievements were all forgotten by Fr. Paul, and in the last few years of his life he lived a life of 'no memory', even of his own name. He stood in front of the body of his deceased mother with no idea of who it was.

Through his life as a lecturer at St Xavier's College, Thumba, the State chaplain of the AICUF, the Founder Director of the Fides Centre, Consultor to the Provincial of Kerala Jesuits, Province Coordinator for Formation, and Superior and Training-in-Charge of the Indian Social Institute, Bangalore, he made a rich contribution to humanity.

Perhaps the most notable and challenging contribution from him was during the 1980s, in the thick of the fisher people's struggle. He was in the forefront of the agitation, going for a week or more of fasting in front of the Government Secretariat demanding justice for the fisher people. As the editor of *Theera Sabdam*, a journal of the fishing community, he contributed substantially to the development of critical thinking and awakening among the most marginalized. As Msgr. James Culas shared at the funeral service, Fr. Paul's service to the Archdiocese of Trivandrum, in its efforts for renewal, is remembered gratefully by the diocese.

- M.K. George, SJ

## ROMAN BRONISLAUS LEWICKI, SJ

(PAT) 1933 - 2016



Born: 20.06.1933. Entered the SJ: 01.09.1952. Ordained: 19.03.1965. Final Vows: 02.02.1970. Teacher, St. Xavier's, Delhi: 1967-68. Spiritual Father & Teacher, XTTI, Patna: 1968-74. Spiritual Father & Director of Midi-Sadhana, De Nobili, Pune: 1974-81. Spiritual Father & Teacher (Church History), Vidyajyoti, Delhi: 1981-92. Spiritual Father & Teacher, XTTI, Patna: 1992-2011. Spiritual Father, XTTI, Patna: 2011- 2016

Fr Roman Lewicki was a gem of a person and a valiant soldier of Christ. He was loving, gentle, kind-hearted, cheerful and full of hope. He encountered physical and spiritual difficulties with faith and courage and helped others to do so. In his childhood his right hand withered due to polio. The debility meant near impossibility of a religious and priestly vocation. But Roman Jr. encountered it with stoic courage and determination. He wanted to be a Jesuit and a missionary in India. His request for exemption from established norms meant a huge effort and several intercessions from various quarters. His prayer was heard, he joined the Jesuit Novitiate, Milford, Ohio in 1952 and came to India after Philosophy, in 1959. Over the years he had many other ailments which necessitated many surgeries. 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going.' Fr. Roman emerged from each surgery and physical ailment as a more loving and cheerful person.

Just as he encountered the physical challenges, with faith and courage he encountered the spiritual ones too: When he was given an assignment which was not to his liking, he wrote to the Provincial, "I feel that though I might want to pack up and pitch my tent in another place ..., I obey that the Lord might work something in me through this. Perhaps this will make me a better instrument in the Lord's hands, and I want that more than anything in the world. I want to be 'pure instrument': that He may flow through me with all the purity of His Being." Of course, Fr. Roman took up the new assignment and fulfilled it with all his heart and soul. It is this clarity, honesty and courage to encounter his own inner self that enabled him to understand the inner world of others. For nearly five decades (1968-2016) Fr Roman was engaged in the ministry of spiritual guidance. On the occasion of his golden jubilee in 2002, Fr General wrote to him, "The hundreds that you have directed have undoubtedly touched the lives of thousands." He guided innumerable young Jesuit scholastics, priests and religious of several dioceses and congregations as well as some lay people.

While arranging his bed in the early hours of the morning on 15 Feb '16, Fr Roman slipped and fell in his room, which resulted in a fracture on his left upper arm. Since his sugar and BP remained high, an operation on the fractured arm was delayed by a few days and it was done on 20 Feb '16. But the Lord called His 'pure instrument' for Eternal Reward at 10.40 pm on 25 Feb '16.

Fr Roman, your life as a dedicated and cheerful Jesuit priest is a rich legacy you are leaving behind as you take leave of us. You loved all of us on this earth; now, that you are united with the Lord in Eternal Glory, pray that we may live and carry forward your legacy.

- Susai Raj, SJ

## SEBASTIAN FERNANDES, SJ

(KAR) 1948 - 2016



Born: 11-03-1948. Entered SJ: 15-06-1965. Ordained: 11-05-1978. Professed: 03-12-1983; Died: 10-02-2016.

Fr Sebastian Fernandes is remembered as a warm, dedicated, friendly, affectionate and human person who was in touch with everyone and everything. It is not easy to say goodbye to him, a great human person and wonderful companion, a friend, priest and a Jesuit

Fr. Sebastian Fernandes, affectionately called Bosthu, was born on 11 March 1948 at Loretto near Bantwal, Mangalore. He was pretty young in the Society when he lost his parents. Bostu joined the Society of Jesus on 15 June 1965. He did his agricultural studies at Hebbal after his Juniorate. After his ordination he went to work in Kohima from 1978-1981, taught in the Juniorate in Dindigul from 1982-1983, was Parish Priest in Anekal 1983 – 1988. Then came his long tenure as estate manager in our Coffee Estate at Gudalur, Thorapally, Ooty for 13 years. He nurtured the estate with dedication and care and he was a great host to all who visited him. He was again in Anekal for four years till 2007 as the Parish priest and mission superior. He was controller of examinations at St Joseph's College of Commerce till 2014 and finally coordinator of the Jesuit Community at St Xavier's PU College, Gulbarga till his death. This in brief is the journey of Fr. Sebastian till the cruel sickness called him to his heavenly reward. He took his sickness as the will of God and suffered calmly and patiently.

Bostu was very practical and down to earth in every situation. Wherever he went he put his studies and knowledge into practice. He was a graduate in agricultural sciences and he linked it with environment. He planted trees, grew vegetables and cultivated minor crops wherever possible. He was not afraid of hard manual work.

Fr Sebastian was a great Jesuit. For him there was no hesitation in accepting the assignment from the superior as the will of God. He went without hesitation to places he was asked to go. His life style was simple and down to earth. Though not a scholar or a great writer, he was an intellectual, well read and up to date with theology and current issues. He was a man with a vision. He always thought ahead of time. His vision for the small coffee estate made it a large, profitable one. He thought in terms of making his parish a model parish.

Above all he was an outstanding priest, and a good Jesuit dedicated to his ministry and mission. He did everything well with constant fidelity to his master. He had time to pray, meet people, do his work. He was invited to preach at weddings, Jubilees and funerals. He did his work with care and affection. He was a man of God and showed it in practice. But cancer overtook him; even that he accepted with devotion and grace. There was pain but he never showed it at any time. The medical officials and the Jesuits were edified by his exemplary behavior in sickness. Rosary and crucifix were his constant support during his painful last days. He died with a smile on his lips.

- Eugene Lobo, SJ

## Timely and helpful

Your editorial in the March issue of *Jivan* on the Sacrament of Reconciliation was a timely one for the season of Lent. The language was different from the usual; things became clear at the end: you had retold in your own way what Pope Francis had told the missionaries of mercy

The comprehensive interview with the Pope in the same issue clarified the mind of the Pope on the various pressing topics of discussion in the church and in society today.

Along the side of the picture of the Pope who stands for universal love, openness to various opinions, you have placed a photo of someone who is just the opposite, judging from media reports!

The lead article on 'The Hunger for Depth' by Paul D'Souza SJ is very timely and helpful for Jesuits looking forward to GC 36.

- Mani Nedumattam, SJ  
Jaipur, Rajasthan - 302 021

## Lack of real love

Your editorial in the Feb '16 issue of *Jivan*, laments the fact that there seems to be a lack of real love in the lives of many Jesuits today, and that this probably explains their lacklustre lives. One of the reasons for this state of affairs is that, in their spirituality nowadays, too much importance is given to the 'karma marg' (path of works) alone, of endless and restless activism. If only they gave equal importance to the 'jnana marg' (path of knowledge or meditation) and, particularly, the 'bhakti marg' (path of devotion), like the Spiritual Exercises and the early Jesuits, or even like Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Fr Pedro Arrupe and Pope Francis, they would surely fall in love, once again, with the Lord Jesus Christ, His values, His Kingdom, His Church, His Real Presence and His saints, and, as a consequence, live lives filled with love, enthusiasm, Spirit, joy and inspiration.

- Joseph M. Dias, SJ  
Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400 093

## Recruitment & love for the Society

Jimmy Dhobi in his article, 'The joy of my mission' in the March '16 issue of *Jivan* mentions many things that are relevant. Formation in the Society of Jesus cannot change but can only influence the values of life inculcated at home. This is the problem we are facing in the Society with the plethora of documents, guidelines and instructions already available and the new ones that will come from GC 36. Some are being implemented while others remain unaddressed and unpracticed. Only humility, grace of God, true love and sincerity make a Jesuit priest realize that he is a sinner; he has been chosen from among men to deal gently with the wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. This is why it is most important to put recruitment in the hands of a few who truly love the Society. The one who recruits should love the Society just as a father loves his daughter. He does not hesitate to show the door to an unsuitable suitor for his loved one! He does this simply because he loves his daughter so. Think of those who refuse to sit for confessions. How were they promoted to ordination and final vows?

- Ranjit Yawu, SJ  
Sri Lanka

## CBCI Plenary Meetings

By the time the next issue of *Jivan* comes out, the 32nd CBCI General Body Meeting will be over. A lot of time and money are spent on these meetings. It is time that our bishops do a serious evaluation of these meetings. As resident bishops, they attend these meetings not in their personal capacity, but as leaders of the local church.

I have been in the pastoral ministry for almost 50 years. I have spent a substantial amount of time in six different dioceses. I do not remember any local bishop sharing with his clergy and the people and inviting their suggestions on the agenda of the CBCI Plenary Meeting he was planning to attend.

I myself have been present at one CBCI Plenary Meeting (in 1988 at Vadavathoor, Kottayam). The bishops were discussing "The Charter for Priestly Formation for India". It was a very discouraging experience.

The bishops will pardon me for saying this: many of them were not prepared for the discussion in which they were engaged. Listening to some of their questions, I wondered whether they had read the text that was given to them earlier. At one point an auxiliary bishop got up and appealed: "Bishops, let us be a little more serious, otherwise our seminarians will laugh at us." This bishop had been the rector of a major seminary.

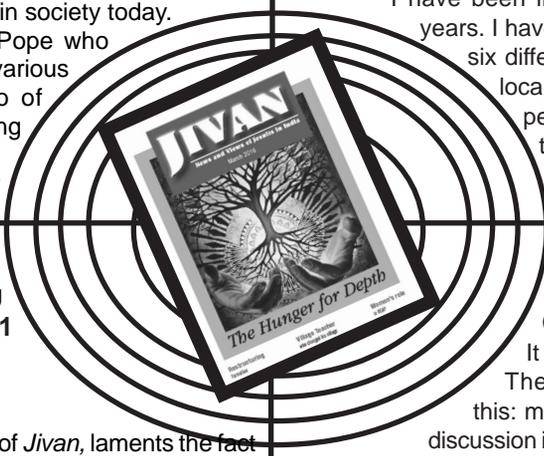
I was so put off by the discussion of the bishops that I told Archbishop Casimir Gnanadickam, SJ: "The next time you have a CBCI meeting, please organize a seminar for the bishops on the topic you plan to discuss at the meeting, so that they can discuss it with greater understanding and depth." He replied: "Subhash, the bishops who do not need that seminar will come, but the bishops who really need it, will not turn up." My own participation in two bishops-theologians colloquia confirms that observation.

Every CBCI Plenary Meeting comes out with a nice statement. In my many years in the ministry, I do not remember any bishop inviting his clergy and the people to reflect together and find ways to implement the statements. Do the bishops take the CBCI Plenary Meeting statements seriously and try their best to implement them? If this is not happening, then these meetings do not really serve any purpose. I may sound pessimistic, but let me substantiate my view.

We were informed that during the recent meeting the bishops had planned to discuss working towards 'becoming a church of the poor' among other things. Already in their meeting in 2014, the bishops said: "We want the Church to be truly a Church of the Poor." Thus the question of being the Church of the Poor has already been discussed two years earlier. I wonder what concrete action had been taken in this direction. I wonder how many of us, priests and bishops, really want to belong to the Church of the Poor.

I thank God that we have some *responsible bishops*, but we need *many more* responsible bishops. If they are not, they can be managers of institutions but not pastors of God's people. And all of us need to be *more responsible*.

- Fr Subhash Anand  
Udaipur - 313 001



# Lessons for Life

## *I've learned from Africa*

BY MARIA VALAN, SJ

“Who are at the other side of the sea?” I used to ask the elders in my village, which is located at the seaside. “There are black people whose noses are long and who eat humans alive,” they used to respond. Their response is not true. That violent story of Africa that I carried from my childhood changed into a story of love and peace when I landed in Africa two years back, in Cameroon and in Central Africa Republic. Yes, the single story turned into multiple stories. Here are some of them:

### **Cultural Openness**

Though poor, the people of Central African Republic have hearts which are rich and generous. Their generosity is shown in their hospitality towards the foreigners. Immense is their joy when they see a foreigner in their land. The children jump and dance to welcome them. And the elders welcome them with wide open arms. They never fail to learn from the other cultures. Be it dress, film, music and dance, and ideology they have a touch of many other cultures and traditions. This made me question why we Indians have a culture which is closed and reserved.

### **Women's Freedom**

Freedom of women is another thing that I very much admired in Central Africa Republic and in Cameroon. Women freely walk in the streets at any time without being harassed by men - unlike India where women feel unsafe. Here just like men women flock the bars and relax after the tiring work. At the time of marriage it is not women who give a dowry to men. It is men who do.

### **Celebration of life and death**

Without any doubt Africans are people of celebration. There is life and energy in the continent. How the colonizers and the political leaders have used this energy for their self-interest is another story. The domination of Africans in the world of sport and music bears witness to the flow of

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youthful energy in Africa. Celebration is part and parcel of their life. Little children dancing on the streets is a normal spectacle in Africa. They not only celebrate life but also death. Farewell to the departed soul lasts for three days normally, and in some cases one week. Relatives and friends visit the bereaved family and sing and dance, primarily to make the members of the family forget the loss of their dear one.

### **One with nature**

Gifted with a green environment and not being corrupted by the modern technology people in Central Africa Republic live a life that is close to nature. People in the villages do not cut the trees. They believe their ancestors live in nature. Destroying the nature is like destroying their ancestry and their past. But, alas, unscrupulous foreign traders (traffickers) come to Africa who cheat the natives into trading trees for meagre amounts of money.

### **Ubuntu**

Ubuntu is a way of life here. It means: “I am because we are”. Although the word ‘Ubuntu’ comes from southern Africa, the concept of Ubuntu is universal throughout Africa under various names. The concept is very strong in Cameroon and in Central Africa Republic. Community comes before the individual. That is why all their celebrations and activities are communitarian. In decision-making people value the words of the elders, the community leaders.

### **God is all**

Since I came to Africa I wished to meet an African who does not believe in God. But I haven't succeeded. Their faith in God is so strong that they can never deny the existence of God. In the refugee camps, when we ask how they are, even when they have not eaten well for a couple of days they always say that by the grace of God they are well. Priests and especially the Bishops are treated like kings. While the Church is so highly regarded by the people here, I wonder why the Church has not used its influence to address serious problems like corruption and tribal and political conflicts that have ravaged this continent ever since the colonizers left. ■



# GREEN COVER



## Eco-friendly innovations at Xavier Technical Institute, Sevasi

Creativity is at the root of innovation. Solutions to problems appear when someone thinks 'out of the box' to find them.

Xavier Technical Institute (XTI), Sevasi, Gujarat cooks for 200 students, pumps water and lights up the campus with solar energy. Fr Vincent Moonnu, XTI Director, manages to come up with down-to-earth eco-friendly innovations – because he cares for Mother Earth.

Turners' workshop has over 40 lathe machines. Each lathe needed twin tube lights system for safe working. So, 80 tube lights worked the whole day. Vincent cut open the slab of the ceiling, and built many water-tight, glass-covered openings for skylight. With bright sunlight 8/10 months of the year in Gujarat, the whole workshop is well-lit, without electricity!

Nearly 300 day-scholars brought lunch from home in simple plastic boxes. They wrapped the food in many plastic bags to protect their books from oily food. In spite of constant requests, plastic bags littered the campus. Fr Vincent hit on an idea: he offered to buy well-sealed tiffin boxes for all the day-scholars, and give them for 50% of the price. Now the students have better preserved and warmer food, and no more plastic bags littering the campus!

XTI has a massive water tank, 200 feet high. Water gushes out with tremendous pressure when taps are opened. Result: great wastage of water, taps break down fast. The three deep soak-pits – 20mtr. diameter & 15mtr. depth - overflowed in one or two months. Now small water tanks on the terraces of each building supply water to the buildings. With reduced pressure, the water consumption came down drastically, the taps survived much longer, the soak pits did not overflow for over a year.

The campus has a large ground for assembly. One Director tiled up the whole area - for beauty and cleanliness! Gujarat's 40-45° degree centigrade heat in summer 'fried' the kids from above and below; some even fainted. Some tiles were removed and trees planted, mostly Kadamb trees that spread branches wide, and kept leaves the whole year round. Now the assembly ground is shady, without obstructing the view; kids use the place for studying, playing, eating meals...

Students use much water to wash off the grease in workshops. It used to choke the gutter system. Now all that water is channelled to the garden, passing through a sedimentation tank to reduce the soap in it. With plenty of trees, dry leaves were often burnt, causing pollution. Now they produce excellent organic manure.

**- Rappai Poothokaren, SJ**



# MOMENTS



We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry,  
naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved  
and uncared for is the greatest poverty. *- Mother Teresa*