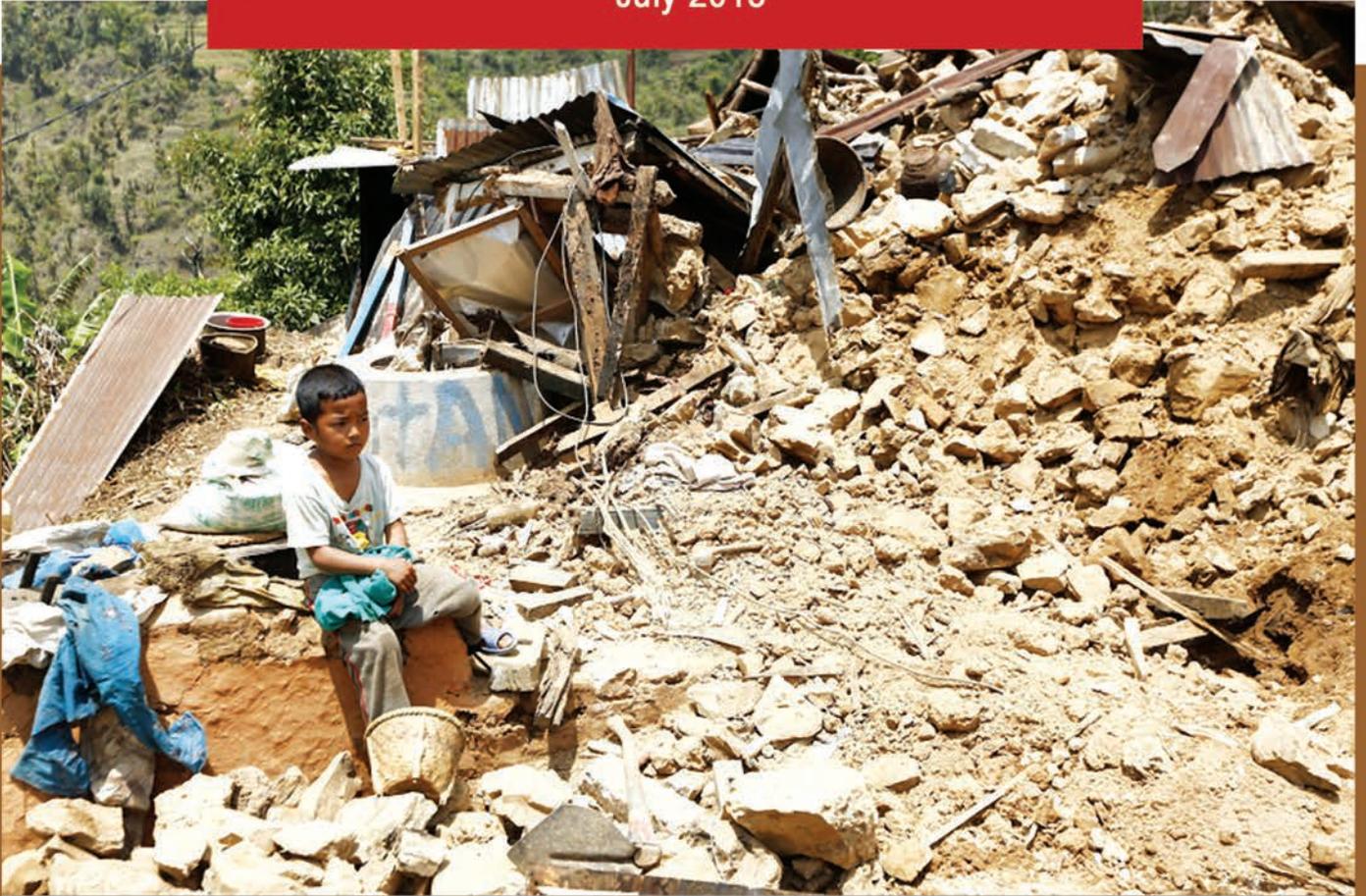


JIVAN

News and Views of Jesuits in India

July 2015



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Bl. Romero

Maier's interview

New Dawn

Kinley's poem

Laudato Si

Pope's encyclical

**"Sisters out of
safety zones"**

**"A good person
who tried to do good"**

A Jesuit smell
Hedwig's perception

Though the mountains may fall
And the hills turn to dust...
Nepal will never fade away
It is there forever to stay
Old buildings may crumble
Old men may fumble
Nepal will rise again
It will gain from the pain
Tears, pain and sorrow
Will fade with the morrow
Nepal will then remember
Heroic stories forever
The hand to a faltering brother
The tears of a father and mother
Nepal will be stronger
It has survived the disaster
Kingdoms have passed on
Sagarmatha gazes on
Nepal, lift up your eyes to the hills
A new dawn appears to banish all ills

New Dawn

BY KINLEY TSHERING, SJ



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

JULY 2015

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Dreams may come crashing down and it may appear as if there is only debris and dust everywhere - as it happened in Nepal on 25 April. But we need to "lift our eyes to the hills", as our poet Kinley Tshering says (*see the poem on p. 2*), and glimpse the new dawn.

Sometimes a picture, a single image can convey as much as a hundred words. Look at the photograph that accompanies the poem. The man - one of the thousands of Nepalis injured in the quake - has bandages on his head and hands, but his child is alright and smiling. In the midst of darkness he is gazing at and kissing his dawn.

Our Jesuit brothers in Nepal, along with their associates, are helping their Nepali brothers and sisters to lift up their eyes and look up at the future. That is what Prakash Louis, who rushed to Nepal to help coordinate the relief work, describes in the cover feature.

Dreams come true not exactly when you aspire, not even when you perspire, but at the 'appointed time.' A long time desire of mine for Jivan will hopefully be realized next month, when we start a regular column called 'Green Cover.' When you see it next month you will understand why it has been christened 'Green Cover'. In that column two of our committed environmentalists, Robert Athickal and Rappai Poothakaren, will present laudable eco-related initiatives that seek to heal and protect our planet - things we could all emulate.

This could be *Jivan's* way of applauding Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*. Luke Rodrigues, our correspondent in Rome, lists the salient points of Pope's much-awaited encyclical and indicates how we could respond to it. (*See p. 16*)

This issue carries another excellent contribution from our dynamic correspondent in the U.S. John Rose travelled to El Salvador to attend the beatification ceremony of Archbishop Oscar Romero on 23 May. He interviewed for *Jivan* a Jesuit who knows the country and its people, its rulers and its martyrs so well that he teaches a course on 'Archbishop Romero and Liberation Theology' at the Jesuit University of Central America (UCA). (*See p. 13*)

Pope Francis' decision to beatify Romero is probably one of the most significant events in this papacy. In an article in Los Angeles Times Tracy Wilkinson and Tom Kington said it "offers the most clear signal yet of the pope's determination to refocus the direction of the world's largest Christian organization." For Pope Francis Romero will be the ideal pastor - on the side of the suffering poor.

At a time when hundreds of activists who stood up for the suffering poor in El Salvador were kidnapped, tortured and killed, Romero refused to be silent and raised his voice in the name of God for the sake of God's victimized little children. Those who did not want his voice to be heard and so killed him had to find a reason to justify their crime. Like those who shouted that Jesus blasphemed and worked against Caesar, these people said Romero was a Communist. Their allies tried to block any official recognition of the people's love and devotion to Romero and they succeeded for quite some time.

Many, who, like Romero, spoke up for the poor and their rights, were harassed by the Vatican. Their Liberation Theology was accused of being Marxist by elements that exploited the poor and hated those who fought for their rights. They exploited something else - Pope John Paul's allergy to anything related to Communism, given his country's and his own sufferings caused by Communists. But it must be acknowledged that it was Pope Benedict who unblocked the cause of Romero and Pope Francis saw to it that the much-delayed recognition came about.

Francis "is saying things I've wanted my church to say for a long time," said U.S. Rep. Jim McGovern, a Democrat from Massachusetts and a Catholic who attended the Romero beatification. As a congressional staffer in the 1980s, he saw what happened in El Salvador and witnessed the myriad attempts by the conservatives within the Church and the U.S. government to vilify Romero. "I am hoping this is not just a moment in history but will last and that you are going to see a more vibrant church," he said.

So when dreams seem to crumble and darkness seems to prevail, look up at the sky and hail the breaking dawn.

- M.A.J.A



Nepal earthquake:

Accompaniment and assistance
by Nepal Jesuits

BY PRAKASH LOUIS, SJ

The devastating earthquake that shook the mountain kingdom Nepal on 25 April 2015 has left behind a trail of devastation and death. It occurred at 11.56 NST, with a magnitude of 7.8 according to the U.S. Geological Survey. The epicenter of the earthquake was located approximately 77 km northwest of Kathmandu, Nepal's capital city, and 73 km east of Pokhara, another major center. It killed over 8,346 people and injured more than 14,556. Those who are missing are many more. The quake brought down many buildings and homes and has caused massive structural changes. This was the worst natural disaster to strike Nepal after the 1934's Nepal-Bihar earthquake.

The tremors were not only felt in neighbouring Indian states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Sikkim, but also in Gujarat, Karnataka and Kerala. The intensity of the tremor was experienced in Bangladesh, southwestern China, Pakistan and Bhutan too.

Out of 75 districts of Nepal, 31 districts were affected by the tremors. Out of these, 14 districts were very badly affected. Homes completely destroyed were 1,60,786 and homes partially damaged were 1,43,673. In addition, over 14,201 offices and schools have been partially damaged. Out of 27 million people of Nepal, over 12 million have been severely affected. Sadly, around 1,26,000 pregnant women and over 2 million women and girls of reproductive age have been affected. It is feared that nearly, 40,000 women and girls may face gender-based violence.

But Nepal is springing back to normalcy. Right after the earthquake, the strong and resilient people of Nepal began to respond to the situation and engage in rescue operations along with

the government agencies and aid agencies. Not only those who were not affected but even the survivors were engaged in rescue and emergency relief. Youth clubs, women's groups, business concerns, schools and colleges, NGOs, secular and religious organizations were and even now are with the people not only through their relief response but also through their accompaniment.

But there was another powerful earthquake of 7.3 magnitude which struck Nepal on 12 May, and caused more devastation. It left the people who were returning back to normalcy panic-stricken. People who returned to their partially damaged houses were so terrified that they once again returned to make-shift tents and began to sleep there at night. Many families came down to ground floor and slept there or pitched tents at roadsides or empty spaces to be safe and secure from falling buildings.

As of today, the number of people killed in Nepal by two major earthquakes and several aftershocks has surpassed 8,786 and injured 22,303 making the disaster the deadliest to hit the Himalayan country. Over 2.8 million people need assistance of various kinds. There are over 392 camps for internally displaced people. Access remains a critical issue, especially as aftershocks continue to



generate landslides. The coming monsoon is expected to aggravate the condition of the roads, further hampering aid efforts. If aid does not reach, the people would be further forced to suffer and remain miserable.

Around, 20,000 classrooms in nearly 7,000 government schools have been either fully destroyed or have been severely damaged. Over 3 million students in 39 districts have been affected. Though teaching resumed from the end of May, due to non-clearance of debris, lack of facilities in schools, trauma suffered by students and teachers, not all the students are attending school. The government was sensitive enough to delay the reopening of the schools and postponed some exams. Now most of the teachers, students and officials are back to schools.

It is reported that every year over 12,000 big and small landslides occur in Nepal and scores of people die or are displaced. The landslide that occurred in Taplejung on 11 June night is reported to have killed more than 80 people and

injured many. It is also reported that persistent bad weather is preventing army rescuers from being able to reach the disaster scene. Taplejung escaped serious damage in the April 25 and May 12 earthquakes. Now with the landslide, thousands of people are rendered without shelter just weeks before monsoon.

the food stock available with them. Then the local administration will end relief distribution in areas served so far and move to places where people still need help towards rehabilitation.

On 13 May, the Parliament endorsed the 27 point stricture unanimously to start the reconstruction of the damaged infrastructure and

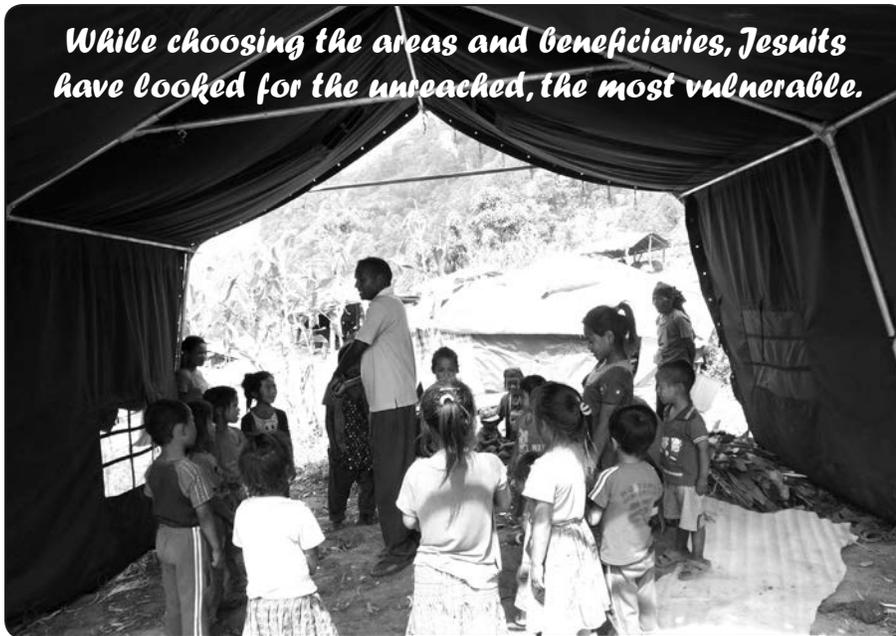
of victims and restoration of physical infrastructure. The Cabinet also decided to form a National Reconstruction Advisory Committee to undertaken all its activities. National Planning Commission (NPC), the apex body that frames country's development plans, has started conducting Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) to determine the impact of earthquake and subsequent aftershocks. The PDNA will also find out funding needs for restoration of livelihoods, and chart out plans to revive the economy and rehabilitate and reconstruct damaged houses and other infrastructure.

Individuals, NGOs, INGOs and UN Interventions

Right from 26 April, many individuals and organizations have been involved in rescue and emergency relief. Many reports of the fantastic humanitarian assistance provided by individuals have been very encouraging. Even earthquake-affected people have provided support to others who like them were affected. At times, individuals and organizations came together on their own to respond to the emerging situation. For instance, an organization called 'Nepal Relief' is a forum of individuals and organisations who have come together voluntarily to help coordinate the relief efforts. They have set up a blog as a central information portal trying to give details on the victims, their needs and who can help.

NOGs and INGOs have also played a crucial role in emergency relief and recovery. Since they are locally based and have been working on other developmental issues they have experience in coordinating relief efforts on the ground.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been successfully implementing a cluster approach to organise multiple humanitarian organizations. UN and



While choosing the areas and beneficiaries, Jesuits have looked for the unreached, the most vulnerable.

According to the government sources, the quake damage so far is estimated to be 513 billion rupees. The loss of income is around 187 billion rupees. Thus the Government of Nepal (GoN) needs over 600 billion rupees for recovery and rehabilitation. It also needs a vast amount of financial and human resources for the reconstruction of the country.

The Government's Response

The GoN had released Rs. 5.53 billion to provide relief packages in all 38 quake-hit districts. It is also reported that over 5,36,677 tents and tarpaulins have been distributed by the Government, NGOs and INGOs. As per the instructions of GoN, all the 38 districts affected by the disaster are to prepare rehabilitation plans after collecting data on the number of affected people, relief distribution and

rehabilitation of the people displaced by the tremors. Under this provision, a Parliamentary Special Disaster Monitoring Committee has been formed which will monitor the reconstruction and rehabilitation works to be carried out by the government. Considering the need for emergency safe shelters to accommodate people in the event of a major disaster, the government has come up with plans to construct a community building in each of the 240 constituencies across the country. With technical support from the District Technical Offices in each constituency and financial support from the District Natural Disaster Rescue Fund set up in each district, the government plans to build community shelters that could accommodate 150 people.

Thus, the GoN committed to the rescue, treatment, relief, rehabilitation

its partners had launched a Flash Appeal on April 29 seeking \$423 million to assist earthquake victims. International organizations continue to provide assistance to support survivors. However, aid efforts are challenged by logistical constraints, continuing aftershocks and the limited amount of funds. Yet efforts continue.

Nepal Jesuits: Accompany and Assist

Immediately after the earthquake, the Jesuits of Nepal responded in the characteristic manner of the Jesuits. They tried to understand the emerging scenario, and with commitment, mobilised personnel and resources and tried to reach the unreached. The Nepal Jesuit Society (NJS), through Jesuits, its various institutions, students, staff, alumni, friends, benefactors, collaborators and coworkers were engaged in providing emergency relief to the survivors. The NJS provided food, health and sanitary kits and other household items. At this stage, just being with the affected people was the main thrust.

It also constituted a Core Committee. It communicated to all stakeholders informing them of the developments and seeking assistance to carry out the relief work. NJS set up an information desk to keep the communication channel open and solidarity and support in terms of volunteers, finance, prayers, and suggestions poured in. As days moved on and more support was enlisted, the families were supplied beaten rice, instant noodles, dry snacks, soap, detergent soap, sanitary pads, water purifier, masks and gloves.

Later three major areas of interventions were identified: a) providing food materials; b) providing temporary shelter with tarpaulin and tents; c) Seeking government's permission for carrying out these activities. Each of the Jesuit institutions

took up different places and responded well, keeping the focus on reaching the unreached.

Nepal Jesuit Society arranged a helicopter and took relief materials to Tipling of Dhading district, where almost all of the 500 houses were fully or partially destroyed. The house where the Jesuits were staying also collapsed. This is one of the most difficult terrains in Nepal. The GoN sent army units to help. The Jesuits, in collaboration with the army, have managed to take relief materials to this location and are trying to respond to the people's needs as much as possible.

NJS considered it essential to have a national institute. Hence it established the Nepal Jesuit Social Institute (NJSI) on 19 May as a national institute to

staff members have been recruited to carry out the work. Vehicles, furniture and other accessories also have been procured to ensure that the response of NJSI goes on uninterrupted.

As on 12 June, NJSI, through its volunteers, students, staff, collaborators and coworkers have provided food and household items to over 6,000 families in 40 villages in 9 affected districts. These districts are: Dhading, Kavre, Sindhupalchowk, Gorkha, Nuwakote, Dolkha, Lalitpur, Kathmandu, and Okhaldhunga. The Jesuits, their students and staff cleared debris in 10 villages, conducted medical camps in collaboration with mobile clinics of NJS and Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) in 20 villages. NJSI also provided psycho-social care to children,



The next phase has been envisaged as Rehabilitation Phase which would commence after August.

respond to the needs of the survivors. The objective of this institute is to accompany and assist the survivors of earthquake as they are making lots of efforts to return to a normal life. In due course of time, NJSI will be registered as an NGO to carry out developmental and social work in the country.

With the establishment of NJSI, the Jesuits of Nepal are able to organize their response to the calamity in a more professional manner. Along with three full time Jesuits to respond to the needs of the survivors, five

students, teachers, staff and many others. It has also, with the assistance of the volunteers and staff, conducted assessments in over 30 villages.

NJSI's Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Plan

Based on the emerging situation in the post earthquake phase, assessment done by NJSI, information gathered from various Government officials and Departments and survivors, volunteers, NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies, NJSI has planned to respond through the following sectors: a) Food

“I have no one left in the world”

Many reports have highlighted the manner in which people have been making massive efforts to resume life after the devastation. One such story was about an elderly woman who was all alone by herself. The caption was something like this, ‘Dhan ka Garib, Man ka Dhani’, that is, ‘Materially poor but rich in generosity’.

This story was reported in *Nepali Times* (15-21 May, ‘15). “Ten days after the earthquake, my colleagues and I headed to parts of Rasuwa, Makwanpur and Nuwakot that hadn’t received any relief at that time. We went there as both journalists and relief workers, carrying supplies bought with funds collected from friends and families.

“As our car drove into Gerku village of Nuwakot in the mid-afternoon on 6 May, we saw an elderly woman. “I have no one left in the world,” she said, her face at the window of the car. Although our initial plan was to eat first, and then begin distributing the supplies we had brought, our hunger subsided after seeing her. Handing her a packet of instant noodles and two packs of biscuits, I told her: “Eat these for now, we will come back to you later.”

“Why are you giving me so much, please give these to others,” she said and returned the biscuits. When our driver Sanu Kancha Tamang tried to give her money, the woman initially refused to accept saying, “Why do you have to give me money when I don’t even have a purse?” She later accepted the money, tucking the notes inside her patuk.

Kits, b) Non-Food Kits, c) Livelihood Options, d) Temporary and Permanent Shelter, e) Educational Interventions, f) Health and Psychosocial Care. Though these are the sectors identified for interventions by NJSI, as the situation keeps changing and altering, NJSI is open and willing to explore in collaboration with the survivors, Government and Humanitarian Aid Agencies, collaborators and coworkers to change and adapt its responses for long term reconstruction of the lives and dignity of the affected people.

While choosing the areas and beneficiaries, Jesuits have looked for the unreached, the most vulnerable, chosen places where was already a Jesuit presence or contacts, works that could be completed satisfactorily and for which they could mobilise sufficient human and financial resources. While the emergency relief phase is over, we are moving towards the recovery phase and planning for the rehabilitation works.

In all that we do, we have been governed by some guiding principles,

(See box on p .8): 1) Respect the dignity and rights of the people. 2) Listen to the local people and include them in the planning. Mobilise the local community for greater participation of people; 3) Reach the most vulnerable and excluded; 4) Invest in livelihood and infrastructure, resulting in reconstruction; 5) Let the resources remain within the village as much as possible; 6) Involve the local experts and experienced people; 7) Rope in alumni, parents and well wishers in various interventions; 8) Ensure coordination, synergy, accountability; and 9) Follow our *modus operandi* to ensure long term, and wider impact.

NJSI made every effort to attend the cluster meetings coordinated by the UN agencies. NJS also participated in the Caritas Nepal and *Caritas Internationalis* forum meetings held in Caritas Nepal office. It also participated in the sharing and reflection meetings organized by the Bishop and the meetings of the religious of Nepal. All these have helped in sharing and gathering relevant

information, avoiding duplications and ensuring synergy.

From its interventions and from its interaction with various stakeholders, NJSI has arrived at the following plan: Phase I: Emergency Relief: first two months, that is, May and June 2015. Phase II: Early Recovery: 3 months from June to August 2015, especially to tide over the monsoon and move fast towards recovery. This phase includes repair of shelters or construction of temporary shelters, identify and start livelihood options, repairing classrooms and construction of temporary learning centres, construction of temporary



health posts etc. All these activities would be carried out by the people themselves as much as possible and where needed through 'cash for work' programs. These would ensure occupation, income, engagement and hence healing from the trauma.

Phase III has been envisaged as Rehabilitation Phase which would commence after August. In this phase, along with providing facilities for food and non-food kits construction of shelter is one of the priorities of NJSI. Another priority would be engaging in livelihood options as much as possible to ensure lives and dignity of the people, so that they are not dependent on outside assistance. Since, the Jesuits of Nepal, like the global Jesuits, are known for educational interventions one of the priorities right through would be addressing the educational needs of the students, teachers and community. This involves repair and reconstruction



of classrooms and other facilities in select schools; training and appointing supplementary teachers; summer camps for children in our institutions, etc. In addition, wherever possible, child play centres and women protection centres would be set up.

Regular monitoring and supervision would be undertaken to ensure transparent and accountable

Guiding Principles

In all their relief work Jesuits have been governed by these guiding principles: 1) Respect the dignity and rights of the people. 2) Listen to the local people and include them in the planning. Mobilise the local community for greater participation of people. 3) Reach the most vulnerable and excluded. 4) Invest in livelihood and infrastructure, resulting in reconstruction. 5) Let the resources remain within the village as much as possible. 6) Involve the local experts and experienced people; 7) Rope in alumni, parents and well-wishers for whatever they can contribute; 8) Ensure coordination, synergy, accountability; and 9) Follow our *modus operandi* to ensure long term and wider impact.

interventions so that the survivors benefit. Assessment and planning at the end of every phase has been built into the system. To ensure all these, the following operational structure has been put in place: a) Coordinator of NJSI, b) Executive Committee, c) Steering Committee, d) Core Committee and e) finally Nepal Jesuit Society which oversees and gives the direction for all the policies and programs of Jesuit response.

for responding in the post earthquake situation. Our heartfelt gratitude is extended to all the volunteers, staff, parents, alumni, collaborators cum coworkers, officials, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies, partners, donors, friends, benefactors and well wishers. It is with the solidarity, support and sustained assistance of all these individuals and institutions that the Nepal Jesuits are able to be at the side of people at this time of disaster.

Devastated but not Defeated

Disastrous events in an economically backward and politically paralyzed nation such as Nepal could feed into a chain of other disasters that the country has faced for a long time. The earthquake and the aftershocks have opened up avenues for frustration, distress migration, human trafficking, labour cost and availability, rental and property needs and costs, unplanned urbanization, increase of slums, mental and physical health needs unmet, socio-economic and political unrest among the others. But everyone is working overtime for the reconstruction of Nepal since the motto is "Let us convert this crisis into opportunity". After the massive earthquake it is in this frontier ministry the Jesuits of Nepal and others associated with them are engaged meaningfully, professionally and spiritually. ■

Fr Prakash Louis, SJ (PAT) is at present in Nepal helping the local Jesuits coordinate the relief and rehabilitation work. He can be contacted at: prakashlouis2010@gmail.com

NJSI and NJS are very grateful to everyone who have accompanied us in various ways in our efforts to respond to the needs of the survivors. We are grateful to the people of Nepal who have given us an opportunity to accompany and assist them in their emergency relief and long term rehabilitation. We thank the Government of Nepal for giving us the necessary permission

Southern POP

Years back they met in Vidyaniketan, Trivandrum, as starry-eyed Juniors. Now many years later, ready to be ordained priests, they met again on 24 June in the facility run by the Nirmala Sisters in Araku Valley, Andhra Pradesh for the South Indian Pre-Ordination Programme (POP) 2015. Most participants were companions either in the Juniorate or Philosophates and it was a great opportunity to get together as theologians on the road to ordination to ministerial priesthood.

27 scholastics from Andhra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala and Madurai provinces gathered to retrace individually and together their pilgrimage in the Society. In particular the aim was to relive their call to the priesthood and to personal intimacy with our Lord and consolidate apostolic zeal. The programme began on 17



April with an exhortation by Archbishop Prakash Mallavarapu, followed by the Eucharist celebrated by him. In his exhortation he humbly shared his experiences - encounters of all kinds. He talked of his own vulnerability and acknowledged the struggles of modern priests. Fr Devadoss Mudiappasamy, (MDU), introduced us to the expectations of Pedro Arrupe when he first thought of a special period dedicated to reflection on Jesuit priesthood preceding the ordination of our men. It was interspersed with a video-recorded faith-journey of many Jesuit stalwarts. Fr S Tony Raj (JAM) facilitated the discussions on psychosexual and spiritual integration for three days. Then there were the sessions on 'Heroic Leadership' by Fr Casmir Raj (MDU) and 'Jesuit Priest Today' by Fr Santiago (AND).

Fr John Bosco (AND) initiated us into writing the 'Intensive Journal'. It was no doubt tiring but helped us go deep into ourselves. It led us to explore the deepest caves of our sub-conscious self. Later Dr. Sreerangam and Sr. Metty (Holy Cross) gave scintillating presentations on their expectations from Jesuit priests.

The month-long experience came to a close with an Ignatian retreat guided by Fr Eugene Lobo (KAR). The entire month was garnished with a well-organised exposure visit to Adivasi hamlets, picnics to Borra Caves and Kothapalli waterfalls. All the participants owe their heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Amar, PCF (AND) who meticulously prepared the programme and Fr. I.M. Joseph (MDU), the resident animator and spiritual director of POP. Fr I.M. Joseph drew appreciation from all the participants.

The participants unequivocally expressed their admiration for the picturesque locale chosen for the programme, the long evening walks and the trekking that they enjoyed. In fact a lot happened over the long walks: scholastics became resource persons, mentors and spiritual guides to each other – after all, years of examination of consciousness, hours of spiritual direction and the number of annual retreats have helped them understand themselves.

In all, POP 2015 will remain etched in the memories of the participants for many more years to come.

- Benedict Santosh, SJ

Northern, Central, Western POP

On the evening of 23 April 22 young and vibrant scholastics from the Northern, Central and the Western zones and from ten different provinces gathered at Woodcot, Kurseong Jesuit community for the Arrupe month this year. We were warmly welcomed in our Jesuit style by the local PCF, Fr Lawrence and Br Gabriel Gurung, the minister of the house. The presence of all the resource persons for the inaugural function added beauty to the event. All of them briefed us about the importance of the Arrupe month. The house minister introduced us to the house and made us feel at home.

We had very fruitful and meaningful courses during the month. The first course on psycho-sexual-spiritual integration on 24-28 April by Fr Tony Andrade was very enlightening. He illumined our hearts and minds by leading us in to the truth of our human nature. We understood that we cannot have a healthy spirituality without the integration of sexuality.

The second course was on 29 April -5 May on Arrupe Letters by the rector of St. Joseph's school, North Point, Fr Shajumon. He dealt with the topic very meticulously by pondering over each aspect of Fr Arrupe's letters. His profound insights and reflections clubbed with his life experiences of being a Jesuit priest and former novice master re-kindled in us the fire to become Jesuit priests and to develop love for the mission and the Church.

On 5 May the local community of St Alphonsus arranged a fellowship meal for us. The community was very welcoming and



generous. 6 May was a day of recollection on Priesthood by Fr George Beck (Dumka). It helped us to rediscover our vocation to the priesthood in the Society.

On 7 -12 May Fr Geoff Meagher (Hazaribagh) conducted a much-appreciated course on the "Discernment". His cheerful presence with his vast experience of being the PCF made the course very lively. On 13 May we had "Darjeeling Darshan". The glimpses of Kanchanganga Mountains from the Tiger Hills were simply fascinating. St. Joseph's School, Darjeeling provided breakfast and lunch for us and in the evening, we were welcomed at Hyden Hall by Fr Paul D'souza. We were quite impressed by the work for the empowerment of women done at the centre.

On 14-22 May we had our Retreat guided by Fr George Beck. His simple and gracious way of giving the retreat helped us enjoy our spiritual vacation with the Lord. His simplicity and inspiring presence left a lasting mark on our hearts. We owe a lot to Fr. George for spending the whole month with us. He and Fr Geoff played a vital role as spiritual fathers for us. During the retreat Fr. Paulose Ezhakunnel also joined the team of spiritual fathers. We ended the Arrupe month on 23 May with an evaluation of the programme. We are immensely grateful to Fr. Lawrence, our spiritual fathers and all the resource persons. Big thanks to Fr. Kinley, the provincial of Darjeeling and Jesuit communities around for their generosity, hospitality and encouragement.

- Sandeep Jagtap, SJ

BY JOSEPH CHIRAPARAMBIL, SJ



My diamond jubilee as a Jesuit falls in the Year of Consecrated Life. If many Jesuits of South Asia were to write their memoirs, it will be impossible for *Jivan* to publish them. Fortunately many want to remain unknown. I decided to write briefly a few of my experiences in this column, as what I want to share is, after all, “Between Us.”

“There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune”.

I think I was led by “invisible hands” into the Society of Jesus. Novitiate gave me some grounding in the Jesuit way of life and its spirituality. Even now I am still plumbing the depths of Ignatian spirituality as it is being further developed and adapted for the needs of changing times.

While I was studying theology in England, Bishop Lester Guilly, the Jesuit bishop of Guyana, used to visit Heythrop College. He showed much interest in having Indian Jesuits working in Guyana Mission. With the approval of Fr Arrupe I was missioned to Guyana in 1967.



Since the British Province found it increasingly **difficult to** supply Jesuits for Guyana I initiated a process of getting South Asian Jesuits to serve there.



No sooner Guyana became independent in 1966 than there was fierce racial tension between the descendants of African slaves and those of indentured or bonded laborers who had come originally from India. For a couple of years I was spared of the turmoil in Guyana. I did a postgraduate degree and completed my tertianship in the USA. Living in Europe and USA changed my outlook on life.

Among my important services in Guyana are the establishing of Basic (Ecclesial) Christian communities; this resulted in Catholics experiencing a vibrant faith life. Another was introducing a course in ‘Moral and Family Life Education’ (MFLE) in secondary schools and in the teachers’



Led by invisible hands

training colleges of Guyana. A third was to establish “Guyana Human Development Centre (GHDC)”, a skill development centre for the unemployed and unemployable youths. Since the British Province found it increasingly difficult to supply Jesuits for Guyana I initiated a process of getting South Asian Jesuits to serve there. (See p. 30)

Had it not been for the help and support from many both in and outside of Guyana I would not have been able to serve so many poor people in my mission work. In the Society of Jesus, particularly after my ordination, I have experienced much freedom to take initiatives. The Society of Jesus is based on ‘trust’. You trust the Society of Jesus and the Society trusts you. I discovered the Society of Jesus, in spite of the tremendous differences in personality and background as truly a group of “Friends in the Lord”.

Jesus’ promise that those who have left everything for the sake of the Kingdom will receive a hundred fold in return has been proved amazingly true in my experience.

I cannot but thank God for so many men and women, youth and children who walked with me at every turn of my ministry. While they gave me opportunity to serve, they loved me, and sustained me with their prayers and steady support. Apart from God’s infinite mercy, I have also felt much love and compassion from many.

On returning to India after having been away for nearly 45 years, I am now able to breathe the native air and be part of the joy and pain of being an Indian. I have always felt my identity as an Indian Catholic Jesuit priest.

I believe I took the current at the right time. My ventures have been blessed by God’s mercy and his unfailing providence. Our brother Pope Francis reminds all in the Consecrated Life that they should spend this year, one, being grateful to the past traditions which founded their congregation and the marvellous things it has achieved down the centuries, two, to live the present with passion, and three, to have a great hope for the future. I pray that God should help me to do just that in this jubilee year. ■

Fr Joseph Chirapambil, SJ (KER), Spiritual Guide for Pre-Novices, resides at Christ Hall, Kozhikode, Kerala.

Roots & Wings: Colloquium on Ignatian spirituality

Our Ignatian heritage is profoundly precious to every Jesuit. So every Jesuit would, some time or other, ardently desire to be immersed in the process of rediscovering the spirit of St Ignatius and his companions and march forward today, along with the Church, to achieve the mission entrusted to us. The South Asian Assistancy has been providing in the past few years an opportunity for such a spiritual pilgrimage, a colloquium on Ignatian spirituality. The participants study the founding documents of the Society and try to grasp in depth the legacy and the heritage of Ignatius of Loyola.

This year we were 14 Jesuits from eight provinces (AND, BOM, CCU, DAJ, DUM, KER, MDU, and RAN) gathered at Dhyana Ashram, Chennai for a month, from 08 April to 12 May. It was a



deep God-experience for all of us. The depth of our experience was seen in our personal sharing we had at the end of the course.

The colloquium was a faith-strengthening and mission-challenging experience, which boosted our zeal to continue our ministry with a new vigour. For many, it helped us revisit our Jesuit-commitment in the present day situation, in the light of the rich heritage we have had down the centuries. It has deepened our Jesuit Identity and spirituality. Foundational documents like Autobiography, Spiritual Exercises, Spiritual Diary, Constitutions, and Ignatian letters came alive as we encountered them with great respect and a sense of gratitude and tried to integrate them with our actual lives. We were so inspired that many of us thought we should deepen our knowledge of the foundational documents and venture into writing ministry. It has given us a new vision.

The input sessions, carefully crafted by the organizers, were facilitated by Frs R.C. Chacko, Michael Alosanaya, Antony Samy, Tom Panikulam, Michael Amaladoss, Jossie Lobo, Jossie D'Mello, and A.J. Thamburaj. A pilgrimage organized within the Chennai city infused a sense of sacredness into the course, so as to feel blessed to work in a country that was served by eminent Jesuit stalwarts like St Francis Xavier, St John De Britto, St Antonio Criminale, Fr Robert de Nobili, Fr Beschi etc.

At the end of the programme we paid homage to the memory of Fr Donatus Jeyaraj, a great Jesuit who was to be a part of this programme, who died suddenly on 01 April.

'Roots and Wings' was efficiently overseen by Fr Jossie D'Mello, the secretary of JIGSA, and the local organisers were Frs Devadhas Muthiah, MDU spirituality co-ordinator and A.J. Thamburaj, superior, Dhyana Ashram, who did a wonderful job. We whispered a word of gratitude to all these individuals and everyone at the Jesuit Community at Dhyana Ashram, Chennai.

- I.S.F. Jeyaraj, SJ

Secondary Education Zonal Secretaries Meet

After the creation of four Zonal Secondary Education Secretariats for the South Asian Assistancy, a one-day meeting of JEA Secretary and the zonal secretaries – Fr Tommy (BOM) of Western Zone, Fr Augustine (RAN) of central Zone, Fr Sebastin James (CCU) of Northern Zone and Fr Stephen L. Pragasam (MDU) of Southern Zone - with Fr. George Pattery, the POSA was held on 26 March at the Jesuit Residence, Jor Bagh, Delhi. Since Fr. General is proposing to the entire Society to think of formation and mission at the zonal level, we have to identify a fine-tuned and customized scrutiny of the common issues, concerns and also formulate common modules to address these concerns, common formation programmes, sharing of expertise, networking programmes at various levels, zonal level school students project exchange programmes, and conducting seminars and symposia.

The second part of the zonal Secretaries meeting was coordinated by Fr Sunny Jacob, secretary of JEA. He called upon all the zonal secretaries to reflect collectively on "How can we propose values, a vision and mission that will contribute to a real change in the world? What are the programmes we can design for the ongoing formation and training of the teachers and students of Jesuit schools?" The four zonal secretaries explored



the various Ignatian legacy programmes conducted in the provinces of the Assistancy and came up with these action plans: Action Plans for the Pedagogical Renovation - Three day-Ignatian Retreats for our teachers -



Jesuit Legacy programme for the newly recruited teachers - Seminar for new Jesuit school Principals at the national and Zonal level - Ignatian Leadership training for both Jesuits as well as lay teachers - Inter province students exchange programme involving sports, cultural and educational events -A seminar on 'Minority Rights' at national or zonal level - A professional sample evaluation of our schools, one in each province by an agency called 'Adhyayan' to be funded by JEA - Giving more importance to building socially and morally responsible students in the curriculum - Sharing all the worthwhile programmes in the JEA web site - All becoming members of the 'Educate Magis' community, a platform for our worldwide network of schools.



In the concluding session, Fr. George Pattery, POSA, insisted on disseminating these reflections at the zonal level. The POSA mentioned that we the Jesuits in the Assistancy must feel as one body and be convinced that a revolutionary change is required in our schools. We need not see the business-oriented and profit-centred schools as our competitors. Let us be open to experience the immense possibilities of thinking, working and discerning together as a universal body with a universal mission, he said.

- Stephen L. Pragasam, SJ

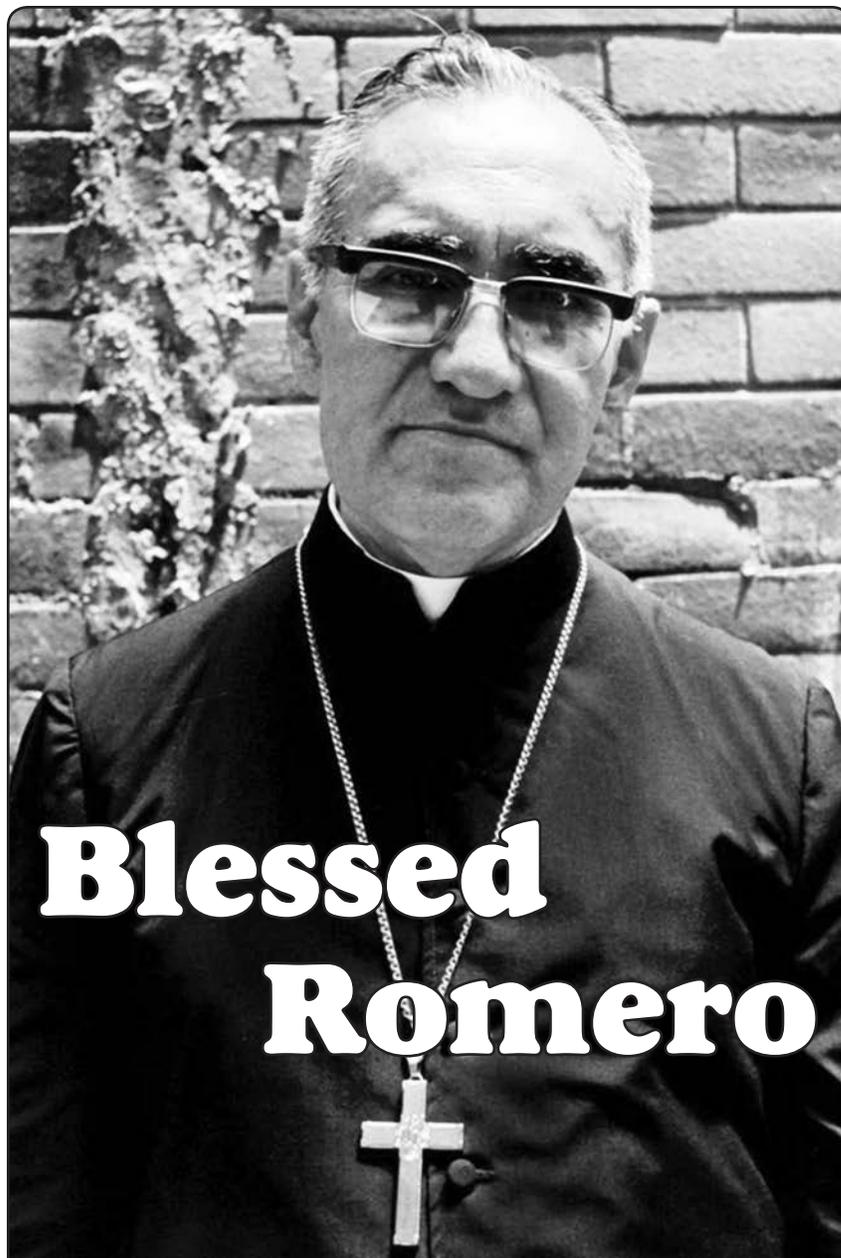
Archbishop Romero - Monseñor Oscar Arnulfo Romero Galdamez - 35 years after his assassination by a sniper from a death-squad of El Salvador's rightwing military government, supported by United States and El Salvador's oligarchs, was finally beatified, despite much opposition from high ranking conservative clerics, on 23 May 2015 in an emotional ceremony. "Romero's spirit is made alive by this great gesture of the Catholic Church and gives comfort to those who lost their loved ones during the civil war," Martin Maier, SJ told our



Jivan Correspondent, John Rose, SJ, both of whom were present at the beatification ceremony that day in San Salvador, in an exclusive interview. Maier, whose Ph D thesis was on "Theology of the Crucified People. The Liberation Theology of Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria," teaches a class on "Archbishop Romero and Liberation Theology" at the Jesuit University of Central America (UCA). He had been in El Salvador during its disastrous civil war (1980-92), and when the Jesuits were murdered in 1989, he was just a few blocks away from UCA and had the horrifying experience of seeing the bodies of his religious brothers riddled by bullets. Maier's recent book, close on the heels of the Beatification, is entitled: Oscar Romero - Prophet of a Church for the Poor.

Who killed Archbishop Romero?

Up to now we do not know who the trigger man was. In 1986, the ex-US ambassador, Robert White, reported to the United States Congress that there was enough evidence pointing to Major Roberto D'Aubuisson as the one who ordered the assassination. Also, in 2010, Alvaro Saravia, an ex-Captain admitting involvement, testified that D'Aubuisson gave instruction to proceed with the killing. A U.N. Truth Commission, after the civil war's end,



Blessed Romero

Significance of the Beatification

Interview with **Martin Maier, SJ**

named D'Aubuisson as the overall leader of the paramilitary death squads and as the mastermind behind the crime. He could not be tried in court since he died in 1991 of throat cancer at the age of 47.

But why was Romero killed?

Because, in the name of God, he challenged the powerful, particularly the military, subservient to the oligarchs. On 23 March 1980, the day before he

was killed in a hospital's chapel while presiding over the Eucharist, he had delivered a strongly worded homily to the military to stop killing innocent civilians. With power in his voice, he said: "The law of God, which says thou shalt not kill, must come before any human order to kill. It is high time you recovered your conscience. I implore you, I beg of you, I order you, in the name of God: Stop the repression!" That was it.

He was thought to be a Communist. Was he, according to you, a Communist in any sense?

It is important to know the situation in which Romero lived. A handful of families owned more than 90% of the land. When the poor peasants organized themselves to obtain their rights and a decent living, the ring leaders were abducted or killed or made to flee the country. Branded as communists, the atrocities against them were exculpated. The military junta got all the firepower necessary from the United States that was phobic about communist shadows over Central and South America. But Romero always condemned violence in the fight for justice. He may have started out, like the majority of the Salvadoran hierarchy, as a conservative, but his contact with the growing number of widows and orphans and of Salvadorans become state-less across the borders, and observation of the devastation caused in the countryside, caused in him a dramatic shift to left of centre. He asked people to pray, and joined in their prayers for peace. He was a man of God. He felt obliged to carry out the social teachings of the Church. The easiest way to get rid of him was to call him a Marxist or a Communist. It was like Jesus being thought of as working by the power of Beelzebub.

What would the Beatification of Romero now mean for the Salvadorians?

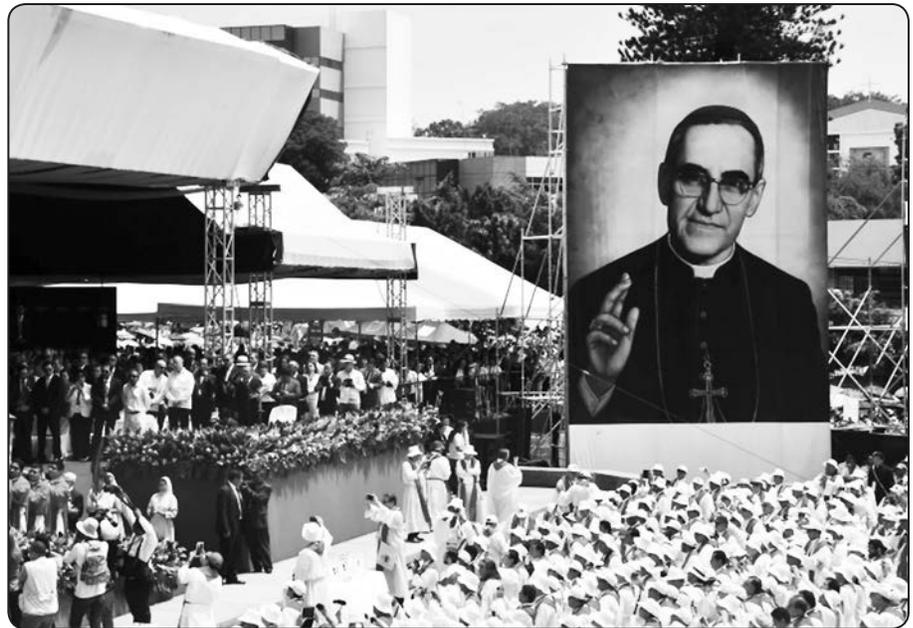
First of all, great joy and consolation. The people are still struggling to come out of poverty and this gesture of Rome

has dignified what they are fighting for. His death will now be seen as much more than merely heroic. And his speeches and writings will be the basis for the people's Charter of Rights. The tarnish on his name by the rightist military and hierarchy and US-backed business interests will be washed away. Above all, there is great hope that social, economic, and political structures in the country will improve, and the great divide between the rich and the poor will gradually diminish, though this will take time.

For the wider world it now means the proclamation of faith and the promotion of justice must go hand in hand. Romero, who did his theology at the Gregorian University, embodies Vatican II and the Latin American Bishops' 1968

expression to their real feelings. It's a little sad about the local Church. Some of its clergy feel that getting involved in social and political issues is against their vocation. As I said earlier, the poor who are still peasants are happy; the oligarchs, who celebrated his death by quaffing brimful wine glasses, are unhappy. I also would add that the Church that is by and large committed to the poor is also happy.

It was Pope Benedict XVI who unblocked the case in 2012 and it was Pope Francis who hurried it up.



Medellin Conference, events that still provide the ideals to be maintained and the impetus for direct involvement required to bring about a just society. To achieve that is impossible without an obligation for the poor.

Who is happy and who is not happy with this Beatification?

That is obvious. The majority of the Salvadorans are ecstatic. The oligarchy will be indifferent, if not gnashing their teeth. But they will not be able to give

But some priests will find Romero's name unmentionable in their parishes.

How did it take 35 long years to give him the recognition he deserved?

One is both helpless and embarrassed to go into all that. The conservative power-blocks in the corridors of the Vatican, the ones that bitterly opposed the advance of Liberation Theology in South America, put it out that Romero was not martyred for the faith but murdered for his politics. It was Pope

Benedict XVI who unblocked the case in 2012 and it was Pope Francis who hurried it up.

Do you agree that Romero had become a saint among his people much earlier?

Yes, I do.

What, according to you, are the most significant factors in Romero's theological and political development?

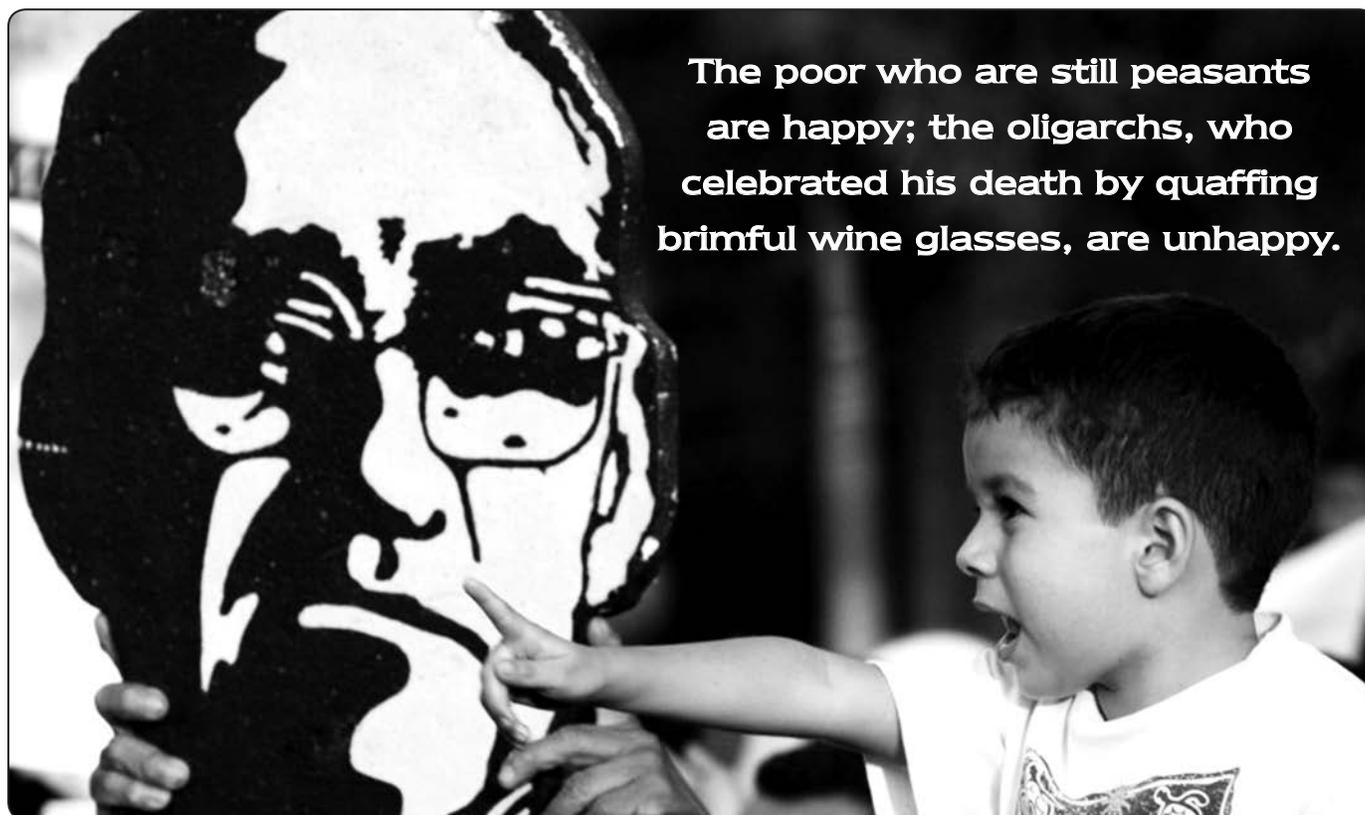
He was personally affected by Rutilio Grande Garcia, SJ who, along

of "Blessed Rutilio Grande and Five Hundred Companions," that is, to include the many clergy, religious, and laity that paid the penalty of death for siding with the poor in their struggles. I won't be surprised if this happens, and soon.

What's plaguing the country right now? How different is it from the 1970s and 1980s?

Extreme social injustice continues. The gap between the rich and poor has scarcely narrowed. What makes things

Romero was not a professional theologian, but after his dramatic transformation he chose Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino, who were major liberation theologians, as close advisers. Romero adopted the main insights of liberation theology from the Jesuits: the option for the poor as God's option, the attention to the signs of the times, faith working through the social dimensions of love. Besides, he was a man



The poor who are still peasants are happy; the oligarchs, who celebrated his death by quaffing brimful wine glasses, are unhappy.

with his friends, was ambushed by the death squad. He was also very much influenced by the Jesuit training at Gregorian University, social teachings of Vatican II and the 1979 Latin American Bishops' Conference held in Puebla.

Don't you think that Rutilio Grande should also have been considered for Beatification together with Archbishop Romero?

Yes. Even now the bishops and priests and laity are talking of terms

worse now are the gangs, originating in the United States, that operate with impunity and are aligned to drug cartels. The social realities are becoming more complex. What I gather from the newspapers is that there are at least 15 people killed in gang-related violence every day. And there is no love lost between the gangs and the police and military.

Tell us about the course you are giving at UCA: "Oscar Romero and Liberation Theology."

of deep traditional piety and he loved saying Mass for the disaffected people.

Will you teach this course or something similar in our theologates in India?

May be. It's no problem for me to teach in German or Spanish or French. I could give it a try. My main problem is time; as you would say: "I've too many tongues in the fire." I can be contacted at maier@jesc.eu ■

BY LUKE RODRIGUES, SJ

Pope Francis' eagerly awaited encyclical on Ecology is out at last.

No papal document in recent times has aroused as much excitement as this one. Months before its release, it was already the focus of much discussion in public forums within and beyond the Church.

The intended impact

Laudato Si (LS) is the first papal document devoted entirely to Ecology. It combines deep Christian reflections with insights from scientific findings. Unlike other encyclicals that are primarily addressed to bishops, LS is addressed to everybody, reflecting the Church's desire to reach out to a wider audience. In April, the Vatican hosted a summit on climate change, bringing together religious leaders and scientists. In September, Pope Francis will address the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York urging decisive action on climate change.

The Pope also wants the encyclical to influence the Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris this December. This conference of 196 nations meets every year to discuss climate change. Paris meet will be the 21st such meeting and hence the name COP21. Previous meetings have failed due to stakes in fossil fuels. The mood seems different this time with a stronger political commitment and national pledges.

*'Praised
be you,
my
Lord!'*

*Pope's much-awaited
Encyclical
on Ecology*

This could well be the moment when the world decides to end the fossil fuel era.

Pope Francis has a sense for the 'big moment' and is lending his moral authority to the climate change debate. This bold move affirms the resurgent influence of the Church as a prophetic voice today.

Important themes in LS

The social teachings of the Church have always promoted the common good, the rights of the poor and transgenerational justice. Ecology has featured in discourses of previous Popes. Pope Francis affirms the perennial value of these teachings but also breaks new ground, both in terms of emphasis and new ideas.

1. **The title:** The title itself is delightfully refreshing and situates ecology within the horizon of spirituality. Taken from the inspiring 'Canticle of the Sun', the words lift up our hearts with all of creation to praise the Creator. The invitation to care for our common home recalls our interconnectedness. St. Francis of

Assisi is the model who inspires us to integrate love for God, justice for the poor and communion with creation.

2. **Concern for the poor:** This stands out right through the document. The Pope points out that environmental degradation has a disproportionately high impact on marginalized communities. The poor benefit the least but suffer the most from the effects of modern development. The fragility of the earth reflects the fragility of the poor. Working for the environment is a work of justice.

3. **Warning:** Pope Francis is not one to sit on the fence. He plunges into the climate debate on the side of the voiceless, warning that nature is hurting and may be forced to hit back strongly. The climate crisis results from greed and so unbridled exploitation and so there is a moral imperative to act. The 'throw away culture' and excessive anthropo-centricism of today is sinful. Leaders are obliged to reduce carbon emissions and promote renewable energy.

4. **Human dignity:** LS asserts the dignity of the human person and deplors living conditions that go against this dignity. It also recognizes the intrinsic value of each creature, a value that goes beyond utility. Every creature is precious, filled with the Spirit and loved tenderly by the Father. In an unexpected but welcome move, the encyclical devotes several paragraphs to the loss of Biodiversity. This is a serious loss, not because of potential benefits of plants/animals but because every species has the right to exist and thereby give glory to God.

5. **Ecological movements:** Due recognition is given to ecological movements whose initiatives have brought ecology to our notice. Mention is made of Environmental Summits that have established milestones along our journey. In keeping with his emphasis on collegiality, the Pope quotes

frequently from various Episcopal Conferences, thereby strengthening the hand of his brother bishops.

6. **Inclusive dialogue:** In the midst of conflicting opinions surrounding this issue, the Pope calls for inclusive dialogue as the way forward. This needs to be an ongoing process resulting in a fair distribution of benefits.

7. **Spirituality:** LS establishes ecology as an integral part of spiritual life and inserts spirituality into the ecological discourse. Ecological Spirituality and Integral Ecology are phrases that will now become part of our language. We are invited to a personal and communitarian conversion, seeing creation not as a host of problems to be solved but a joyful mystery to contemplate. With grateful hearts we contemplate this gift, a gift that reveals the Trinity and draws us deeper into the Divine Mystery.

Expected Reactions:

LS is sure to cause waves all over. Given the huge popularity of Pope Francis, this document will be read by a larger than usual proportion of persons within and beyond the Church. Catholics already involved in the ministry of ecology will joyfully welcome this support to their efforts. Environmentalists of other beliefs will appreciate and use the encyclical in their work. Seminaries and spirituality centres will incorporate this document in their programmes. Some Catholic Universities are planning to make the encyclical mandatory reading.

Strong criticism has already started. One bloc of critics are politicians and academicians who deny the dangers posed by climate change. They advise the Pope to limit himself to religious/moral teachings and not venture into political/economic issues. They clearly fear the possible impact of the encyclical on a consumption-driven economy. Another group of critics

The encyclical affirms the resurgent influence of the Church as a prophetic voice today.

are those who support an exclusively anthropocentric view of Christianity and are unhappy with the new emphasis given to creation theology. They fear that conferring a spiritual status on creation could undermine the unique spiritual status of human beings.

Our response

Passit on: It is important to amplify the message of the encyclical and make it heard in the right places. Our institutions offer effective platforms to speak about ecology and its relation to faith and justice. At a time when climate change deniers are vocal in their criticism, we should raise our voices of support through articles, blogs, facebook, twitter etc.

Where ever possible, we can demand accountability from our elected representatives. Advocacy efforts from the Church, linked with efforts of other groups can lead to stronger national legislation. After all, politicians care about what is important for a sizeable number of voters. Global collaboration is also needed. We can help the Church to continue promoting conversations among nation states and environmental movements.

Stay with it: In line with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the encyclical calls us to an ecological conversion by

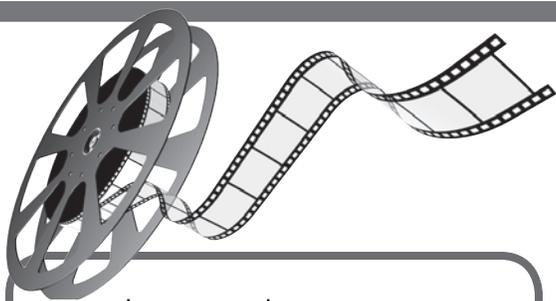


establishing right relationships with God, creation and each other. It offers rich material for prayer, reflection and action. We are invited to lead simpler, fuller lives. Along with the well known practice of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle', the concept of 'Less Things, More Links' offers exciting possibilities for our apostolates.

This is the moment for us to revisit *Healing a Broken World* published in 2011 by the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology. (Promotio Iustitiae 106, available on <http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/PJ/>). Chapters 5 and 6 offer concrete suggestions at the level of provinces, communities, apostolates and personal lifestyle. Acting on this could be a fruitful way of 'thinking with the Church'.

Finally, I draw your attention to a pledge proposed by GreenFaith, an interfaith environmental organization. The pledge is simple in its wordings and powerful in its implications. I invite you to take this pledge and live it out. It says, "I pledge to make my life a blessing for the Earth." ■

Fr Luke Rodrigues, SJ (BOM) is the Delegate of Fr General for the Christian Life Community.

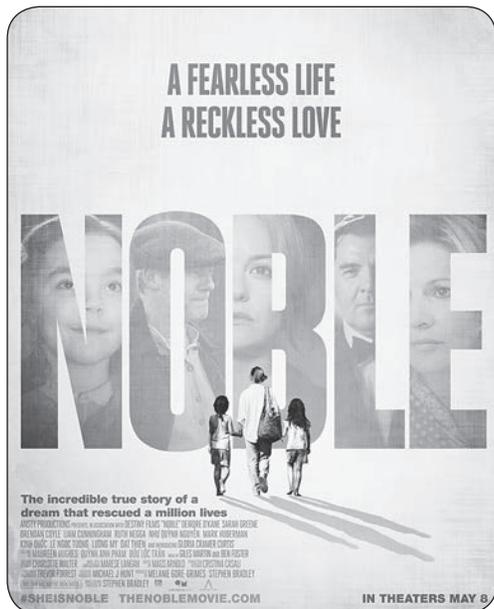


Love and courage

Noble

A film by Stephen Bradley

Starring Deirdre O’Kane, Brendan Coyle, Gloria Cramer Curtis...



The film is set in Vietnam in 1989, fourteen years after the end of the war. Christina Noble flies into Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). With a few dollars and her own hard-won courage, she embarks on a life calling. The film explores her tough upbringing in Dublin and her early adult life in the UK. It is the inspirational true story of a woman who believes that it only takes one person to make a difference. They broke everything but her spirit. They took everything but her dream. *Noble*, the award-winning feature film, is the incredible true story of a fearless Irish heroine driven by her daring vision to escape the slums of Ireland and risk everything on the streets of Vietnam. Winner of six U.S. film festival awards, the film written and directed by Stephen Bradley is heralded by critics as “raw and genuinely powerful,” “captivating” and “moving.”

The artist-activist



A huge, angry crocodile lounging in acid green water right in the middle of a busy freeway greeted startled commuters recently in Bangalore. Fed up with the civic authorities who failed to repair a pothole in the middle of the Sulthanpalya Main Road in north Bangalore, artist **Baadal Nanjundaswamy** decided that intervention of the most unusual kind was needed. Nanjundaswamy, the creator of the sculpture, turned the giant pothole into an artificial pond by planting the life sized crocodile in it. He painted the area around the crocodile green to make it look like a pond.

While Nanjundaswamy made his point, the commuters are thankful the animal isn’t real. The artist said that despite complaining for over a month, authorities showed no interest to fix the pothole. “Locals have complained to the BBMP and the BWSSB to no avail. I am hoping they will take some action now,” Nanjundaswamy said. The ‘crocodile’ measures nine feet in length and weighs up to 20 kg. It took the artist a week to make the sculpture and cost him Rs 6000.

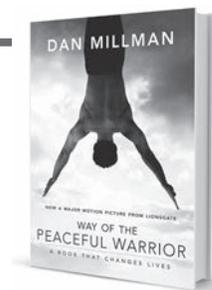
What wasn’t done in a month, was done in just a day after the artist posted the pictures of the ‘crocodile pond’ on social media. The Bangalore municipal corporation covered up the pothole after the pictures went viral.

Source: www.huffingtonpost.com

Peaceful warrior

Way of the Peaceful Warrior is based on the story of Dan Millman, a world champion athlete, who journeys into realms of romance and magic, light and darkness, body, mind, and spirit.

Guided by a powerful old warrior named Socrates and tempted by an elusive, playful woman named Joy, Dan is led toward a final confrontation that will deliver or destroy him. Readers join Dan as he learns to live as a peaceful warrior. This international bestseller conveys piercing truths and humorous wisdom, speaking directly to the universal quest for happiness.



Way of the Peaceful Warrior

By Dan Millman
Published by H J Kramer
20th Anniversary Edition
Pages: 240, Rs. 595/-

BY JOSE KAVI

“Sisters should come out of safety zones”

Interview with
Sr Jessie Kurian

Sr. Jessie Kurian is a leading human rights activist whose mission is to provide legal assistance to marginalized women in India. Kurian was the first Catholic nun in India to hold a quasi-judiciary post. A member of the St. Anne's Providence of Secunderabad, she was a member of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions and is the first member of her congregation to study law.

The educator-turned-lawyer is now based in New Delhi and practices in the Supreme Court of India. She shared with Global Sisters Report what prompted her to take up law and work for the poor.

Why did you become a lawyer?

From my childhood itself I had the desire to become a lawyer after reading about the life story of Anna Chandy, India's first woman judge. At the same time I wanted to become a nun to serve people. When I consulted my parish priest, he said no convent would admit a lawyer. She might ask too many questions. I chose to become a nun thinking that it would help me serve humanity. God so willed that after 20 years in the convent I could become a lawyer. After 30 years, I have realized a nun has a better chance than a lawyer to serve people.

Then, how did you become a lawyer finally?

As a nun, I saw common people, especially women, suffering. I was the principal in many schools and colleges in Andhra Pradesh for 10 years. I saw women suffering because of domestic violence, cruelty, the dowry system and sexual harassment.

What really compelled me to take up law were two incidents. I came across a woman lecturer who had been married to a professor for five years but had no child. While talking to me she burst into tears and told me that, on



her first day in the husband's house, the mother-in-law warned her that she would be sent to her home if her first child was a girl. The couple never tried for a child because of fear.

Second was the plight of a first-year girl student in my college. She used to be on campus at odd hours. When I enquired, she said that from the time of her birth, her father was against her mother for giving birth to her, a girl child. Everyone considered her mother a curse. Her father was angry when he saw her, his only child, in the house. He worked in a factory in shifts. The girl went home only when he was away for work. When he was at home at night, she would go to bed early.

I was shocked to learn that a woman had no right to give birth. A girl child has no right to be born. It is the birthright of any woman to give birth. The mother-in-law had no respect for her own gender. These people

suffered because they did not know their rights. So, I had to teach people their fundamental rights.

I resigned my post as a principal in 2002 and went to study law.

When did you start your practice? What was your first case?

My practice started in 2005. My first case had to do with domestic violence. A woman was burned to death by acid. Three people were arrested and convicted. They were given seven years in jail. After that case, I came to Delhi the same year.

What has been your experience as a lawyer nun?

As a child, I had thought a nun would do greater service than a lawyer, but now I realize a nun lawyer can help the exploited people much more. My clients trust me because I am a nun. I can now use legal literacy to help people claim their rights and protect them from exploitation.

Any challenges in your profession?

I mainly deal with matters related to women – domestic violence, cruelty, the dowry system. Of course, when one fights for justice or points out injustice, others may not like it. Such opposition and challenges merely make me stronger.

Why have you started an NGO? What are its activities?

My NGO, 'Citizens Rights Trust', was registered in 2011. It has Supreme Court lawyers, retired judges, social activists, law students and socially

committed persons as members. We started it to promote human rights, legal literacy, legal aid and women's empowerment. We conduct legal literacy programs in different places, especially in slum areas, all over India. We educate women, children, minorities, laborers and tribals and Dalits about their rights. We also teach them how to file an FIR [first information report, to register a case] and guide them to the right government departments to get access to solutions.

India's treatment of women has become a matter of international shame. Why do our women suffer? How could we end atrocities against women?

It is true that women in India get a second-class treatment. Women suffer because of the narrow mindset of men in India. Patriarchy and men's belief in their superiority lead to attacks on women. Even religion is no exception. Our men have developed a superior mindset and women carry a submissive or inferior mindset. To change this situation, religion, family, society and the government have to join hands.

Please elaborate.

Religion should impart gender justice and equality through religious teachings and sermons. Also it should give equal respect and an equal place for women. Women should be made administrators, leaders and decision-makers instead of being treated as a mere workforce.

Parents should treat sons and daughters equally – provide them with equal opportunities in study and other matters; instill in them respect for women from childhood itself.

Society should shed the patriarchal mindset – consider women as equal partners and collaborators.

Government should introduce topics such as gender justice and equality in the school syllabus starting

in primary school. Schools should also teach the rights of women, fundamental rights and human rights.

You have worked with the government. What was your post and what did you do?

The Indian government appointed me a member of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions. The commission is a quasi-judiciary one. My duty was to protect and enforce the educational rights of minorities in India. I am happy that I have made many minority educational institutions aware of the existence of such a commission and the procedure for obtaining a minority status certificate. For this, I had to address minority communities in many places. As a result, during my time, many Christian educational institutions could get minority status certificates, of course through legal procedure.

Looking back, I thank God for giving me such an opportunity to serve my nation.

How do you assess the Indian church's programs for women's welfare?

Well, the Indian church has miles to go when it comes to women issues. It is true the church is playing a wider role for women's empowerment. However, the church is part of the Indian society. Its members come from the same society that is shackled by traditions, cultures and customs. So we cannot expect a different mindset for the men in the church. However, we expect priests to have a wider vision on gender justice and equality.

The Church is patriarchal in structure. However the church should allow women equal participation – in parish councils, administration and decision-making. Women should be given a due place on the dais when the Church holds some functions and programs. Since God has created

men and women equal and in his own likeness and image, I cannot accept any superiority of men. Gender justice, equality and respect for women should be taught in the seminary. Human rights, fundamental rights, rights of women and other related topics should be made mandatory subjects for seminarians. I am happy that some seminaries have already started such subjects. Women professors should be introduced in seminaries in good number so that these young men will get an opportunity to know the divine beauty and worth of women.

Do you find support from your congregation for your work?

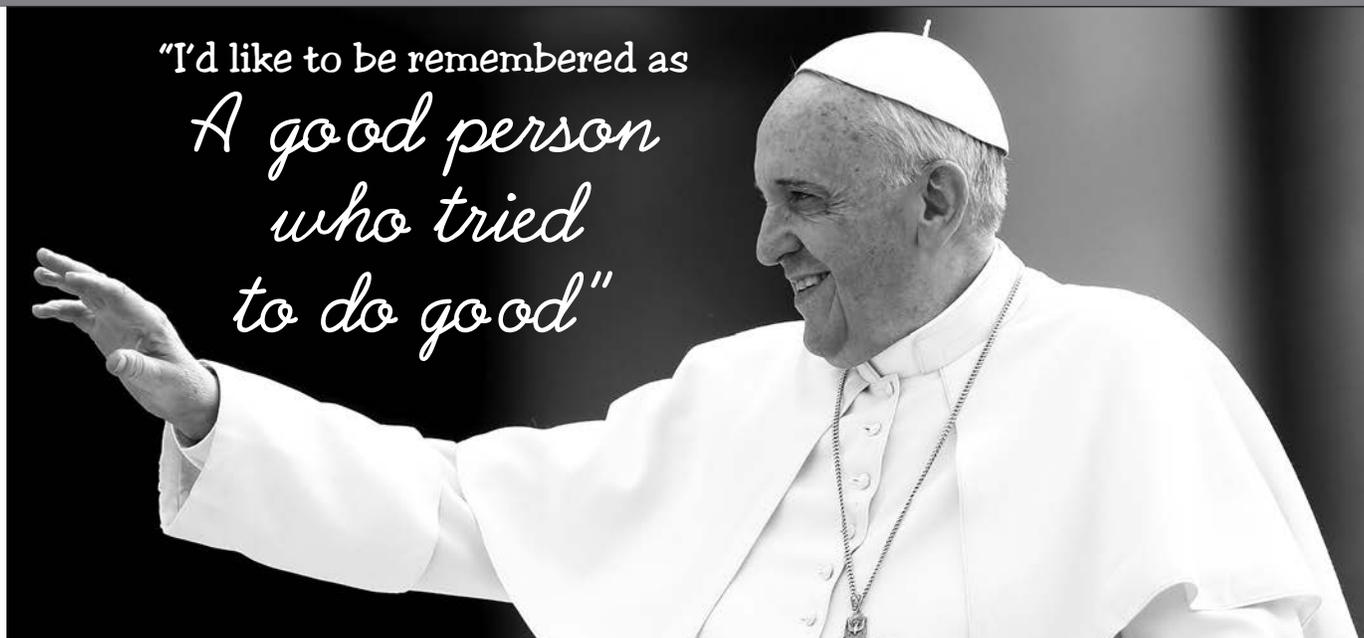
Wow! It is a substantial but a tricky question. I became a nun to serve people, especially the suffering, the poor, needy and the exploited. I want to do something different for people. I joined this congregation because my old parish priest had told me it would offer me opportunities to do social work.

I must acknowledge that I am the only nun in our congregation to enter the legal profession. However, some members in the governing body cannot fully understand why a nun should promote human rights. They think it is the work of lay persons and lawyers. I am happy our president, an Italian, is committed to the poor, and she and her team support me. Even the Indian provincial and her team are happy with my work. Hope it will continue.

Do you have any message for sisters in India?

Sisters should come out of their four walls of security and safety zones, as Pope Francis has rightly said. Then work for the poor and the exploited. Time has come where sisters have to stand up for social causes – against child marriage, trafficking, dowry system, domestic violence, exploitation, child abuse, sexual offences and displacement. ■

"I'd like to be remembered as
A good person
who tried
to do good"



Excerpts from an interview Pope Francis gave to the Argentine newspaper, La Voz de Pueblo [*The People's Voice*]. In a free, frank and forthright interview Pope answers a wide variety of questions:

Did you ever dream of being the Pope?

Never! Nor about being the president of the Republic or the General of the Army. You've seen that there are some kids who dream about that. Not I....

But you didn't fantasize about that possibility as you advanced in your service as a bishop, either?

After I was in positions of authority for 15 years, where they kept assigning me, I went back to the simple life, to being a confessor, a parish priest... The life of a religious, of a Jesuit, changes according to needs. And regarding the possibility, I was on the list of 'papabili' during the earlier conclave... But this time, because of my age, 76 years old, and because in addition there were certainly better-suited people... So nobody mentioned my name, nobody. Besides, they said that I was a 'kingmaker' (as they call cardinals who, due to their experience and authority, are more able than others to influence the electoral results). So much so, that not even one photograph of me was published in the newspapers; nobody was thinking about me. The London bookmakers ranked me in 46th place (*he laughs heartily*). I wasn't thinking about myself either; it didn't even occur to me.

Despite the fact that in 2005 you were the second most voted after Ratzinger?

Those are things people say. What's true is that at least in the other election I was in the newspapers; I appeared among the 'papabili.' Inside, it was clear that it had to be Benedict, and there was almost unanimity in his favor, and I liked that very much. His candidacy was clear, and there was no clear second-place candidate. There were several possibilities, but none was strong. That's why I came to Rome with just what I was wearing and with a ticket to go back on Saturday night so I could be in Buenos Aires on Palm Sunday. I even finished writing my homily and left it on my desk. I never thought it was going to happen.

And when you were elected, what did you feel?

Before the final election I felt great peace. "If it's what God wants..." I thought. And I stayed peaceful. While they were counting the votes, which takes forever, I prayed the rosary, unworried. My friend Cardinal Claudio Hummes was at my side. In a vote prior to the definitive one he said to me, "Don't worry, eh. This is how the Holy Spirit works..." (*he laughs again*).

And you accepted immediately?

They took me to the Sacristy, they changed my cassock, and game on! And there, I said what came to me naturally.

So then, it was something natural.

Yes, I felt full of peace and I said what came from my heart.

Do you recognize the magnetism people experience towards you? I say this because of the "plus" your personality gives to the papal institution.

And, yes... I know that people... (*he pauses*) First, I didn't understand why that happened. And some cardinals tell me that the people say, "We understand him." Of course, I try to communicate clearly in my audiences, in the things that I say, like today (at the public Wednesday audience) when I told a story about when I was in fourth grade. That is when the people understand what I want to say. Like when I talked about the case of parents who are separated, who use their children like hostages; it's very sad, they turn them into victims. The father speaks badly about the mother, or the

other way around, and the poor child ends up lost and confused in his head. I try to be concrete, and that is what you call magnetism; certain cardinals tell me that it is related to the fact that the people understand me.

Do you enjoy public audiences?

Yes, I enjoy them humanly and spiritually, both ways. Being with people is good for me, it gives me “good vibes,” as they say. It’s like my life gets involved with the people. I, psychologically, can’t live without people; I could never be a monk, that’s why I stayed here to live in this house (in the Santa Maria residence). This is a guest house. There are 210 rooms; 40 of us who work in the Holy See live here and others are guests, bishops, priests, lay people, who stay here while passing through. And that does me a lot of good. Coming here, eating in the dining room, where all the people are, celebrating that Mass when people come from outside, from parishes, four days a week... I like that very much. And I became a priest to be with the people. I give thanks to God that I haven’t lost that.

What do you miss from your life before the papacy?

Going out into the street. I do miss that, the tranquility of walking through the streets. Or going to a pizzeria to eat a good pizza (*he laughs*).

You can get it delivered here at the Vatican.

Yes, but it’s not the same; the point is to go there. I always loved being out on the street. As a cardinal, I loved to walk along the streets, use public transportation, the subway. I love the city, I am a city dweller at heart. I couldn’t live in a city like yours, for example, it would be very hard for me... No, Tres Arroyos isn’t so small, I actually could live there. I couldn’t live out in the country.

Do you move around the city here?

Noooo, (*he laughs heartily again*). I visit parishes... But I can’t go out. Imagine

me going out here on the street and things get complicated. One day I went out in the car alone with the chauffeur and I forgot to roll up the window; it was open and I didn’t realize it. And it turned into a mess... I was in the passenger’s seat, we had to go just over there, but the people didn’t let the car move forward. Of course, if the Pope is out in the street...

That has to do with your personality.

It’s true that here they call me undisciplined; I don’t follow protocol very much. Protocol is very cold, although there are official things to which I am totally faithful.

Can you sleep at night? Do you disconnect?

I sleep so deeply that I lie down in bed and I fall asleep. I sleep for six hours. Normally, I am in bed at nine and I read until almost ten. When one of my eyes begins to water I turn out the light and I am out cold until four when I wake up on my own; it’s my biological clock. I need a siesta later, it’s true. I need to sleep from 40 minutes to an hour. There, I take off my shoes and I lie down on my bed. And I sleep deeply then too, and I also wake up on my own. On the days when I don’t take a siesta, I feel it.

What do you read before falling asleep?

Right now I am reading about St Silvanus the Athonite, a great spiritual teacher.

During your visit to Manila in the summer, you spoke of the importance of crying. Do you cry?

Yes, when I see human tragedies. Like the other day when I saw what is happening with the Rohingya people, who are travelling on those big boats in Thai waters, and when they get near land, they give them a little bit of food, water, and they cast them out to sea again. This moves me deeply, that kind of tragedy. Then, sick children. When I see what they call here “rare diseases,” that are the result of disregard for the

environment, I get all stirred up inside. When I see those little children, I say to the Lord: “Why them and not me?” I am also moved when I go to prisons. Of the three Holy Thursdays that I’ve had, on two of them I went to jails, one time to one for juveniles and the other time to the Rebibbia one. And afterwards in other cities in Italy that I visited, I went to the jail, and I had lunch with them; and while I was talking with them, the thought came into my head: “To think that I could be here...” That is to say, none of us is certain that we will never commit a crime, something worth going to jail for. And then I ask why God allowed me not to be here. And I feel sorry for them and I thank God that I am not in the jail, but at the same time I feel like that gratitude is a luxury too, because they didn’t have the opportunity that I had of not having committed a crime worthy of imprisonment. That makes me cry inside. I feel that very strongly.

But do you end up actually shedding tears?

I don’t cry publicly. There were two times that I was on the borderline, but I was able to stop on time. I was very, very moved, there were even a few tears that escaped me, but I played dumb and after a little while I passed my hand over my face.

Why didn’t you want them to see you cry?

I don’t know, it seemed to me I had to keep going.

What were those situations?

One I remember, the other I don’t. The one I remember had to do with the persecution of Christians in Iraq. I was talking about that and I felt profoundly moved. To think of those children...

What are you afraid of?

In general, I’m not afraid. I tend to be more reckless; I act without weighing the consequences. Sometimes that causes me headaches because an extra word slips out here and there (*once again, he laughs loudly*). As far as assassination

attempts go, I am in God's hands and in my prayer I spoke to the Lord and I said to him, "Look, if this has to happen, let it happen; I only ask you for one gift: that it would not cause me pain" (*he laughs*), because I am a coward when it comes to physical pain. I can withstand spiritual suffering, but physical suffering, no. I am very cowardly in that regard. It's not that I'm afraid of getting an injection, but I prefer not to have problems with physical pain. I have a very low tolerance; I take it as an after-effect of the lung operation they performed on me when I was 19 years old.

Do you feel pressured?

There is pressure. Every person in government feels pressure. Right now, what is hardest for me is the intense amount of work. I am working at a very fast rhythm. It's a syndrome of the end of the school year, which ends here at the end of June. And then a thousand things happen at the same time, and there are problems... And afterwards, there are the problems they create for you, with what I said or didn't say... The mass media also grab a word from over there and take it out of context. The other day I was in the parish of Ostia, near Rome. I go along greeting the people, and they had put the elderly and the sick in the gymnasium. They were sitting down and I walked by and greeted them. Then I said, "Look how funny, here where children usually play are the elderly and the sick. I understand you because I'm old too and I also have my aches and pains, I'm a little bit sick." The next day the newspapers say: "The Pope admitted that he was sick." There's nothing you can do against that enemy.

And do you understand everything that is published?

No, no. I only read one newspaper, *La Repubblica*, which is a middle class paper. I do it in the morning and it doesn't take me more than 10 minutes to skim it. I haven't watched television since the year 1990 (*he takes his time to answer*). It's a promise I made to Our Lady of Mount Carmel on the night of 15 July 1990.

For any particular reason?

No, no, I said to myself, "this isn't for me."

You don't watch the San Lorenzo [Argentine soccer club] games?

I don't watch anything.

How do you find out the results?

There is a Swiss Guard who gives me the results and how they are doing in the league tables every week.

Do you browse on the Internet?

Not at all. Earlier I never gave interviews; this is something that has just started to come to me. It's the grace of state. Earlier, facing a journalist made me panic.

Do you like it when they catalog you as "El Papa Pobre" (the Pope who is poor)?

If they put other words with that, yes... like 'pobre tipo' (that poor guy)... (*he laughs heartily again*). Poverty is the center of the Gospel. Jesus came to preach to the poor. If you take poverty out of the Gospel, you don't understand anything; you take its heart out.

Isn't it utopian to think that poverty can be eliminated?

Yes, but utopias pull us forward. It would be sad if a young man or woman didn't have a utopian dream. There are three things we all need to have in life: memory, capacity to see the present, and a utopian vision for the future. We can't lose our memory. When nations lose their memory, there's the great drama of neglecting the elderly. Capacity to analyze the present, to interpret it and know the path to follow with that memory, with those roots we carry, how I have to handle the present. That's the life of young people and adults. And the future, that's for the young people above all and for the children to determine, with memory, with capability of managing the present, of discerning, and a utopian vision for the future, which is where young people are involved. That is why the future of a nation is shown in caring

for the elderly, who are the memory, and for the children and young people, who are the ones who will carry it forward. We adults have to receive that memory, work on it in the future and give it to the children. I once read something very beautiful: "The present, the world we have received, is not only an inheritance of the grownups, but rather a loan given us by our children so we can give it back better than it was." If I cut my roots and I lose my memory, that which happens to every plant will happen to me: I am going to die; if I live only in the present without looking forward to the future, I will suffer the same thing as every bad administrator who doesn't know how to foresee and plan for the future. Environmental pollution is a phenomenon of that kind. The three have to go together; when any of them is missing, a nation begins to decline.

What are the worst evils affecting the world today?

Poverty, corruption, human trafficking... I might be wrong about the statistics, but what would you say to me if I asked you on what item more money is spent in the world after food, clothing and medicine? The fourth is cosmetics and the fifth is pets. This is very serious, eh. Taking care of pets is like love that is a bit programmed; that is to say, I can program the loving response of a dog or a cat, and now I don't need to experience a love of human reciprocity. I am exaggerating, this shouldn't be taken literally, but it is something to worry about.

Why do you always repeat, "pray for me?"

Because I need it. I need to be sustained by the prayer of the people. It's an interior necessity; I need to be sustained by the prayer of the people.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a good person. I'd like them to say: "This man was a good person who tried to do good." I have no other aspiration. ■

Courtesy: RV Asia Newsletter

Spiritual Directors Colloquium

The colloquium of the Spiritual Directors serving in our Common Houses of the South Asian Assistancy was held at De Nobili College, Pune from 13 to 15 March, 2015. It was planned and executed by Fr Raj Irudaya, the Assistancy Delegate for Formation. "The Ignatian Perspectives in Spiritual Direction" was the main theme of the Colloquium. The three day colloquium was aptly animated and facilitated by Fr R.C. Chacko (HAZ), the Tertian Master from Sitagarha. While stressing the need and the importance of spiritual guidance for our young men, Fr. R.C. invited all the participants to take up this challenge with a great sense of mission and lead our men into our 'Way of Proceeding' and to guide them into our Mission. The participants then reflected on the topics like, 'What is Spiritual Conversation?', 'The Root Grace



and the Root Sinfulness', 'The Three Areas of Interior Knowledge', 'The Basic Assumptions of Spiritual Direction', 'Consolation and Desolation', 'Issues and Concerns in Spiritual Direction' and 'Profile of a Jesuit Spiritual Director'. With all these reflections and sharing the group felt that the three days were a time of great learning and a grace. All were of the opinion that they should not miss such a golden opportunity of meeting every year for an input session like this. The group was very grateful to the administration of DNC for its generous hospitality. Special thanks to Fr Keith Abranches, Rector, Fr. Jesu Raj, Minister and Fr. Augustine Tigga, the local co-ordinator.

- Richard Mascarenhas, SJ

The call to peace-building

Islam Studies Association (ISA) and Minhaj-ul-Quran International (India Chapter) (MQI) jointly organised an interfaith program "Together We Build Peace" on 26 April 2015 at Presentation Convent Senior Secondary School, Old Delhi. The program was aimed at bringing together some of the practitioners of dialogue so that they can know one another, learn from one another so that they can work together for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice. The organisers also thought it would be good to listen to children and learn from them what they think 'key' to peace. Around sixty people from different Muslim organisations, students from Jamia Millia Islamia, students from Presentation Convent Senior Secondary School and Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) trainees attended the program.

Fr Joe Kalathil SJ, a member of ISA spoke about the mission that he received from the bishop to work on a cross-border reconciliation project between India and Pakistan. Though the mission was sensitive and difficult, he considered that the call to work for peace is a gift and responsibility that come from his Christian faith the Jesuit vocation. He said that the process

started with establishing Peace Clubs, helping students to work for peace. promoting cross border student contacts, Indian and Pakistani children writing letters to one another exchanging peace and good will. He encouraged his listeners to start peace clubs in their schools and places of work. He told his audience not to doubt the possibility of peace when people can come together.

Mr Junaid from the Interfaith Forum of Minhaj-ul-Qur'an noted that a large number of Muslims condemn violence on religious as well as humanitarian grounds. Many Muslim leaders do speak out against violence unhesitatingly. Media often ignore such voices and give prominence to those 'sound bites' that come from hate preachers who stir up violence. Often Muslims who condone violence do *not* cite religious reasons for their approval of violence but overlook violent activities of their fellow Muslims on political rationalisations. Conflicting positions of Muslim scholars make non-Muslims suspect that such conflicts might have roots in the Qur'an and Hadith.

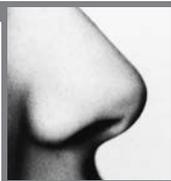
It is in the context he, Mr Junaid, discussed peace initiatives arising from spiritual resources of Islam. He said that MQI was founded by Shaykh ul Islam Dr Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri in the year 1981 with a long term vision to promote peace, love and harmony. MQI strive, Junaid said, "to promote peace, tolerance, interfaith harmony; to promote education, integration and working for community cohesion; to engage with young Muslims for religious moderation, to promote women's rights, development and empowerment; and provide social welfare and promotion of human rights".



Fr Tom Kunnunkal SJ, the President of ISA (Islamic Studies Association) emphasised that diversity whether in nature or among humans, is part of the very design and mystery of God. God has no borders and boundaries. God is seamless. Hence, he noted that ISA is one of the important initiatives taken by the Catholic Church in India for dialogue with Muslims in India. He affirmed that the focus of ISA is to enable Christians to understand, appreciate and enter into friendly relationship with their Muslim brothers and sisters, namely engage in dialogue of life.

Every participant said that they recognized the importance of peace within one's own heart and within societies in which they live. Many young school students who were present in the meeting noted that if peace is lost ... humanity is lost. It is amazing to realise that youngsters seek human dignity above everything else. We discovered that there are people who are interested in working together with others for peace. The initiatives come from everywhere: Muslims and Christians, young and old, and they all complement each other. They agreed that differences need to be acknowledged, respected and protected. It emerged very clearly that human rights and human dignity are the foundation for a sustained dialogue between Christians and Muslims and their common responsibility to work for peace, reconciliation and justice in the world.

- Victor Edwin, SJ



How does a Jesuit smell?

BY HEDWIG LEWIS, SJ

At a gathering of Jesuits in Cameroon last April, Fr General Adolfo Nicolas “sketched an image of a Jesuit as a man in constant search of understanding and meaning. Every Jesuit is engaged in a world that is in constant flux, a world that poses questions and challenges on a daily basis. A Jesuit, he argued, may have some answers to some of these questions and challenges, but is never satisfied. Such a Jesuit wears three scents – the scent of the sheep, the scent of the library, and the scent of the future.” (SJ Web News, May ‘15). The *Eau de Jesuit*, we may assume, is an exotic blend of realism, eclecticism, and optimism!

The metaphor of “scent” reminds one of a classic phrase – “odour of sanctity” – that we heard repeatedly as novices decades ago during the refectory reading of the “martyrology”. This catchphrase may sound obnoxious to modern ears, but it had a mellifluous appeal to our spiritual aspirations then. We were taught that holiness, like bottled perfume, spills out from the depths of our being every time we open up to compassionate love and service. The source of an odour is hidden, invisible, but its ‘presence’ can be felt by one and all. Like musk, it is sustained by a deep inner resource, unlike perfume that is available commercially, applied superficially and evaporates instantly. Natural fragrance, like that of a flower in bloom, is pervasive and alluring.

The “three scents” that Fr Nicolas speaks of, helps us reflect on the identity and mission of the Jesuit today, especially in the context of “depth” that he places them in.

The ‘scent of the library’ exudes from one who has launched out into

the vast ocean of knowledge, as strongly as from deep-sea fishermen reeking of salinity on returning ashore. The ‘scent of the library’ is more than a metaphor. The mustiness of books, of course, does rub off on those who frequent the literary enclaves, but it is recognizable as a characteristic of Jesuit identity. We are challenged by our very vocation to pursue knowledge in both the spiritual and professional fields with non-negotiable persistence. A Jesuit seeks to be ‘eminent’ in wisdom and to ‘emanate’ it creatively through the diverse channels of communication available today. The real challenge lies in the ‘intellectual apostolate’, the “ministry of research” (Nicolas, 2014/9).

“Ignatius was always concerned with depth,” Fr Nicolas once pointed out. “You have heard many times, I am sure, his principle of *non multa sed multum*, literally, “not many, but much,” originally one of the annotations in the *Spiritual Exercises*, but applied often to Ignatian pedagogy as well. One could paraphrase this as “not quantity, but depth”: “what satisfies the soul,” Ignatius says – in other words, what really matters in the business of becoming human and Christian – is not many superficial bits of knowledge and information, but a deep understanding and appreciation of what is most important” (Philippines, 2011).

A Jesuit has the “scent of the future”. He is a man on the move, dissatisfied with the *status quo*; with no comfort zone to lay down his head. His sights are on the far horizons that beckon to him. He is a pilgrim compelled by the Ignatian *magis*: his backpack stuffed with zeal and enthusiasm beneath the *Spiritual Exercises* and the Bible; his ‘sweatshirt emblazoned with a flaming IHS, and the mantra AMDG constantly on his lips!

Fr Nicolas’ reference to “the scent of the sheep”, is an obvious allusion to Pope Francis’ plea to priests to be “like shepherds living with the smell of the sheep ... the poor, prisoners, the sick, those who are sorrowing and alone” (Chrism Mass 2013).

It is opportune here to remind ourselves that this precisely is our identity as Jesuits.

“Our commitment to follow a poor Lord,” Ignatius wrote to the Jesuits in Padua, “quite naturally makes us friends of the poor” (6 August 1547). The same love of Christ “impels us to be near people and with them in their daily life, like the first Jesuits to take once again to the streets of our cities, in order to read there in the very heart of people’s existence the signs of the times, the signs of the Spirit’s action” (Kolvenbach, Naples, 1997).

Our mission demands seeing “the world from the perspective of the poor and the marginalized, learning from them, acting with and for them” (GC 35.3.27), reaching out in various ways: economic, personal, professional, psychological and spiritual. Our solidarity with the weak and marginalized must be so integrated with their life that the ‘smell’ of hapless humanity naturally rubs off on us. In turn, our ‘scent’, too, has a salvific impact. As Pope Francis emphasized, those at the “outskirts experience our own anointing, its power and its redemptive efficacy.” They find solace and healing in the fragrance of our presence.

“You may dress the shepherd in silken robes, but he will still smell of the sheep.” goes an ancient Bedouin axiom. A Jesuit, likewise, in whatever guise, will always smell distinctly like a... Jesuit! ■

Hedwig Lewis, SJ, is the author of Jesuit Roots and Shoots and several other books. Visit his website: <http://joygift.tripod.com>

Is Islam a peaceful religion?

Victor Edwin, SJ responds to the remarks of D. Albert, SJ on Islam (See box)

Albert says that Pope Francis, like many Christians, gets carried away by statements such as there is no scope in Islam for terrorism or tyranny, and believes that “Islam is a peaceful religion”. He substantiates his statement by quoting Pope Francis’s remarks on dialogue with Muslims in *Evangelii Gaudium* (IV: 253). Pope says that “authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Qur’an are opposed to every form of violence.” Certainly the problem is with the word ‘authentic’. Who decides what ‘authentic Islam’ is?

I have discussed many issues related to Islam and peace with a number of Catholic scholars on Islam and Christian-Muslim relations like Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, Prof. Daniel Madigan, SJ, Dr. Chris Hewer, Dr Paul Jackson, SJ, Dr Herman Roborgh, SJ and Prof. Christian W Troll, SJ on a number of occasions in the past. Their helpful comments have shaped my view of Islam and the Qur’an.

It is true that many Muslims hold that authentic Islam is opposed to every form of religious violence. Albert calls them moderate Muslims. I do not qualify Muslims as moderates or otherwise. I do not judge them. I just speak of ‘many Muslims’ or ‘some Muslims’. Many Catholic scholars on Islam note that it is true that the Qur’an does allow and even command violence in some verses, but many Muslims would claim that the force referred to may only be defensive.

The Qur’an speaks much about fighting (*qital* rather than *jihad*), but this is usually in a context of defending the community. Muslims would say

This has reference to the interview with Prof. Akhtarul Wasey (*Jivan*, April 2015) where he says that there is no scope in Islam for terrorism or tyranny. This is a standard saying of many moderate Muslims. We also often hear that Islam is a peaceful religion and many Christians get carried away by such statements. Our Pope Francis is very much with such Christians who believe that Islam is a peaceful religion. In one of his apostolic exhortations, he said, “Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalisations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.”

While respecting our Pope’s understanding of the Quran, my reading of the Quran has brought me to the conviction that it is not an entirely peaceful scripture and the religion it has given rise to is not entirely peaceful either. There are more than 150 verses in the Quran that advocate varying degrees of violence. More than 60% of the Quran is filled with hatred and hell fire. However, it does not follow that all Muslims are violent, not at all; most of them are like anybody else – peaceful, loving human beings. Taking Muslims as our equal partners, we ought to foster friendship, cooperation and collaboration with them at the social and political levels and engage with them constantly in order to solve common problems confronting our communities.

- D. Albert, SJ
Pathardi, Maharashtra - 414 102

that religious violence would be ruled out by the words “*lā ikrāha fi-l-dīn*” (no compulsion in religion). However, we know that in Pakistan the blasphemy laws are misused. The monster ISIS is committing inhuman atrocities. The punishment of death for apostasy from Islam is still maintained by many Muslims, but it is contested by others.

For a Catholic Christian the ‘authentic’ Islam is what the Vatican document, *Nostra Aetate* states: “*The Church has also a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God...They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the bidden decrees of God... Although not acknowledging him as God, they worship Jesus as a prophet, his virgin Mother they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke. Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms and fasting.*”

“This is the ‘Islam’ the Catholic Church knows and highly appreciates” writes Chris Hewer. He says that if one reads this part of *Nostra Aetate* thoroughly, “we note that there is no single hint of fundamentalism, extremism or any other kind of violence hailed or appreciated by the Catholic Church. In other words: The Catholic Church

recognizes clearly and solely the spiritual dimension of Islam that pays attention at the same time, or even because of that, to the social needs, making efforts also for global unity, fraternity, friendship, justice, peace and harmony”.

We know that in the Qur’an there are many verses dealing with violence against Christians, Jews and infidels. The Pope is not asking Muslims to understand everything written in the Qur’an in a literal way but rather asking them to make “*an adequate interpretation*” which supports common values such as the dignity of human life, the well-being of the world, peace, harmony, justice and global fraternity and friendship. In a nutshell: an adequate interpretation of the Qur’an means a human and contextual interpretation which will promote human dignity and so human rights. We need to read the texts carefully taking into account the 15 centuries of historical and intellectual traditions of dialogue between followers of these two remarkable faiths. What I do appreciate is Albert’s words: “Taking Muslims as our equal partners, we ought to foster friendship, cooperation and collaboration with them at the social and political levels...”

- Victor Edwin, SJ
Delhi - 110 054

BENJAMIN EKKA, SJ

(MAP) 1940 - 2015



Fr Benjamin Ekka, 73, expired on 07 March '15, at Holy Cross Hospital, Ambikapur. He died of acute renal failure, and was laid to rest on 08 March at the Jesuit cemetery at Khrist Milan Ashram, Namna, Ambikapur.

In the year 2013 he celebrated his Golden Jubilee in the Society of Jesus. For the last 13 years he was at Lievans House for rest and treatment, and had remarkably recovered doing spiritual ministry in nearby parishes and convents, and in his own Jesuit community. No one expected that the end would come so suddenly. Due to his breathing problem and chest pain he was taken to the hospital and kept in the ICU, where he breathed his last.

I have known Fr Benjamin for the last 55 years, since our High School days. He was a brilliant student. Later in the Society of Jesus both in Ranchi and MAP Provinces both of us worked in various apostolates. He was a soft-spoken man, a man of few words, humble and simple, having a wonderful memory of people whom he met. He knew them by their names. A man of prayer, always available and obedient, he loved both the Society and the Church, and had great devotion to Jesuit saints about whom he knew a great deal. He shared his knowledge with others spontaneously. As a Jesuit priest, Fr Benjamin lived a very disciplined life. And he always exhorted me to commend all my woes and worries to the most loving Heart of Christ and Mary.

He joined the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1963 at St Stanislaus College, Sitagarha, Hazaribag and pronounced his First Vows on 31 July 1965 at Mount St Joseph, Bangalore. It was followed by one year of Juniorate in the same place (1965-1966). He studied Philosophy at Sacred Heart College, Shembagnur (1968-1970) and Theology at JDV Pune (1973-1976) followed by Diaconate ordination in De Nobili College, Pune. He was ordained a priest in the cathedral church of Kunkuri by Bishop Francis Ekka on 01 May 1976. He did his Tertianship at St Stanislaus College, Sitagarha (July 1985 - March 1986) and made his final commitment at St Xavier's Church, Pathalgaon on 08 December 1991. He was well-prepared for ministry. He did his B. A. at St Xavier's College, Ranchi and M. A. and M. Phil from Delhi University. He did his B. Ed. at Utkal University. He had been studious all along. His main ministry was in Pathalgaon as a teacher and hostel in-charge and later as the Principal of Prakash School, Pathalgaon. He slogged very hard giving his very best to make it grow from strength to strength. During his tenure as the Principal he obtained a permanent recognition of the school from the school department and a Grant-in-Aid which ensured government salaries to the teachers.

Fr Benjamin combined simplicity and availability for ministry with hard-work, assuming responsibilities and being committed to duties, being obedient to the superiors, and always aiming high for the greater glory of God. "Let us live and work in the present, now", he often said, "and not worry about what people would say of us after death; for as the saying goes, 'De Mortuis Nihil Nisi Bonum' ('Of the dead, nothing unless good.')"!

He was always eager to do something more for the Lord. But when his ill-health overcame his zeal from 2006 onwards, he joyfully displayed his obedience and submission to God's will. May Fr Benjamin rest in peace! **- Alphonse Minj, SJ**

GERARD VAN WALLEGHEM, SJ

(DAR) 1927 - 2015



Fr Van, as everyone knew him, was born on a family dairy farm outside the city of Winnipeg, mid-west-Canada. His parents Jules Van Wallegem and Elizabeth Lievens were Flemish immigrants from Belgium. Fr Constant Lievens, SJ, was the grand uncle of Elizabeth, and his shadow followed Fr Van all his life, inspiring him and haunting his mother who feared she would lose her youngest son (of five, with one daughter) to India. After his novitiate, juniorate, philosophy and a year of regency in Canada he arrived in India in 1952 with two scholastics, Edgar Burns and Lawrence Wimpenny and Brother Michael Quinn, all of whom left their mark in Darjeeling and Nepal. He was ordained at St Mary's, Kurseong, in March 1958. He completed his tertianship under Fr Louis Schillebeeckx in Sitagarha in 1961. On his return to Darjeeling he began his life's work, a vocation that would endear him to thousands of students and to a multitude of religious, for whom he became a master guide in the life of the spirit.

For more than twenty years he remained at St Joseph's College, North Point, filling various posts, teacher, professor, counsellor, headmaster, rector until he gradually became the face of North Point. In the late 1960s he went to Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA, to update his educational qualifications. When in the 1980s, after two decades of slow expansion geographically and into new apostolates, the Darjeeling region was planning a Novitiate for its growing numbers, Fr Van was the obvious choice to pioneer that dream, which he did for the next ten years. In the following years he went to Kurseong as parish priest and headmaster in St Alphonsus School, a post that tried his limited knowledge of Nepali but which, as expected, endeared him all.

Finally in 1999 he returned to North Point where he remained till his death, always active, even guiding the community as Rector for a second term. His outreach activities seem endless - assisting in the administration of Planters' Hospital, emailing NP alumni worldwide to solicit support for its development, involvement in Darjeeling diocese as Chancellor and counsellor of its young candidates, visiting Rajganj St Xavier's College in Jalpaiguri as Counsellor. He was awarded a Ph D honoris causa from the University of Manitoba in recognition of his unique contribution to education in Darjeeling. Van is buried in the garden at North Point near the statue of Fr Depelchin, who brought the Jesuits to Darjeeling in 1888, among whom 'Van' will always hold a special place. **- William Bourke, SJ**

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Assistancy Appointments - 2015 (PART – II)

APPOINTED BY PROVINCIAL OF SOUTH ASIA

Alexis PremKumar (MDU) – Assistant Regional Director of JRS

Denzil Fernandes (GOA) – Treasurer of ISI Community– Delhi (Additional)

Gabriel Tirkey (DAR) – Minister & Administrator of Jor Bagh Community (Additional)

Jeyaseelan Arockiam (AND) – Coordinator of Legal Cell at ISI – Bangalore

John Packiaraj (AND) – Guyana Mission

Anthony Inico (MDU) – Paraguay Mission

Keith Abranches (GUJ) – Superior of Jor Bagh Community (Additional)

Raj Irudaya (MDU) – Coordinator for Secretariats and Commissions (Additional)

George Cordeiro (BOM) – Admonitor to Rector – Papal Seminary, Pune

COMMISSION:

“Support team dealing with Sexual Abuse matters,”

Joy Karayampuram (PAT) (Convener); Stanislaus Alla (AND); Raj Irudaya (MDU)(ADF); Sr. Tresa Paul (HC): Sr. Mary Scaria (SCJM).

FORUM:

Jesuit Faculties Forum for South Asia (JFFSA): Members appointed are: President, Rectors, Principals of (JVD, SN, VJ), JHEASA Secretary, ADF, Socius-Posa, Rudi Heredia (BOM), Michael Amaladoss (MDU).

ELECTORS FOR GC 36, FROM THE PROVINCE CONGREGATIONS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. P.R. John (AND) | 14. Karuthukunnel Jose Jacob (KER) |
| 2. Wendell D'Cruz (BOM) | 15. Awaited (KHM) |
| 3. Poulouse Mangai (CCU) | 16. Ranjit Tigga (MAP) |
| 4. Wilfred John Lobo (DAR) | 17. Francis Xavier P. (MDU) |
| 5. Jeerakassery Sebastian (DEL) | 18. Jebamalai Irudayaraj (MDU) |
| 6. Kuruvilla Pandikattu (DUM) | 19. Devadoss Mudiappasamy (MDU) |
| 7. Agnelo Mascarenhas (GOA) | 20. Boniface Tigga (NEP) for Patna |
| 8. Francis Gonsalves (GUJ) | 21. Susai Raj (PAT) |
| 9. Manickam Irudayaraj (GUJ) | 22. Stanislaus Fernandes (PUN) |
| 10. Santosh Minj (HAZ) | 23. Francis Minj (RAN) |
| 11. Jerome Coutinha (JAM) | 24. Ajit Kumar Xess (RAN) |
| 12. Dionysius Vaz (KAR) | 25. Pathirana Sujeeva (SRI) |
| 13. Joseph Anthony D'Mello (KAR) | 26. Brother Delegate |

The South Asian Assistancy is deeply grateful to the companions who have rendered dedicated service to the Common Houses and Works, and are now either reverting to their Provinces or assigned to new responsibilities in the Common Houses:

1. Christdhari Kujur (MAP) Acting Superior of Jor Bagh.
2. Prakash Louis (PAT) Director of ISI-Bangalore
3. Joe Sebastian (AND) VJ Rector
4. Gabriel Tirkey (DAR) Socius to POSA.
5. Consultor Western Zone: Vernon D'Cunha (BOM)
6. Consultor Northern Zone: JeyarajV eluswamy (CCU)

Are Jesuits reluctant to face themselves?

I write this in response to the article in *Jivan* of May/June 2015, “Women’s empowerment. What Can Jesuits Do?” I write this with deep regard and affection for Jesuits as my faith formation has come largely from Jesuits, especially as a teenager and a young adult, at critical times in my life. I was baptised by a Jesuit, a family friend on my mother’s side. I am told that he was the first visitor I had after I was born. He is long dead. I have many, many fond memories of him.

Since society and religion are patriarchal, it is not only women who have internalised patriarchy, but even the Jesuits! As human beings they are as much a part of and products of society and church as any of us. So if Jesuits are to help women to transcend their socialisation, they have first to do it within themselves. I know this is easier said than done, but unless steps are taken towards this end, all change will be fleeting as it does not arise from metanoia.

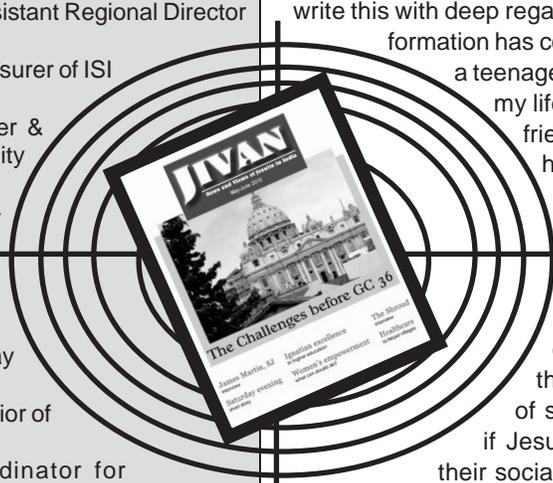
A Jesuit speaking to me about interfaith marriages said, “I feel so sorry for Catholic girls marrying non-Catholic boys”. I said, “Why don’t you feel sorry for Catholic boys marrying non-Catholic girls? Is it because this being a patriarchal society, children inherit the religion of the male parent? Are you not supporting patriarchy?” He was silent, but I sensed him holding on to his position that the church must hold on to numbers at any cost.

I know priests, some of them Jesuits, qualified professionals, highly experienced and competent, invited to speak on patriarchy. They read books on feminist theology and reproduce such material at seminars. Though they are invited to speak on patriarchy from their experience as professionals and persons relating to women, this just does not happen. I have often wondered why. Is it that they consider patriarchy only for women to free themselves of and that they are free of the sin of patriarchy by commission or by omission? Or are they also in need of metanoia from the sin of patriarchy? Or are they reluctant to face themselves as deeply as this calls for? After all, “The truth shall set you free,” but as a friend once said to me, “It shall first make you miserable!”

When at seminars the only female paper-reader is a woman who has specialized in Feminist Theology, what does this convey? That Feminist Theology is “soft” core theology only for women? That women cannot do “hard” core theology? Even after this was brought up at the discussion, again the following year there was only one woman speaker and that too on Feminist Theology. What does this convey?

I do think that this article on what Jesuits can do for women needs to be looked at in the light of the cover feature by Fr Amaladoss.

- Ms Judith Siqueira
Pune - 411 002



Great help

I sincerely thank Fr Michael Amaladoss for his article titled, 'The Challenges before the GC 36' published in *Jivan*, May-June 2015. It is a great help for me and all the electors of GC 36 of our Assistency to reflect and ponder over these challenges before we meet in Pune in November to prepare ourselves for the forthcoming GC 36. I have read it twice and I would be sending this to every community in my province so that they read it in one of their community meetings and reflect on these challenges to get involved in the process of preparation for GC 36. Thank you for publishing such articles.

- P.S. Amal, SJ
Hyderabad - 500 017

Well-written

I appreciate your valuable comments on Pope Francis' personal qualities quoting the words of Jared Brock. The rest of the contents of the magazine too have been rich and helpful.

The lead article, "The Challenges before GC 36," by Fr Michael Amaladoss, SJ is certainly a well-written article by a very knowledgeable person that will help us Jesuits to better follow the Congregation going to take place next year. His reflections on a proper understanding of what 'mission' for us in India today should be, his suggestions to have a more sensitive approach to ecological matters, the urgency to promote spirituality, are all helpful in our present context. His reminder to all to appreciate better the collaboration of women in our mission is very timely.

On a similar subject the article: 'Women's empowerment - what can Jesuits do?' by Virginia Saldanha is also some food for thought for us men religious/priests! The CBCI is said to have brought out a "Gender Policy." I wonder how many Jesuits are aware of it. How many would have seen this document? I haven't! Most church men can't think of women as priests! We need a change in our attitudes!

- Mani Nedumattam, SJ
Jaipur, Rajasthan - 302 001

Untenable

In his 'Letter to the Editor' in the April '15 issue of *Jivan*, Fr Ama Samy, SJ, has raised the question, "What is our mission?" He argues that Alex Premkumar's venture in Afghanistan is 'foolish heroics'. What he says is untenable for me.

From whom does our Mission come? St Ignatius would ask us to look at the crucified Christ, and ask "What have I done for Christ?," "What am I doing for Christ?," "What ought I do for Christ?" (S.E. 53)

Our mission comes from contemplating the crucified Christ. One who follows and preaches crucified Christ (1 Cor

1:23) would go any extent to prove his love for Him. This is what our Jesuit martyrs have done. Is the beheading of John de Britto foolish heroics?

- X. Savarimuthu, SJ
Tiruchy, T.N. - 620 002

Wise as serpents

I guess the unique combination of the Jesuit intellect and Zen training helps Ama Samy see and say things most of us don't. What he says (in his letter in the April-May issue) on missions to dangerous regions highlights the great responsibility that superiors have while they decide where to send their men. Afghanistan is one of the countries where the situation has so deteriorated that peace, order and human rights cannot be guaranteed to their own citizens. Imagine the plight of foreigners working in such places even with the best of motives. While the individual Jesuit's readiness and courage to go anywhere he is sent are commendable, the responsibility of the superiors is great. We are called to be innocent as doves but also wise as serpents.

- Leo Raj
Bengaluru - 560 001

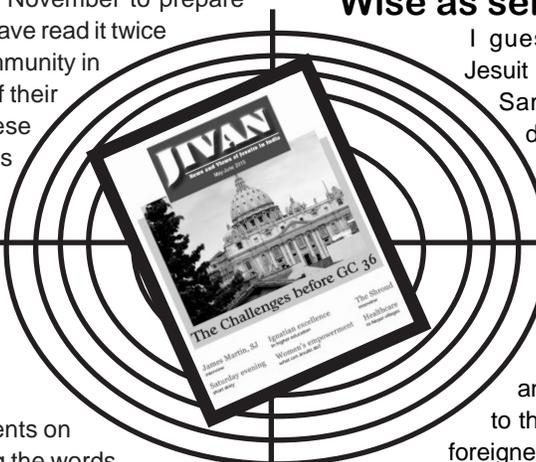
No Jesuit to defend our faith

Recently there was a scholarly article, titled, "Christianity has totally failed in India" by Tony Joseph published in *Outlook* (13 April 2015). In the next issue (*Outlook*, 27 April 2015) as many as 24 readers reacted to this article. Out of these only four, including myself, wrote in favour of Christianity whereas 20 wrote against it and criticized Christianity in India for various reasons. I was much disappointed to see no other Jesuits seizing this precious opportunity to defend Christianity and the role it has played and continues to play in India in. Though we are aware of the power of the media and know very well that media creates public opinion, no Jesuit took the trouble of sending his reaction to the magazine defending Christianity and its great contribution to the nation.

This raises some questions in my mind regarding our loyalty and fidelity to the Society's aim which is : defense and propagation of faith under the banner of the the Cross. Are we serious about this responsibility laid on us by our founder St. Ignatius? What about our obligation with regards to thinking with the Church (*sentire cum Ecclesia*)? Love is shown in deeds and not merely in words (Sp.Ex).

We would well to reflect on this especially now when interest in and enthusiasm for Ignatian spirituality is on the increase; seminars, courses, formation of Ignatian Spirituality family etc. are in vogue.

- William Macwan, SJ
Vidyanagar, Gujarat - 388 120



Lessons for Life

I've learned from Guyana

BY RAMESH VANAN, SJ

Don't judge

When I opted to come here for my Regency in 2007 my perception of Guyana was that I was going to a jungle where people needed help with everything possible. But after coming here I realized that Guyana is a beautiful country with a great mix of diverse cultures. My encounter with its rich culture, well-educated and qualified people, internationally known sport stars and extremely hospitable and friendly people has made me realize how mistaken I was. So the lesson is: don't judge people before you know them.

Learn from people

The ease of acceptance among the Guyanese people is fascinating as you become someone's son, brother or cousin. This home away from home provides much comfort when you know you have been accepted in a foreign land. I have learnt so much from the people here - to be generous, friendly, courteous, helpful, prayerful and spiritual.

Differences enrich you

With the influence of English, African, Asian, American, and indigenous priests, people and music, the Church is very vibrant and lively. The rich traditions brought by the English Fathers during the Colonial rule have mixed with the Caribbean culture of worship. So the liturgy provides a totally engaging experience with the Lord.

Live together

The population of Guyana is less than a million, and most of the residents live on the Low Coastal Plain area. Divided into four natural Regions, Guyana is blest in its natural resources. The Forest Region and numerous waterways provide the mainstay of occupations like logging and mining. We have a good mix of religions too. The main ones are Christianity, Islam, and Hindu. Among many Christian denominations, Catholics and Anglicans are in the majority. Guyana has only one diocese with about 35 priests, most of whom are Jesuits engaged in pastoral ministry.

Let everyone contribute

While the Jesuits from Britain have been responsible for starting the mission here in Guyana, and have contributed

Ramesh Vanan SJ (KAR) did his Regency in Guyana. Now, after his studies in U.K. and U.S., he has returned to Guyana where he is at present a Parish Priest ministering in four churches and also a lecturer of Psychology at the University of Guyana.



a lot to the growth of the church in Guyana, great and solid contributions have been made by Jesuits from USA, Zimbabwe, India and Brazil. My first experience of mingling with Jesuits from other countries has been very pleasant and encouraging.

Let spirituality unite you

What have I learnt from interacting with Jesuits from other countries? I learnt that even though we had our formation at different locations throughout the world, and our language, lifestyle, and culture were different, we were united by the same Jesuit Spirituality. The way we spoke our Jesuit language was the same. This is the foundation of our communities, that have men from various countries. We enjoy our Jesuit companionship in our communities.

Let your prejudices be swept away

Something that got imbedded within many colonized people through history books and patriotic movies was hatred towards the British. I was no different. Here in Guyana, I saw that British Jesuits were very different from the stereotypes. They are very friendly, genuine and creative persons. I became more and more appreciative of the British and British culture. Hence I learnt that stereotypes can be broken by exposure and experience.

Be tough

The experience of Jesuit missions in the interior locations of Guyana have been similar to the scenes in the famous film, *The Mission*.

The waterfalls, the bridges, the boat rides in rough waters, the indigenous people, the welcome we receive, the opposition we face have taught me to be tough and strong.

Make Christ the centre of your life

If you need to persevere as a priest primarily, and if you have to answer a call within a call that is to be a missionary in a foreign land, one has to have Christ as the pivot of everything one does. Build everything around Christ. Do this for yourself and for the people you serve. This is something I learnt from my senior Jesuits here in Guyana.

Live life to its fullest

Enjoy life and live it to the maximum. This seems to be the tag line for many in Guyana. Yes, there are difficulties. There is crime and one gets robbed. But in spite of all this the Guyanese see the positive side of life and live in harmony, in spite of all the differences. ■



Dear Lord,

*Little by little You are getting through my befuddled mind
to teach me another practical concept
about living a life pleasing to You.*

*Lord Jesus, I know You said that in this world
we would have troubles, but for some reason,
I really thought there would be fewer problems as I aged,
that I would become wise. But life becomes more complicated.
I wonder, Lord, is it because You need to constantly remind us
that this earth is not our home...*

that we are heaven bound?

*So many times I forget that people,
circumstances or things cannot give me happiness;
only You can. I realize now that my discouragement
can be because of the lack of trusting You.*

- Katherine Kehler

Source: www.catholicdoors.com



MOMENTS



© Vivian Richard, SJ (KAR)

“Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.”

- Maya Angelou