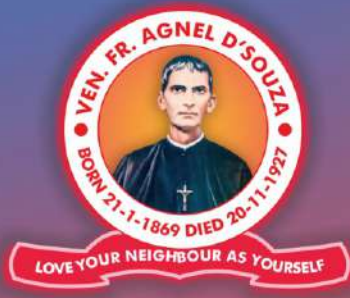


February 2023



FR AGNEL

SHRAM NEWS



LOVING
CARING
SHARING

SHARING IS CARING | CARING IS LOVING | LOVING IS AMAZING

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World Day of the Sick | MARY AND SUFFERING

The suffering human beings must endure is a mystery at once terrible and familiar, with the most common area of human suffering being in the medical realm, with old (leprosy?) and new (Covid?) diseases afflicting old and young, rich and poor, in “developed” as well as “developing” countries. Besides physical suffering, there is also moral suffering, which can embrace both the psychological and spiritual dimensions of human beings.

Suffering can be made *meaningful*. Though not fully understandable by our limited reason, it can still have a beneficial purpose, and *Marian Devotion* is one very important school for helping both Catholics and people of other Faiths to experience this. Therefore, when Pope St. John Paul II instituted the **World Day of the Sick**, he fixed 11th February (Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes) for its annual commemoration.

In Mumbai, there is a Marian shrine (of Our Lady of Perpetual Help) that attracts thousands, even tens of thousands of people **every week** to its Novena Services, many of the devotees being non-Christians. A survey made some years ago elicited answers from these devotees to the question, “Why do you come here every week? What help do you receive?” Many women, Hindus by religion, replied, “Because we can identify with Mother Mary in her life and her sufferings. We have no god/goddess who is portrayed as being with a child, holding a child in her arms, standing at the foot of a cross, etc. Our gods/goddesses all look fearsome, with blood dripping from their hands and mouths, with swords in their several hands to kill the evil monsters, and wearing a necklace of human skulls, etc., whereas Mother Mary is so gentle, so compassionate, so noble, she touches a chord within us, and we receive strength by praying to her. She teaches us *how to love*, even when we suffer!” (Survey by Xavier Institute of Communications, ASTHA, 1988).

Popular Marian devotion includes the belief that Mary's intercession can bring about physical healings, inner (or emotional) healings, and conversion of life. Mary both brings relief from

suffering as well as *teaches how to face suffering*, and so devotees are never lacking at services held in churches small or big (like in Mumbai), and at Marian shrines like Guadalupe in Mexico, Lourdes in France, Vailankanni in India, etc.

GUADALUPE: As far as can be established from history and modern science, the Blessed Virgin gave us *a miraculous image of herself*, known as Our Lady of Guadalupe. It happened in 1531, in what today is a part of Mexico City. The Immaculate Virgin appeared four times to a man named Juan Diego. During the last apparition, she left behind (without Juan Diego realising it immediately) a most beautiful full-length picture of herself imprinted on the coarse *tilma* (a kind of shawl) with which he was clothed. As a result of these apparitions and the miraculous picture, eight million Mexican “Indians” were baptised within the next seven years. Today too (2023), *daily* throughout the year, over 15,000 people (about 7 million annually) go on pilgrimage to this shrine, seeking and finding strength and peace to face life positively. The Image of the Virgin remains to this day and is preserved in the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

It is 66 x 41 inches in size, the image of Mary being 56 inches high. Strangely, it appears much larger from a distance, and the colours which at close range seem faded, are also vigorous and fresh when viewed at a distance. (Scientific efforts to duplicate it have seen the cactus



fibers disintegrating after seven years, with the colours changed and deteriorated). Nitric acid was accidentally spilled on the Image in 1778, but to everyone's astonishment, it was protected from damage. Even worse, a powerful bomb was secretly burst by terrorists under the Image in 1921, but Our Lady's glass was not even cracked! Also, no matter what the surrounding temperature is, the Image itself remains at the normal human body temperature, 98.6 degrees F.

“*The Virgin is one of us, the Indians! Our pure Mother is one of us!*” cried the Aztec Indians who were first privileged to behold the Image. The overarching meaning of her Image to the Indians was simply “life,” and life bubbling in abundance

unto eternity! Mary is shown in the Image as *pregnant* by the four-petalled flower over her womb. As a result, there soon came to an end the horrific Aztec practice of sacrificing thousands of human beings to a demon god. Innumerable miracles of healing and of protection from harm and danger, as well as of answers to prayers for every human need, have been witnessed through a fervent devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

LOURDES: Mention the name " Lourdes " to any Catholic and immediately, the image of miraculous cures comes to mind. Lourdes is in fact a source of great and more frequent *spiritual renewal and strengthening* than the occasional supernatural cure. Since the first

apparition of the Virgin Mary to St. Bernadette on 11th February 1858, only 70 certifiable miracles have been attributed to the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes. However, day after day, year after year, decade after decade, millions of people have been touched and healed by visits to this spiritual wellspring. The Lady had revealed that she had come primarily to communicate a message of repentance and prayer for the conversion of sinners.

The Lady instructed Bernadette to wash at the spring. There being no spring, Bernadette dug a small hole, and in the muddy water which appeared, washed herself. By the next day, an abundant spring of fresh water

had begun to flow. This spring was responsible for the first medically unexplainable cures at Lourdes! Since then, many have been cured through the use of the special baths, which even today contain water from the still flowing miraculous spring.

The occasional miraculous healings serve to remind us that God can and does continue to intervene in human history. Any person who has made a pilgrimage to this shrine will tell you that

Lourdes is a place where the sick, the poor, those with emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical handicaps find encouragement, solace and hope. There, these downtrodden of the world become the centre of attention and the focus of the *community's* activity and care.

The "well," the "healthy" who travel to Lourdes, also come away with a sense of peace, reconciliation, and healing.

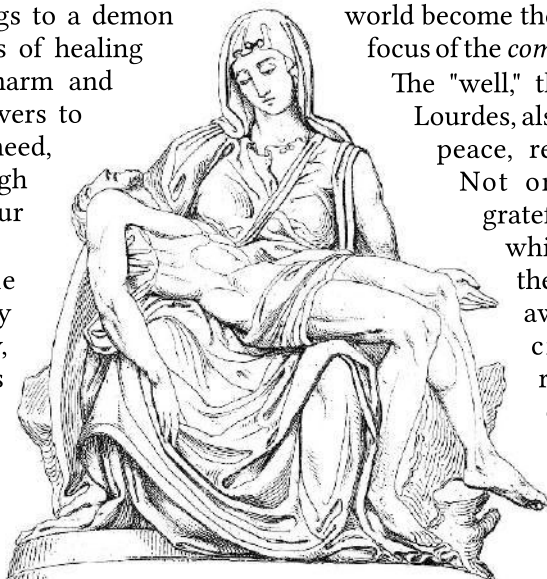
Not only are the "well" more grateful for the many blessings which God has bestowed upon them, but they are often more aware of His goodness to all of creation, and frequently realize they have developed a compassion of which they were not previously capable. Healing occurs in a variety of ways, on many levels, to everyone. The small number of miraculous cures which

have been certified over the years is negligible when compared with the vast number of genuine healings that occur every day at the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes. It is a special place for having one's faith deepened, and it happens without one realizing it.

Also, for many people, Mary is not only a mother but also a friend, a companion, a fellow-struggler. She stands as an example to people to

stand firm in the face of oppression and suffering. Yes, authentic popular Marian Devotion has much to offer people who suffer, for it has a proven track record of helping many to develop healthy perspectives, values, and

attitudes with which to face suffering. This is what World Day of the Sick aims at achieving!



Fr. Fio SJ, now in his 80th year, writes books on spirituality and preaches biblical retreats. He can be contacted at frfiomas@gmail.com

THE TRADITION OF CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

-Christopher Mendonca

Rooted in the Teaching of Jesus: The tradition of the practice of meditation is rooted in the teaching of Jesus on prayer. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us that when we pray, we are not to go babbling on like the heathen who imagine that the more they say, the more likely they are to be heard. Our prayer is to be done in secret; we are to go into our inner room, shut the door and pray to Our Father who is in secret, sees what is done in secret and rewards us (Mt. 6:6-7). Interiority is of the essence of prayer. He then proceeds to give us the "Our Father" as a model of the way we should pray. What is less known is that this prayer in the Jewish Christian tradition is not meant to be recited in its entirety in one go. It consists of a series of phrases that were repeated over and over again, meant to be interiorised. Following this tradition, the 20th century mystic Simone Weil says that it sometimes took her almost an hour to complete the prayer, saying each phrase with attention and going back to the start if she found her attention had wandered.

In the letter to the Romans, St. Paul tells us that we do not know how to pray but it is the Spirit that prays within us giving voice to our inarticulate groans, coming to the aid of our weakness (Rom. 8:26). And yet he tells us elsewhere that we are to pray continually (I Thess. 5:16). It is evident from these texts that they do not refer to vocal prayer; we know that we cannot keep doing so continually. The early Church understood this to mean that

when we pray, we must allow the prayer of Christ to well up from within us so that it is not we who pray but the indwelling Spirit of the Risen Lord, Jesus who prays within us, with us and for us.

Monologistic Prayer: This is the Prayer of one word / phrase. Through the constant repetition of a single word-phrase, we come to an inner silence; we come to an awareness of the Spirit of the Risen Lord within us and allow it to become the source of and give meaning to everything we are, everything we do. The desert fathers and mothers in the III and IV centuries and in particular John Cassian in his IX and X Conference on prayer recommends the recitation of a single word / phrase to come to inner silence. Regarded as the founder of Western Monasticism, St. Benedict was greatly influenced by John Cassian. The repetitive chanting of the Psalms of the Divine office cemented this tradition of prayer. The Recitation

of the Rosary of 15 decades of 10 Hail Marys each is considered to be the layperson's Divine Office, aligned as it is on the 150 Psalms of the Old Testament. In its own silent way this practice of saying the Rosary continues this tradition of repetitive prayer. Other forms of Rosaries/Chants/Chaplet of the Divine Mercy serve to do the same.

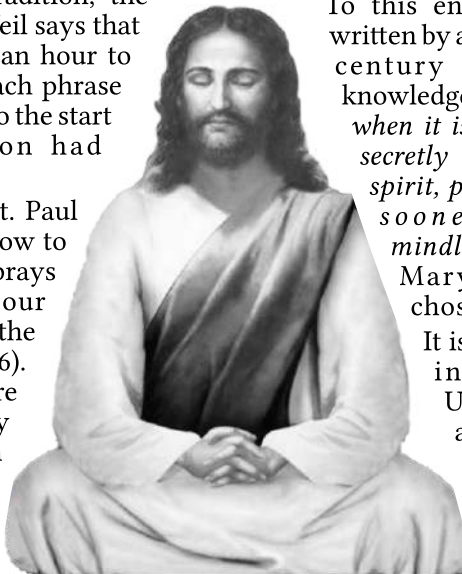
Meister Eckhart, the Dominican monk in the 13th century, was one of the first to suggest that God is a mystery and cannot be completely known or described by words, images and thoughts alone. Beyond words, images and thoughts, God's presence must be experienced as real. In faith we must believe in the Real Presence of the Risen Lord within us and in silence allow ourselves to be enfolded by his love.

To this end 'The Cloud of Unknowing' written by an anonymous author in the 14th century glorifies 'experience' over knowledge. *"A short word of one syllable, when it is not just spoken or thought but secretly intended in the depth of the spirit, pierces the ears of almighty God sooner than any long Psalm mindlessly mumbled in the mouth".* Mary rather than Martha has chosen the better part.

It is worth noting that at this point in history we are still the Undivided Church. With the advent of the Reformation, the Western Church felt the need to formulate doctrines to ensure orthodoxy both in belief and practice. It gave the Church a sense of identity. Reliance on the right formula, however,

created a distrust in 'personal' religious experience even though guidance for the discernment of spirits was available. Personal prayer became reduced to thinking about God. Vocal prayer became the norm.

Contemplative prayer became the prerogative of priests, monks and religious. Meanwhile in the Eastern Christian Tradition, this practice continued to flourish and nourish the spiritual lives of the lay faithful. This is the Hesychastic Tradition obscured in the West, obscured but not obliterated. *The Practice of the Presence of God*, a spiritual classic written by a Carmelite Friar in the 17th century shows how the suggestion of St. Paul to pray at all times and continuously is to be understood and practised. Hesychasm is a contemplative monastic tradition in the Eastern Orthodox Church in which stillness is sought



through uninterrupted "Jesus Prayer". *The Way of a Pilgrim*, a Russian classic in the Hesychastic tradition, introduces us to it and is also called the Prayer of the Name. By constant repetition of the Name of Jesus we are able to come to an inner stillness, an awareness of the Presence of God within us. In our own day, John Main, a Benedictine monk, recovered for us this practice in the Western Church, putting in touch once again with a long lost tradition. This teaching re-establishes the link between the Eastern and Western Christian Tradition in the practice of Contemplative Prayer.

From Word into Silence: The practice of using a single word (mantra) to come into inner stillness is part of a Universal Spiritual Tradition. This 'method' practised within the context of our Christian faith assumes a special importance in the context of Jesus Christ WORD of God made flesh. The book of Genesis speaks to us of God's Creative Word. Creation is the Word that emerges from the Eternal Silence of God. Meister Eckhart said, "There is nothing more like God than Silence". The Word made flesh dwells within us. This Mysterious Silent Presence of the Spirit of the Risen Lord can only be accessed through coming into inner silence.

The practice of Meditation provides us with a simple means of doing so. Simple does not mean easy, since as soon as we attempt to travel along this road in a Journey to our Centre, we realise

that we are 'wired for distraction'. The Desert Fathers and Mothers had long since realised that "Distraction" is in fact the "Original Sin". We are made in the image and likeness of God. Having turned our attention away from the God within us, we carefully construct an alternative self to deal with the trauma of facing our own nothingness apart from God. Paying attention to the 'self', worshipping it, is the worst form of idolatry.

The first commandment asks us to worship only the LORD our God. The first of the beatitudes given to us by Jesus, Word of God lets us know that this can only be accomplished by the poverty of spirit. The poverty of the single verse / word-phrase free of images, and thoughts takes us beyond "ourselves" into the awareness of our BEING IN GOD. It brings us in the words of John Cassian "with ready ease to the first of the beatitudes". Disobedience is a failure to 'listen'. Obedience happens when in SILENCE we begin once more to listen to the WORD within, when like Mary treasure it within us and allow it to become flesh.



Christopher Mendonca is a writer on Spirituality in the Christian Biblical Tradition. He is committed to teaching the practice of Christian Meditation, as part of the World Community of Christian Meditation (WCCM) in the Archdiocese of Bombay.



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

**Poonam & Gaurang Mehta,
Kanjurmarg, Mumbai**

We wish to sponsor a child at Balbhavan for a year, the donation amount being Rs.15,000. We have been sponsoring a child every year and would like to continue doing so.

Saveena David, Dubai, U.A.E.

I would like to contribute AED 357.84 i.e. INR 8,000 for sponsoring meals for the children at Balbhavan for a day.

Rita Dias/Jane & Sydney Dunbar, Canada

As a token of thanksgiving to Ven. Fr. Agnel, we wish to donate an amount of Rs.15,000 to Fr. Agnel Ashram and the Balbhavan orphanage. We are ever so thankful to Fr. Agnel for favours received all throughout our lifetime.

Antoinette Lobo, Canada

Kindly accept our donation of Rs. 8,000 towards the sponsorship of lunch for the Balbhavan children. This is in thanksgiving and on the

occasion of the wedding of my son Kristophen Lobo, which took place during the Covid-19 period. Since we could not celebrate the occasion at that time, we would now like to sponsor lunch for the kids of the orphanage.

**Praveen Madhur Srivastava,
Kandivili, Mumbai**

Please accept my donation of Rs. 65,000 towards Fr. Agnel Ashram and the Balbhavan orphanage. It gives me great joy to donate, month after month, year after year and see the children doing well.

Honorine Nachia, Bangalore

I would like to send you my annual donation which in the past used to be for an orphan boy at Balbhavan. I would like to continue my sponsorship with a love offering of Rs.15,000.

Baldev Banshi Darira, Andheri, Mumbai

I am happy to contribute Rs. 20,00,000 towards the care of the Balbhavan children across India. It is in memory of my dearest mother Anila Banshi Darira. Keep up the good work, Fr. Agnel Ashram.

CANCER - A BLESSING

-Ninette D'Souza

The crab which represents the zodiac sign of Cancer, is the eponym of the illness, Cancer. Just as the sharp, strong grip of a crab pinch can be quite painful, so is the immense agony of cancer sufferers and their companions. I have ceded three family members to this dreadful disease. Although cancer won the battle, I espied them fighting the good fight, they finished the race with aplomb, they kept the faith. The indomitable spirit displayed by them gave me, my husband and my sister, their primary care givers respectively, the strength to carry on. This article is a testimony.



For those battling the ailment, hang in there. As David Koch, the accomplished businessman, engineer and philanthropist, survivor of prostate cancer, himself, affirms, "You know, once you've stood up to cancer, everything else feels like a pretty easy fight." There is no time or place for negative energy, as you handle the malaise. I know it is easier said, than done.



As mentioned earlier, FAITH, though it may not make things easy, it most certainly makes them possible. Difficulties in varying proportions come to those dealing with an incurable (most of the time) affliction, like cancer. These do not come to destroy us, but to help us realize our hidden potential. Let the difficulties you are facing, know that, 'You Are Difficult'.

The truth is, what we desire, is almost always, not what we get. But unknowingly, we get much more than what we expect. These are called 'Blessings'. Life is full of small perfect moments. Claim each one of yours by living in the present. Enjoy and love every moment of your life – pain, chemo, radiation, hair fall et al. There is no system to get a refund on an unused life.

Daddy Dearest

June 1996 - my dad was displaying a sore throat that wasn't healing. Our family doctor advised a visit, to a dental oncologist. Our worst fears were confirmed. The cancer had taken hold of the larynx and the oesophagus. My dad had difficulty in breathing, speaking and swallowing. My tears welled up each time I heard him wheeze, while

drawing in a deep breath or watched him cough and puke, as food got stuck while eating.

During surgery, at Holy Family Hospital, Bandra, Dr. Ian D'Souza, was forced to cut off quite a bit of dad's jaw. Hence post-surgery he had to ingest soft, really soft food. My mum had passed away a couple of years before and dad was living all alone. Fortunately, I lived in the building opposite his. At this point of time, I was on a break from school, so I was able to attend to him. As his condition deteriorated, I had to grind everything to a liquidy paste in the mixer, so that he could sip it slowly through an extra wide, disposable straw. As his end drew near, a tracheostomy was done, to ease his discomfort and make his last days a wee bit easier.

Despite the cancer wrecking his body, that November, my dad travelled to Goa and back, by bus, to attend the inauguration of the new house my sister had constructed. He longed to live through till December 1997, when my elder son would receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, but it was not meant to be. My dad left for his heavenly abode in February 1997. In his case it would be so right to say, the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak.

Micromanaging everything... my dad's illness, looking after my family and conducting my tuition classes, really took a toll of me. My take away? Delegate responsibilities. Superheroes are good in reel life, not in the real one.

The Affable Father-in-Law

My father-in-law who lived in Goa was diagnosed with colon cancer in May 2000. One of his legs (up to the knee) had already been amputated on account of gangrene. During one of our daily 9 pm phone calls, he pleaded with my husband, saying, 'Son take me to Mumbai. I will die here miserably'. Much against the wishes of his brothers and sisters settled in Goa, my husband brought Pop to us. Again, it was Dr. Ian who on opening him, realised the cancer had spread through the abdominal cavity, fitted a colostomy bag and sent Pop home, with a time frame of 3 – 6 months. Pop passed away on the 4th of November 2020. Regrets? NONE whatsoever. I had learnt to adhere to the act, of trusting in the Lord's plan for our lives.

The most satisfying action in life, is to build a bridge of hope, on a sea of despair. This is what caregivers do, day in and day out... 24 x 7, as long as it takes ... weeks, months, maybe even a year or more.

All involved in the care of a cancer patient need to understand that your every deed, is like a seed. So, choose wisely,



as each will grow either thorns or flowers. In order to try and keep our suffering family member free of stress, most of us tend to avoid kerfuffles in the family, sweeping everything under the carpet, to be dealt with, later. We bottle it all up and one day it explodes, without warning. Then the simplest of issues get exacerbated.

My 2 bit of advice to families struggling with cancer is... Please don't let it usurp familial bonds. Don't live in the crosshairs. A cancer patient and his/her primary care giver, along with the extended family, relatives, neighbours and friends, are all in it, together. They see everything together, walk the same road of life, together. So yes, all are suffering, either physiologically or psychologically. "Happiness is always a choice. You can't wait for circumstances to get better. You have to create your own good fortune. So, look for ways to be happy every day." – Joel Osteen.

My brother-in-law was detected with pancreatic/bile duct cancer, in June 2018. In Mumbai we made the rounds of all the top-notch hospitals, meeting oncologists who specialised in this virulent form. The verdict was the same ...surgery was not an option; chemotherapy might shrink the tumour and give him a little longer lease of life than the 18 months assured. Once back in Kuwait where they lived, their children continued the search for the answer, all of us were looking for. Charles left us in September 2019.

Relatives, friends, neighbours, offer your time, if not an entire day at least a couple of hours and give the caregiver a break. Book an appointment at a salon, send them window shopping. If they wish to throw off the cloak of Martha and become Mary for a while, spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, encourage them. Form a WhatsApp group and together pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. If 3 o'clock is zzzzzzz time no problem, pray at 2 or 4 pm. The Lord's mercy is available 24 x 7. Another very refining prayer is the Liberation rosary, available on the internet. One of the greatest gifts a person can give to another, especially in trying times like these, is, SUPPORT. It could be logistical or through prayer. JUST BE THERE. When you focus on being a blessing to others, God makes sure that you are always blessed in abundance.

'Close the Care Gap'

From 2022 – 2024, this has been the theme for world cancer day, commemorated on 4th February, each year. Dear caregivers, some journeys need no road, only a willing heart. Cancer and the recent pandemic have shown us that, life has its own plan for us. Some of the most beautiful moments of our lives, are actually unplanned and taking care of that cancer patient, may just vivify that flicker of Faith, whose embers are beginning to slowly, die out. You are the ones, to inspire, challenge and make the patient want to live.



Ninette D'Souza is a prolific writer and retired teacher of Canossa High School, Mahim.



AGNEL HAPPENINGS

'JOY OF GIVING WEEK'

celebrated by Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune



Spreading love with Louis Braille NGO

Soaking in the spirit of sharing is caring, the Joy of Giving Week is an event that is observed every year at Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune. It is celebrated with lots of enthusiasm, reflecting the spirit of empathy and generosity of the students, teachers and parents. This year, it was held from 16th to 20th January.

The celebration commenced by educating the students about the joy of giving by narrating stories and showing videos related to the Joy of Giving during assembly and inculcating the value of sharing and giving. The school organized a Cleanliness Drive. Every student, along with teachers, was an essential part of this drive. Every day, the students cleaned the various parts of the school which inculcated the idea of keeping the school, home, locality and city clean.

'Ek Muthi Aanaj' activity was carried out. Students and staff collected various groceries like sugar, tur dal, moong dal, chana dal and oil.

On 20th January 2023, to commemorate Fr. Agnel's Jayanti, Patrons Day and Joy of Giving were celebrated. A small skit 'Moments of Joy of Giving' was performed with a message that if you give with love and silence in your heart, God will bless you.

Groceries collected by the students were donated to the NGOs like Snehalaya, Shree Mukabadhira, Mauli Balak Ashram, Louis Braille, and Sarthak Vrudhashram.

The programme concluded with NGOs expressing their gratitude towards the school and the children.

ANNUAL SPORTS MEET 2022-23

celebrated by Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune

The Annual Sports Meet of Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune was held on 1st and 2nd December 2022 for the students of Nursery to Std. 9th. Fr. Aloysius Gonsalves, the Parish Priest of Christ the King, Mr. Arvind Shivale, the member of the Pune District Association, Dr. Wilson Andrews, the Technical Director for Futsal Association of India and Dr. Fr. Arun Anthony Chully, the Director of Christ College, Pune, were the chief guests for the sports days.

The students presented a spectacular March Past and parade. Races such as obstacle race, sprint

races, relay races and team events such as cricket, football, basketball, and throwball were held. The winners were awarded with trophies, medals and certificates. Students performed beautiful, enthralling drills such as Flower drill, Peacock drill, Umbrella drill, Aerobics, Zumba, Sports dance and Lezim. The house trophy was won by the Compassion house and the Runner-up position was secured by the Honesty house.

The programme concluded with a grand finale which spoke about the theme of the year 'Let us be Human'.



The proud winners of the Annual Sports Meet 2022-23

FR. AGNEL SCHOOL, VASHI

wins DSO Boys U/14 State Level Football Tournament

The DSO Boys U/14 State Level Football Tournament was held at Krida Sankul Ground, Sambhaji Nagar, Kolhapur on 29th January 2023.

The quarter finals were played between Krida Prabhdani from Pune division and Fr. Agnel School, Vashi from Mumbai division. Nathan Vaz and Ziyaan Shaikh from Agnells scored one goal each helping Agnells win 2-1 to reach the semi-finals.

The semi-finals had Bishop's School, Pune playing against Fr. Agnel which the Agnells team won with Rio Pane and Nethan Vaz scoring one goal each.

The final match between New Maharashtra School, Kolhapur pitted against Agnells was a clinching win for the Agnel team with a score of 5-0. Agnelites Ryan Pereira scored two goals while Rio Pane, Adavet Salunkhe and Ziyaan Shaikh scored one goal each for the winning team.

The Agnells team was led by school coaches Suprit Jathanna, Jerome Dias, Harinder Mall and Severin Godinho. Rev. Fr. S. Almeida, Managing Director of Fr. Agnel School, Vashi, himself travelled with the team to encourage the players and win the trophy for Fr. Agnells.



The winning football team with the school coaches and Rev. Fr. S. Almeida, Managing Director of Fr. Agnel School, Vashi (seated second from right).

Saint John – the Beloved Apostle

-Sunil D'Cruz

The apostle John, brother of James, was nicknamed by Jesus as one of the “sons of thunder”, but he liked to call himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” in his own Gospel. Together, with their father Zebedee, the brothers were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus called them to follow him.

John, one of the first apostles, was a beloved friend of Jesus Christ, the writer of five books of the New Testament and a pillar of the early Christian church who helped spread the gospel message. He is credited with writing the Gospel of John, the letters 1 John, 2 John and 3 John; and the Book of Revelation.

John and his brother James later became part of Christ's inner circle, along with the Apostle Peter. These three (Peter, James, and John) were privileged to be with Jesus at the raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead, at the transfiguration, and during Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Apostle John began his gospel account by identifying Jesus as the Word of God, the second person in the Trinity, and present with God the Father at Creation. Jesus, the Word of God, encompasses all rituals and rules regarding sacrifice. Every biblical sacrifice pointed towards Jesus. The meaning and context of John 1:29 is significant to the Christian faith because Jesus sacrificed His own life for ours.

John continually emphasizes that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, sent by the Father to take away the sins of the world. He uses many symbolic titles for Jesus, such as the Lamb of God, resurrection, and the vine. Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus uses the phrase “I am,” unmistakably identifying himself with Jehovah, the Great “I AM” or eternal God.

The Gospel of John was written to help people believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John writes, “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name” (20:30-31). John writes a very intimate and personal story of Jesus who died for us to provide us eternal life.

John was especially loyal to Jesus. He was the only one of the 12 apostles present at the Crucifixion on Mount Calvary. The Gospel readings during

the Holy Week are from the Gospel of John.

A previous relationship with Joseph Caiaphas allowed John to be present in the high priest's house during Jesus' trial. On the cross, Jesus entrusted the care of his mother, Mary, to John, who took her into his home (John 19:27). On Easter Sunday, when Mary Magdalene told the disciples that the stone of the tomb was rolled away, Peter and John ran to the tomb but John outran Peter only to find the linen cloth still there but not Jesus since he had risen, thereby defeating death.

After Pentecost, John teamed up with Peter to fearlessly preach the gospel in Jerusalem and suffered beatings and imprisonment for it. He

then moved to work in the church at Ephesus. He supposedly outlived all of the disciples, dying of old age at Ephesus, perhaps about A.D. 98. John is the only apostle of Jesus to die a natural death.

The Gospel of John is full of heart and soul since he reports what he saw, heard and experienced

straight from Jesus. Here are some well-known passages from his Gospel:

John 14:6: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

John 11:25-26 “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

John 15: 5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

John underwent a remarkable transformation as a disciple, from the quick-tempered Son of Thunder to the compassionate apostle of love. This happened because John experienced the unconditional love of Jesus firsthand and he preached that love in his gospel and letters.



Saint John, the Apostle.



Sunil D'Cruz is on the Editorial team of Fr. Agnel Ashram News.

SAINT VALENTINE – Patron Saint of Lovers

-Christine D'Sylva

Your flaws are perfect for the heart that is meant to love you.

February is a month that has the shortest days and it is also a month renowned for being a romantic month for sweethearts all over the world.

14th February is celebrated as Valentine's Day. It is named after St. Valentine. It is a day for lovers to acknowledge their love for each other by gifts, cards, flowers and other romantic gestures.

So who was St. Valentine? Was he a romantic saint of sweethearts? St. Valentine was a Roman priest and physician. Valentine served as a priest in the third century in Rome.

Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those who were wed with wives and families. Thus he outlawed marriage for young men. This was certain unjust at least according to Valentine. He felt this was not morally right. Therefore he decided to go against the law in a covert secretive manner. He performed marriages for many young lovers in secret.

Now this could certainly not go on forever. Someone would have tattled about it and this reached the ears of the Emperor. When Valentine's actions were discovered by the Emperor, he flew into a rage. He ordered that Valentine be put to death. Thus Valentine became a martyr when he was beheaded.

According to one legend, the imprisoned Valentine sent a valentine greeting to the daughter of his jailor whom he fell in love with. In that letter he signed - From your Valentine. This expression is still used today.

We are not quite sure about the accuracy of the legends of Valentine but one thing is common - all the stories are romantic and heroic. They paint a picture of a man who believed fiercely in true love and the sanctity of marriage.

By the Middle Ages, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France. It was at the end of the 5th century when Pope Gelasius I declared 14th February as St. Valentine's Day.

During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in countries like France and England that February 14 was the beginning of the bird's mating season. And this added to the idea that this should be a day for romance.

The oldest known valentine was written in 1415, by Charles, Duke of Orleans to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following



his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. Several years later it was believed that King Henry the fifth hired a writer named John Lydgate to compose a valentine note to Catherine of Valois.

According to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated 145 million Valentine Day cards are sold each year making Valentine's Day the second largest card sending occasion while Christmas occupies the first place. So Valentine's Day is a day of romance for lovers all over the globe.

However, if we recall Christ's second commandment - You shall love thy neighbour as thyself, then we can conclude that great love does not necessarily mean romance. It can encompass all the many forms of love, love shared between siblings, between parents and kids and between friends. But keeping in mind the teachings of Christ, love should mean we must be Good Samaritans.

According to the parable of Jesus, we learn a Good Samaritan is a person who helps other people, especially strangers when they are in trouble. So it is easy to be good to our friends but we must also be good to those whom we do not particularly like or regard as our enemies. Let us widen this definition to include all living forms of life, animals and plants who were also created by Our Heavenly Father. We must show care and concern for all living things in earth for they were created with love by God. Let us not regard other living creatures as lower than us, but respect and love them just as Jesus did.

On Valentine's Day, let us not just focus on the romantic aspect of it, although we should, but also broaden our definition of romance to include a deep passionate love for all God's creatures on this planet. Our motto this Valentine's Day should be - To love and to serve our fellowmen and to extend our appreciation, concern and respect for all living creatures on our planet. This will certainly please Jesus Christ for love is the basis of Christianity.

Happy Valentine's Day!



Christine is an author of 30 books available on Amazon worldwide in paperback and Kindle. She also enjoys playing the piano and has a YouTube cooking channel Christine D'Sylva's fusion kitchen.

IN A WORLD FULL OF SCIENCE...

-Tancia Pires

"Good morning, Alexa! Please switch off the alarm, and turn on the lights!" said the father, and rushed to brush his teeth with his electric toothbrush.

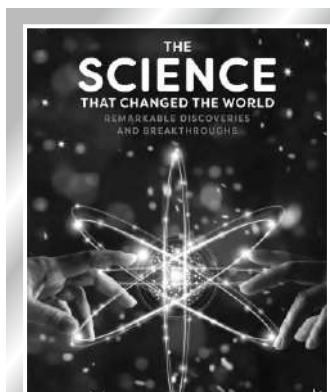
"Mom, why isn't hot water pouring from the shower?" screamed the little boy in dismay, "It's winter, so the solar panels haven't warmed up apparently, switch on the geyser, son!" replied the mother in haste. She turned around and continued preparing French fries in the air-fryer, as the bread from the toaster snapped up at that very instant. While all this multi-tasking was going on, she yelled at her daughter who was buried in her smartphone, even before getting ready for school! But finally, all got ready, just in time. They left home in their electric car and zoomed off to their respective destinations.

So has life become nowadays, where we see science exploited practically in almost everything we do, be it at home, the workplace, or anywhere else. Right from the discovery of making fire by striking stones against each other to igniting a flame with a click of a switch, we've come a long way. Undoubtedly, we are marching towards advancement in different fields of science at an astonishing pace. To commemorate this advancement, every year we celebrate February 28th as 'National Science Day' with great fervour, to honour the discovery of the "Raman Effect" by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman. He received the Nobel Prize in 1930 for his discovery. The

celebration could be for a day or even for a week, across the masses especially at schools, colleges, universities, etc. through various science-related, theme-based activities, like discussions, model presentations, quizzes, etc. These activities aim to enhance

the student's perspective on science and appreciate various scientists' role in addressing global issues and promoting global wellbeing.

This year, the Science and Technology Minister Shri Jitendra Singh announced the theme for National Science Day 2023: "**Global Science for**



Global Wellbeing". It highlights India's emerging role on the global stage, with some of its thrilling discoveries, and encourages young scientists to expand their horizons, and take Indian discoveries and advances to a global platform.

Each year we celebrate this day and applaud all the scientific laurels, get inspired, and may indulge in more relatable reading, experimenting etc. Yes! That is a necessary and essential step for the growth and

achievement in the scientific field. But, do we take time and ponder over the fact that we often end up indulging in misusing or at times squandering many of the innovative inventions instead of judiciously putting them to beneficial use for the betterment of our lives? For example, the opioids that were discovered by physicians, as an analgesic (pain-killer) are today a major liability for substance abuse and are leading to a large number of drug addicts most of whom are the youth of today.

The smartphone developed by tech experts is not just a mode of communication but is endowed with the qualities of a calculator, camera, calendar, recorder, radio, television, storage device, etc. but nowadays, we see people engaging in cyber-crime, breaching people's privacy, and destroying lives. Ethical hacking for criminal investigations is one thing and intruding in somebody's personal space, morphing pictures or related 'deep fakes' is a truly questionable practice.



Humans are now living like an island drifting away from family and friends just for virtual acquaintances on social media or by spending endless hours playing virtual sports or games (especially the overrated PUBG, Blue whale challenge, etc.).

Intelligence in physics and nuclear medicine is used to invent explosives and armed weapons, with the actual purpose of defence but however, a person with bad intent could obviously use it to cause harm. We are already witnessing the rise in waging wars and disruption of global peace

among humanity. People are investing their brilliance, time, and energy in genetically engineering a human child with desirable qualities and skills that are so-called conforming to the unsaid societal rules of acceptance. Genetically altering genes aimed at disease resistance, or correction of a probable abnormality is no doubt, beneficial and truly commendable, but, creating 'designer babies' with higher intelligence or desirable features of appearance is highly controversial and seems unnecessary especially when we are completely unaware of the long-term side effects of this technique.

Another process recently in talks is a simulator called 'ectolife' that is ready to replace the human womb! A highly bewildering discovery, could sound like a solution to problems of infertile women or to those with risks and complications in conceiving, but what about the larger picture, where human is trying to mechanize everything including the process of natural reproduction? Why are we trying to modify this beautiful creation that we already are, created with such intricacy and perfection? Are we trying to take the place of God in the name of science and development? Why are we becoming inhumane, insensitive and indulging into ethically unruly behaviour?

We are talking about 'space colonization' or 'martian inhabitation' while bruising and hurting our very own Mother Earth. Why are we forgetting our ethical responsibility towards our own planet? Why don't we try to use our intelligence and brilliance in conserving our nature and safeguarding it for the future? These are just a few examples taken from the vast ocean

of inventions and discoveries from the ample branches of science.

This science day, let us pledge to, make judicious use of our resources, and use our intelligence, ability, power, and energy to think, create, invent and discover for enhancing lives without negatively impacting the natural balance between various ecosystems, without degrading the essence of life and humanity, by not stooping down below the levels of ethical acceptance where we forget our virtues, morals and the rights of every living creature.

Let us grow in knowledge, and skill, and march forward toward a brighter and better future with an advanced way of living. Let us try to broaden our horizons, dream big and achieve bigger, but truly not at the cost of humanity and global peace. Let us not try to become 'God.'

Overpowering others or taking control of all natural things shouldn't be our motto. Let the well-being of others, the well-being of nature, and as a whole well-being of our planet be the very aim and objective of all scientific advancements and technical developments. Let not greed for wealth or power make us do things that our conscience wouldn't agree with. Let us stay humble yet soar higher keeping good morals and values intact and truly abide by the virtue of "**Global Science for Global Wellbeing**"!!



***Tancia Pires** from Goa is currently pursuing Masters in Medical Imaging technology, a branch of Radiology. She is passionate about writing, acting and singing.*





FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

PASSED CA EXAMINATION

KHANJURMARG (W): My prayers have been answered. After praying to Ven. Fr. Agnelo, my son has passed his CA examination. Previously, he had made many unsuccessful attempts. A thanksgiving offering of Rs. 500 has been given to the Ashram.

-M. D. Iyer

FAVOURS RECEIVED

UTTAN: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have received many favours. With a grateful heart, I have made a love offering of Rs. 500 to Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-D. A. Bhandari

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESSFUL DENTAL SURGERY

GOREGAON: I am very much thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for undergoing a successful dental surgery. I have come to the Ashram and made an offering.

-M. Gracias

THANKSGIVING IN HONOUR OF FR. AGNEL FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

VASAI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, our family has been blessed abundantly. With a grateful heart, I have come to the Ashram and made a love offering.

-S. George

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

SURAT: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have received many blessings. A love offering has been given to Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-A. Parmar

THANKSGIVING FOR GRANTING OF WISHES

VIRAR: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my wishes have been fulfilled. A thanksgiving offering has been given to the Ashram.

-V. Rodrigues

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

MUMBAI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, many prayer requests have been granted. A thanksgiving offering of Rs 500 has been given to the Ashram.

-E. Pereira

THANKSGIVING FOR INTERCESSION

MIRA ROAD: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my prayer requests have been answered. A thanksgiving offering of Rs. 200 has been sent to the Ashram.

-J. Cardoz

BLESSINGS ON FAMILY

ANDHERI (E): Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my family has been blessed abundantly. A thanksgiving offering has been given to the Ashram.

-A. Vaz

THANKSGIVING FOR SEVERAL FAVOURS

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: I have sent a money transfer of INR 10,000. This is my thanksgiving offering for the many favours received, especially relating to receiving our visas for Australia, for our son's excellent results in his Master's Degree final exam, good health for all the family members, and for his intercessions for our daughter's wedding plans successfully falling into place last month.

-Swaroop/S. E. D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

VASAI: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for receiving blessings on my birthday. With a grateful heart, I have come to the Ashram and made a love offering.

-E. Figer

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

KARNATAKA: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for helping me in many ways. I have sent an offering to the Ashram.

-W. Rodrigues

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

S. Gandhi	U.S.A.	39,000	L. Shetty	Thane	3,100	P. Mary	Kerala	2,000
A. D'Souza	Mumbai	27,000	C. Mathias	Mumbai	3,100	P. Jose	Kerala	2,000
R. Thakkar	Mumbai	26,200	Pravin/Vimla	Mumbai	3,001	S. Sangeetha	Mumbai	2,000
M. Fernandes	Mumbai	20,000	M. Lam	Mumbai	3,000	J. Augustine	Kerala	2,000
P. Ved	Mumbai	18,000	P. Mendonca	Mumbai	3,000	C. Engles	Punjab	2,000
Steffie	Goa	15,000	M. Sheth	Mumbai	3,000	L. Thomas	Kerala	2,000
P. Rajak	Mumbai	10,500	M. D'Souza	Mumbai	3,000	P. Nayagam	Mumbai	2,000
Davis T.J.	Kerala	10,000	P. Kadam	Mumbai	3,000	Charles	Karnataka	2,000
G. Varghese	Kerala	10,000	Simi K.	U.S.A.	3,000	Mary A.	Kerala	2,000
S. Castalino	U.A.E.	10,000	Lifeway Holidays	Kerala	3,000	K. Limbaji	Maharashtra	2,000
A. Fernandes	Mumbai	10,000	G. Patel	Mumbai	3,000	A. Coutinho	Vasai	2,000
S. Saldanha	Karnataka	10,000	F. Thekketh	Kerala	3,000	M. James	Kerala	2,000
Rina/John	New Zealand	10,000	D. Hsiung	Mumbai	3,000	T. Menezes	Mumbai	2,000
K. Shah	Mumbai	10,000	S. Valan	Tamil Nadu	3,000	A. Dass	Pune	2,000
H. Gantzer	Uttarkhand	10,000	Marian	Mumbai	3,000	P. Ghosalkar	Mumbai	2,000
J. Nazareth	Kerala	10,000	Joseph/Hilda	Canada	3,000	Sarah	Mumbai	2,000
F. D'Souza	Thane	10,000	Techno Products	Chennai	3,000	Fatima F.	Mumbai	2,000
S. Peres	Mumbai	10,000	N. Nayak	Maharashtra	3,000	L. Shinde	Pune	2,000
R. Hatkar	Mumbai	10,000	M. Cardoz	Mumbai	3,000	S. Kavita	Mumbai	1,500
N. Asher	Mumbai	9,100	S. Inigo	Tamil Nadu	3,000	M. Fernandes	Mumbai	1,500
G. Lobo	Karnataka	8,400	J. Manjali	Kerala	2,500	S. Kavita	Mumbai	1,500
S. George	Oman	8,000	G. Coutinho	Karnataka	2,500	T. Lobo	Thane	1,500
S. David	Dubai	8,000	F. Almeida	Mumbai	2,500	G. Fonseca	Mumbai	1,500
S. Vanvaria	Mumbai	8,000	Techno Products	Chennai	2,500	C. Rodrigues	Mumbai	1,500
S. Britto	Palghar	8,000	Jain T.	Kerala	2,500	A. Jadhav	Kerala	1,500
Rajam/Anne	Mumbai	7,000	S. Dalvi	Mumbai	2,500	C. D'Souza	Mumbai	1,500
W.Fernandes	Mumbai	6,000	A. Pinto	Thane	2,500	A. Kuttikadan	Thane	1,500
Ramani/Borgaonkar	Mumbai	6,000	D. Gandhi	Gujarat	2,300	M. Satellite	Mumbai	1,500
R. Muniz	Mumbai	6,000	B. Jain	Mumbai	2,196	S. Cardozo	Mumbai	1,500
Z. Bharucha	Vasai	5,001	P. Ghosalkar	Mumbai	2,100	A. Shah	Mumbai	1,500
C. Monteiro	Mumbai	5,000	S. Venkataramanan	Mumbai	2,100	H. Mehta	Mumbai	1,500
D. D'Souza	Mumbai	5,000	J. Desai	Gujarat	2,001	K. Christie	Gujarat	1,500
P. Pai	Mumbai	5,000	J. D'Souza	Mumbai	2,000	Aditi Shinde	Mumbai	1,500
J. Puthur	Kerala	5,000	A. Elavia	Mumbai	2,000	T. Punnen	Kerala	1,500
A. D'Souza	Goa	5,000	B. Rani	Mumbai	2,000	J. Menezes	Mumbai	1,500
D. Fernandes	Vasai	5,000	K. Savla	Delhi	2,000	M. D'Mello	Thane	1,250
J. Rose	Kerala	5,000	K. Sangani	Mumbai	2,000	N. Bhavani	Mumbai	1,200
S. Ethel	Tamil Nadu	5,000	Cranetech Eqpts.	Mumbai	2,000	H. Gala	Mumbai	1,200
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5,000	N. Rodrigues	Mumbai	2,000	A. Christopher	Tamil Nadu	1,200
V. Pijwala	Gujarat	5,000	C. B Mi	Pune	2,000	S. Saravade	Mumbai	1,200
R. Parikh	Mumbai	5,000	J. Jose	Kerala	2,000	X. Gomes	Kolkata	1,200
A. Lobo	Mumbai	5,000	J. Jacob	Thane	2,000	N. Amodara	Gujarat	1,100
Godfrey	Mumbai	5,000	T. Xavier	Kerala	2,000	D. Gupta	Mumbai	1,100
J. Lewis	Mumbai	5,000	P. Dias	Hyderabad	2,000	Pathare	Mumbai	1,100
R. Ghosh	Mumbai	5,000	J. Saldanha	Mumbai	2,000	I. Kapadia	Lonavala	1,100
Z. Bharucha	Vasai	5,000	B. Khimasiya	Mumbai	2,000	M. Thakkar	Mumbai	1,100
Shalini	Karnataka	5,000	J. D'Souza	Mumbai	2,000	T. Gandhi	Mumbai	1,100
E. Lewis	Mumbai	5,000	B. Rani	Mumbai	2,000	M. Rukhana	Mumbai	1,008
C. DeSouza	Mumbai	5,000	O. D'Silva	Mumbai	2,000	B. Asani	Mumbai	1,008
J. Gill	Mumbai	5,000	A. D'Souza	Mumbai	2,000	G. Dumasia	Mumbai	1,001
K. Kapadia	Pune	5,000	F. Solanki	Mumbai	2,000	H. Hirjidama	Mumbai	1,001
Joseph J.	Kerala	5,000	E. Pious	Kerala	2,000	Louis D'Souza	Mumbai	1,001
Jean/Osmund	Mumbai	5,000	P. Hendricks	Tamil Nadu	2,000	Lionel D'Souza	Mumbai	1,001
V. Albuquerque	Mumbai	5,000	S. Robert	Kerala	2,000	K. Talikoti	Thane	1,001
D. Valentine	Kerala	5,000	P. Michael	Kerala	2,000	A. Makwan	Gujarat	1,001
G. Fernandes	Amravati	5,000	G. Ratos	Mumbai	2,000	A. D'Souza	Mumbai	1,000
M. Lopes	Vasai	5,000	R. Francis	Kerala	2,000	K. Surti	Mumbai	1,000
S. D'Abreo	Vasai	5,000	Isola	Mumbai	2,000	M. Dias	Vasai	1,000
S. Rodrigues	Vasai	5,000	Fitech Inds.	Mumbai	2,000	N. Bhavani	Mumbai	1,000
S. Machado	Palghar	5,000	L. Menezes	Mangalore	2,000	P. Almeida	Palghar	1,000
C. Unwala	Mumbai	5,000	V. Karanjia	Mumbai	2,000	A. Dias	Vasai	1,000
C. Sebastian	Kerala	5,000	I. D'Souza	Mumbai	2,000	M. Cardoz	Mumbai	1,000
E. D'Silva	Mumbai	4,500	H. Kenny	Mumbai	2,000	J. Monterio	Mumbai	1,000
A. Ramani	Mumbai	4,000	M. Saldanha	Mumbai	2,000	B. Dutt	Kolkata	1,000
S. Parmar	Mumbai	4,000	Y. Fernandes	Mumbai	2,000	P. Thakkar	Thane	1,000
C. Achrekar	Mumbai	4,000	B. Antony	Kerala	2,000	S. D'Souza	Mumbai	1,000
N. Nair	Mumbai	4,000	S. Boarde	Nasik	2,000	R. Ghelani	Mumbai	1,000
B. Joseph	Kerala	4,000	G. Parisutham	Tamil Nadu	2,000	S. Fernando	Mumbai	1,000
G. Pillay	Pune	4,000	S. Tribhuvan	Pune	2,000	J. Adhav	Pune	1,000
C. Alvares	Mumbai	4,000	S. Lopes	Vasai	2,000	G. Katak	Mumbai	1,000
S. Koyande	Thane	3,500	S. Hiralal	Daman & Diu	2,000	W. Rodrigues	Vasai	1,000
S. Shetty	Thane	3,200	R. Valentine	Mumbai	2,000	D. D'Souza	Karnataka	1,000

Bob's Banter

by Robert Clements

Read-Lead like Rishi Sunak..!

A writer rarely has free time, not because he's always writing, but that he's thinking his next article or story or play or plot. But, on those delightfully glorious occasions I find I have that odd hour or two, I pull out a huge volume of short stories by Roald Dahl, and lose myself in his world of fantasy, and unexpected story endings.

I was pleasantly surprised that Dahl is also a favourite author of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak!

What a special day it was for all of us here in India when a country that prided itself in being white outside and white inside too, decided to have a man of Indian origin as their Prime Minister. Something that would have made the likes of

understood then that word is not one that is commonly used, and instead of helping us to master the language may come in the way of communicating with others. You don't want your friends or audience glancing at a dictionary to find out the meaning of what you speak, do you?

They won't and you will remain the most misunderstood person that lived.

But the dictionary you need to use are books!

Read and lead!

In the Writer's and Speaker's course I conduct, I tell my class month after month, to pick bestsellers and instead of reading just content, to carefully read a page and then the next page, studying the way the author has communicated. Very



Become a Powerful Writer and Speaker!

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Winston Churchill and Queen Victoria turn in their respective graves. But as they voted him in, it was not the colour of his skin the Tories saw but his rhetoric, his skill in oratory and his brilliant language!

That skill won him the impossible!

That skill can do the same for anyone of us! And to a very great extent the command over language does not come from learning the dictionary by heart but comes from a passion for reading!

The best textbooks on grammar are not the Wren and Martin we studied in school, but the billions of books written so painstakingly by authors over centuries.

Read and lead!

Many of us think by learning a new word a day or by keeping a lexicon as our study book, we can master the English language. The simple fact is, that if the word needs a dictionary to be

soon the student will be able to do the same.

Not grammar books, nor dictionaries, but novels, short stories or articles.

You want to become a thinker, whose thoughts will be much sought after, read in silence, absorbing each word. You want to become a world leader whose language will convince and whose voice will command, then read aloud. The printed word should become alive in your mind, and then, and then only will you find the truth in the fact that you can read and lead..!

Robert Clements is a newspaper columnist, whose column has graced over 80 newspapers and on certain days has a readership of over 6 million. He can be contacted at bobsbanter@gmail.com



VEN. FR. AGNELO'S 154th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY celebrated at
Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra on 21st January 2023

Most Rev. Lourdes Daniel, Bishop of Nashik,
was the Main Celebrant



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Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan

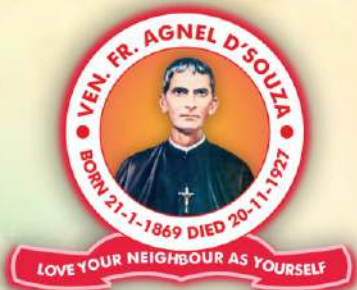
**(Ecumenical Peace Pilgrimage to South Sudan)
31st January – 5th February 2023**



**Pope Francis with the President of the
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo in Kinshasa.**



**Pope Francis with South Sudan's President
Salva Kiir in Juba.**



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