

FR. AGNEL ASHRAN NEWS May-June 2023

RECHARGE RENEW RE-ENERGISE

Vacation time ensures the perfect work-life balance

FR. AGNEL ASHRAM NEWS

MAY-JUNE 2023

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Guest Editorial

Christianity and Pentecost

-Fr. Fio Mascarenhas SJ

There would be no Christianity at all, if fifty days after Jesus Christ rose from the dead, there had not taken place the historical event called **Pentecost**. Moreover, this same event is being repeated daily for the last 2000 years, thus keeping the Church fresh and filled with new vigour, or *new life in the spirit*.

Many Christians (Pentecostals mainly) mistakenly interpret the words, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8) as meaning primarily charismatic gifts for bold preaching with signs and wonders. However, the Catholic Church interprets

"power" more broadly as the giving of God's Spirit to enable disciples to *live Christ-centered lives* daily. The Fourth Eucharistic Prayer of the

Mass explicitly states: "That we might live no longer for ourselves but for him, he sent the Holy Spirit as his first gift to those who believe ..." (This phrase is taken from 2Cor 5:15). As all Christians declare in the Nicene Creed, the Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of Life, who at Pentecost created the new entity of the Body of Christ, in order to perpetuate the dynamic presence of the Risen Lord Jesus in human society forever, and who now continually empowers faithful

Christians to be visible witnesses, living "no longer for themselves *but for him.*"

For this reason, our good Pope Francis, from the beginning of his Pontificate, has been turning the spotlight frequently on the Holy Spirit! Not only did commentators 10 years ago recognize with admiration that his very election was the work of the Holy Spirit, and that his first actions and speeches were wonderfully Spirit-inspired, but Francis himself has, again and again, been calling the whole Church to open herself to the lifegiving action of the Holy Spirit, and to pray often to the Holy Spirit, and to joyfully obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit. At a recent General Audience, he declared, "Men of all times and all places want a life that is full and beautiful, we all feel this desire! And it is the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus pours into our hearts, who fulfils this desire... Let us allow this Paraclete into our hearts!"

Jesus called the Holy Spirit "*another Paraclete,*" an unusual but highly significant title. Outside of the New Testament, *parakaleo* and *parakletos* are used in courtroom contexts, but *in* the New Testament, *in the sense that Jesus intended*, the more correct translation of *Paraclete* is the **Encourager**, someone who stands by us 24x7 to cheer us on, to exhort us to pray, to forgive, to carry the cross, to love like Jesus, etc... (Hence, "Advocate" or "Counsellor" are misleading

> translations because, after all, our lives are not all spent in a courtroom! Moreover, Rom 8:31ff states categorically that a Christian has no need of more Advocates!) When Jesus talks about "another Paraclete," it means that he (Jesus) is himself the first (see 1John 2:1). In this context, the Catholic Catechism (CCC 689,690) teaches us that the sending of the Spirit is simultaneous with the sending of the Son, theirs is a *joint mission* in which the Son and the Spirit are distinct but

inseparable. Their joint mission in us is to make us become more loving, like Jesus; hence Jesus' promise that while he must return to the Father, this other *Paraclete* "*will be with you forever*," he is "*the Spirit of truth*, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you" (Jn 14:16,17).

Perhaps the most important of all biblical texts about the Holy Spirit (of fundamental importance for Christian spirituality) is this one: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,

are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2Cor.3:17,18).

In this text, for the very first time in the whole Bible, the divinity of the Holy Spirit is explicitly stated! St. Paul teaches that the Spirit is not an impersonal force sent by God to be a blessing to a few individuals (as understood in the Old Testament) but the Spirit is God himself, he is the new Self-Gift of God to us in Jesus Christ. About this Divine Spirit, Jesus himself had promised that the Father would give to be "with you forever... because he dwells with you, and will be in you." The Holy Spirit is not a Transitory Guest, but a Permanent Resident!

St. Paul here insists twice that "the Lord is the Spirit" (at the beginning and ending of the text), and goes on to explain that this Divine Spirit gifts us first with the gift of spiritual *freedom*. This "freedom" is not the same as *license* to do whatever one pleases, but *freedom* to live life in obedience to God: "For you were called to freedom; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal 5:13). And again, "God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-discipline" (2Tim 1:7).

Moreover, Paul insists that the continuing work of the Spirit is all about our **transformation into Christ.** By indwelling us 24 hours x 7, the Divine Spirit is busy "*changing us degree by degree into Jesus' likeness.*" Notice that this happens not all once but by degrees! Our "*spirit, psyche and body*" (1Thes 5:23) are complex, and much influenced by subconscious and unconscious resistances to Gospel ideas, values and behaviour patterns, so it will be our lifelong work to cooperate with the Spirit in his "changing us into Jesus." Hence the tense used here by St. Paul is not the past tense, nor the future tense, but the *present continuous* tense: "we all **are being** changed!" Paul expresses in other Letters too his complete confidence in the Spirit at work in us: "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, **God has revealed to us through the Spirit**" (1Cor.2:9f, see also Phil 2:13, Eph 3:20, 2Tm 1:12, etc).

Pentecost is the feast of the Paraclete, of "God gifting himself to us anew in the Holy Spirit" (St. John Paul II). But we must want this Gift personally, and pray for it! Pentecost is not just one more feast in the Church's calendar, to be commemorated and then forgotten until it comes around again a year later, but it is the be-all and end-all of all Christian life. Hence, we must **every day** of our lives do what the Apostles and Mary did, pray with expectant faith for "the promise of the Father." There is no surer way to live our Christianity fruitfully in this ultra secular post-modern world than in the power of this Holy Spirit.



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READER'S FEEDBACK

We have increased the number of pages of Fr. Agnel Ashram News, from 20 to 28, to bring you more interesting articles. We would love to hear from you. Share your views at **agnelashramnews@gmail.com**

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Taking a Break and Planning a Restful Vacation

It's summer time once again! There are many seasons in a year but the most awaited and favourite season of all is summer. Let us also remember that the summer month of May is dedicated to our Blessed Virgin Mary.

Students eagerly look forward to this month as it gives them a chance to stop learning from books, and start living. It also gives them an opportunity to forge a deeper connection with their roots.

There are so many things to do in the summer season. Families love going on vacation and freely take part in different activities like visiting picnic places, resorts, beaches, wildlife

sanctuaries - the options are limitless. However, for a successful and

restful vacation, proper planning is extremely important.

Here's how to plan a restful summer vacation:

Firstly, decide on a destination that suits your budget

and needs. If you prefer a serene environment, choose a place that offers peace and quiet. If you prefer adventure, choose a destination that offers outdoor activities like trekking, bird spotting or cycling. Success of your vacation will depend on successful selection of your destination.

Secondly, all your activities need to be planned in advance. For a restful summer vacation include activities that induce a feeling of happiness and facilitate stress reduction. Begin by identifying your interests and planning activities that align with your passion. For instance, if you love nature, you can plan to visit botanical gardens, national parks, or lakes. Alternatively, you can plan to attend concerts, visit museums, or engage in other activities that make you happy.

Thirdly, book your accommodation well in advance. Finding a suitable accommodation can be challenging during peak season. Book early so -Tony Menezes

as to minimise disappointments or inconveniences. Consider factors like proximity to your activities. Cleanliness, and overall comfort need to be given special consideration.

Fourthly, in your passionate search for the right destination and accommodation, don't leave out the food considerations. Plan your meals ahead of time. Eating healthy and nutritious food is essential to maintaining your well-being during your vacation. Identify restaurants that offer healthy options or choose to cook your meals if you have access to a kitchen or kitchenette. You can also combine your meals with outdoor

activities by way of barbecues, etc.

Lastly, plan for relaxation time. A restful summer vacation should also include time to rest,

reflect, and recharge. Plan for activities that allow you to rest and relax, like reading b o o k s , meditation, or visiting a spa.

Also, consider unplugging from technology to give your mind a break and reduce your stress levels.

In conclusion, planning a restful summer vacation is essential to ensure that you enjoy your time away from work or school. By choosing a suitable destination, planning activities, booking accommodation, planning meals, and making time for relaxation, you can make the most of your vacation. Remember, it's not just about the destination but also about the activities, rest, and relaxation that you experience during your time away and lots of fond memories to carry forward.



Tony Menezes is a writer, aspiring poet, hospitality management professional and animallover.

MARVELLOUS AND MIRACULOUS MOTHER MARY

MOTHER MARY, our Mother in times of distress, our hope beyond all hopes, our Mother who intercedes and pleads for us to the LORD to grant our every prayer, particularly in times of trouble and when there seems to be no solution to our problems.

At Cana, when there was no wine at the wedding, Jesus performed his first miracle at the request of His Mother. Although, Jesus had no permission from God to begin His work on earth or to perform miracles, as His time had not yet come. Even so, at one request from His mother, Jesus turned the

water into wine. God, our Father allowed Jesus to perform this miracle. So tremendous is the power of the word of Mother Mary, and her intercession before God the Father and Jesus Christ. Untiringly, she pleads for us to grant our every prayer.

Can we comprehend the endless number of miracles, Mother Mary performs daily in our lives? Just by reciting the miraculous '3 Hail Marys', 'The Rosary' or the various 'Novenas', especially the one to 'Our Lady of Perpetual Succour'. Hence, the month of May has been dedicated to Mother Mary.

Everytime we attend a Novena, Mother Mary is busy performing miracles for us, granting our prayers, pleading and begging of Her Son Jesus and God, to grant our impossible prayers in hopeless situations, as nothing is impossible for God.

Blessed Mother Teresa's prayer to Mama Mary was "Mary, give me your Heart: so beautiful, so pure, so immaculate; your Heart so full of love and humility that I may be able to receive Jesus in the Bread of Life and love Him as you love Him and serve Him in the distressing guise of the poor."

"From Mary we learn to trust even when all hope is gone." - St. John Paul II.

-Judith de Almeida

In an appearance, to Conchita at Garabandal, Mother Mary gave a message and insisted that the cup of Sin is overflowing. Quoting her message, "Ever less importance is being given to the Holy Eucharist. We should turn the wrath of God away from us by our own efforts. If you ask His forgiveness with a sincere heart. He will pardon you. I, your Mother, through the intercession of St. Michael the Archangel, wish to tell you that you should make amends. You are now being given the last warnings. I love you very much, and I do not

> want your condemnation. Ask Us sincerely and We shall grant your plea...Reflect on the Passion of Jesus."

> In yet another message, Mary speaks about the warning, "This warning is like a punishment, for the good and for the bad: for the good so they can draw closer to God and for the bad to tell them the end of times is near. This is to be the last warning."

> Many of the miraculous weeping pictures or statues of Mother Mary are crying tears, and tears of blood, warning us that the sins we commit are too many to

count, the result of which Mary said that many people will be lost to Satan, only a few will be saved from going to Hell.

St. Padre Pio insisted, **"Say the Rosary and pray** it everyday. The Rosary is the weapon given to us by Mary to use against the tricks of the infernal enemy (Devil)."

Everytime, we are asked why we worship Mother Mary, and why we give her so much importance, it is because of all these reasons, that Mother Mary is called the Queen of Heaven. It is because she is the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Mother in Heaven too. Hence, it is said that, 'IN TIMES OF DARKNESS, HOLDING THE ROSARY IS LIKE HOLDING MARY'S HAND.'



Keep the Lamp Burning

Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning. Give me oil in my lamp, I pray. Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning. Keep me burning till the break of day.

We sing this hymn often since the yesteryears, beseeching the Lord to attune us to the call of the Spirit, to make us joyful, peaceful, faith-filled, bearing fruit in every good work (Col 1:11). **Jesus Is Lord, Now and forever! Now and Forever, Jesus is Lord!** The world is emerging from the pandemic 2020 misery and fallout. On the economic front, we look for better days,

progress and growth. What about the Spiritual front? Our Christian life is a beautiful thing, mysterious, graceful and yet challenging.

Faith is a gift from God given to each one of us to live the Christian life with the ups and downs, twists and turns. The door of faith is always open to the one who wishes to enter and walk ahead. Where does the barometer of our faith stand today? The words of

Pope Francis are thought provoking, "Faith is not a lullaby that lulls us to sleep, but rather a living faith that keeps us wakeful and active even at night."

Faith is a personal gift from the Most Holy Trinity, which each of us have received. Through Baptism, we enter through the door of faith. Participating in the Sacraments, particularly the Eucharist helps us to enliven and nurture our faith. "I will go peaceably and firmly to the Catholic Church for if Faith is so important to our salvation, I will seek it where true faith first began, seek it among those who receive it from God Himself," says St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Many have yet to return to the full participation in the Sacraments.



-Severina Peres

Our faith challenges us to get God's people back to church, to return and gather together as a family of God, to feel His Love and Presence in His people, as we worship corporately as a family. Many of us live our faith by engaging ourselves on various fronts, personal or communitarian. May our Faith help us to lead men and women out of the Desert and towards the place of life, towards the One who gives us life in abundance (Pope Benedict XVI's first sermon).

The time is now to help people to get out from the individualistic tendencies and be one in faith and worship.

> Faith is a precious gift entrusted to the Church by the Triune God. Faith gives us new life and invites us to an intimate relationship with God our Father (Gal 3:26). Faith can be seen as the external manifestation of our inward disposition. As a flower blooms before the fruit appears, so does our faith blooms in prayer before the manifestation of it outwardly. The personal decision is required to accept

this precious gift (Rom 10:16-17).

Faith without works is dead, our ACTIONS must show our faith. Even the slightest doubt can be an obstacle to the grace to grow in a faith-filled life (Mt 14:31). It is not more faith that is required to raise the bar of our faith-filled lives, rather a loving response to God for our Lord has said, "Even if you have faith as small as a mustard seed then nothing will be impossible for you (Mt 17:20)."

In the current situation of climate change and environment degradation, protecting and cherishing creation has become the priority of many. Likewise standing up for the rights of others requires a courageous faith in action. In these struggles to restore life, the Lord will sustain our faith and bring it to completion, for we look to Jesus the Captain and Sustainer of our Faith (Heb 12:2).

Faith is a promise of eternal life, beginning with the here and now. St. Augustine says that faith is to believe those things that you do not see and the reward of it is to see what you believe. The People of God were faced with a lack of the basic requirements of life in the wilderness (Num 14:1-12). It was the faith of Moses which led the People out of the testing time to experience the Promise of God's abundant Provision and Care.

The recent message of Pope Francis gives us strength: "The gift of sharing the love and mercy Christians receive from God enables to experience an immense joy that is not a fleeting emotion or mere human optimism, but the certainty that we can face every challenge with the grace and assurance that come from God, without this Joy faith shrinks into an oppressive and dreary thing."

Mahatma Gandhi stood his ground on many tough occasions, for to him "Faith is not like a flower that withers away, faith is like a Rock that stands firm forever." Our firm faith in God's saving help during trials and tribulations becomes the testing ground for Faith to be cherished and enriched. Faith and life complement each other. With the eyes of faith, we can forge ahead to make God and His promises real to ourselves and others. May Mary the Star of the New Evangelisation help us to share the Light of Faith to the world.



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of **GIVING**

Catherine Fobler, Canada

I have transferred Rs.10,000 in thanksgiving to Ven. Fr. Agnel. I request prayers for my grandson Max (7 years) for healing of his left knee and emotional health. Also for peace in our family. God Bless you all.

Louis D'Souza, Kalyan, Mumbai

I have made an online transfer of Rs. 2,000, as donation towards Easter Gift and Lenten alms for the needy.

Jaison Chackochen, Ernakulam, Kerala

Kindly accept my donation of Rs.1,000 per month. My son Joyal is better, thanks for your prayers. My daughter Jewel's fever is not better, please pray.

Susan E. D Souza/Swaroop, Dubai

I have sent INR10,000 as Patron's Contribution. Please enroll us as Patrons of Agnel Cooperators Society, as well as my daughter's mother-in-law Mrs. Chong Mok Kiat and brother-in-law, Mr. Sean Lim Xiong Cai from Australia. We offer grateful thanks to dear Ven. Fr. Agnel for the many favours granted through his intercessions. May he always continue to bless and intercede for all of us.

Shardaben Naik/Meeta Naik, Mulund (W), Mumbai

I have made a donation of Rs.5,000 for the orphan children of Balbhavan, in memory of my husband Bhikhubhai R Naik.

Nilesh Parmar, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Through NEFT Bank transfer, I have sent my humble donation of Rs.25,000 for the Balbhavan orphanage and for the education, maintenance and care of the children, as well as for the needs of the Fr. Agnel Ashram.

Jane Godinho, Marine Lines, Mumbai

As I wish to sponsor a child of Balbhavan on a yearly basis, I am donating an amount of Rs.15,000 towards the same.

On Mother's Day, the world honours Mothers with gifts, flowers and cards. Every human person owes his or her life to a mother, and almost always owes much of what follows in life to her. Pope Francis in his General Audience 2015, makes a point "Yet, despite being highly lauded from a symbolic point of view — many beautiful things said poetically of her — the mother is rarely listened to or helped in daily life, rarely considered central to society in her role.

During May, the Church calls us to open our hearts in a special way to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who graces our lives with her Motherly presence. Mary is *"the image and model of all mothers, of their great mission to be guardians of life"* (Pope Benedict VXI). Motherhood is a woman's vocation, it is an eternal vocation. Motherhood is

a gift of God, a grace and joy that springs from the Creator's goodness (St. John Paul II), through the marriage union woman and man share in the creative power of God. A woman's life of carefree irresponsibility is not the same as she has a child and begins a family.

Mother to be is filled with wonder and "understands" with unique intuition what is happening inside her. For a woman embarking on her first pregnancy, fear of the unknown is still a common emotion. During pregnancy, a woman 'pays' directly, which literally absorbs the energies of her body and soul. In the shared parenthood, the man owes a special debt to the woman, as he always remains outside "the process of pregnancy and child birth." Mary's words at the Annunication "Let it be to me according to your word" - signify the woman's openness for the gift of self and her readiness to accept a new life, the woman "discovers herself through a sincere gift of self." "Yes, being a mother doesn't only mean bringing a child to the world, but it is also a life choice. What does a mother choose? The life choice of a mother is the choice to give life" (GA 2015). We salute mothers who are interiorly ready to accept children and bring them into the world.

New Mother: "When a mother is in travail she has sorrow, because the hour has come, but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into the world (Jn 16:21). Too little attention is given to how the new mother feels about the event of child birth, an event which transforms her life. The woman takes on a new identity, a shift, a new

-Severina Peres

role - she is in charge, which is as demanding as the process of giving birth. St. Luke tells us that Mary weighed up the wonder and mystery of the birth of her Son as she kept all these things, pondering them in her heart (Lk 2:51).

'Mothers "divide" themselves, from the moment they bear a child to give him to the world, gives birth to him, nurse him, help them grow and cares for them with affection. She gives her life. That's martyrdom. Perhaps mothers, ready to sacrifice so much for their children and often for others as well, ought to be listened to more'(Pope Francis GA 2015). The memories of mother's unconditional love will always remain, for in that silence of daily life; a mother is giving her life little by little for her family.

Mother of little children anticipates new pleasures with each age of her children, she also faces emotionally charged events in

the course of rearing her children. The value of faith is inscribed in the first prayers, the first acts of devotion that a child learns from a mother through her simple and profound warmth. The woman as mother and first teacher of the human being (secular education and spiritual formation) has a specific precedence over the Father. Mothers trust God to work, filling childhood with memories of love given through sacrifice and perseverance.

In the life of Mary, we are informed that Jesus went down with them, and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these

things in her heart (Lk 2:51). Pope Francis feels that Mary appears to us as a vessel filled to the brim with the memory of Jesus (Angelus address 1st January 2016). He invites us to understand more about a Mother's daily struggle to be efficient at work and attentive and affectionate in the family; we should better grasp what Mothers aspire to, in order to express the best and most authentic fruits of their emancipation.

Mother of adolescents and teens develops patience and wisdom even as she feels vulnerable in dealing with adolescents, at times despairing and insecure. A Mother learns to smile through her tears in moments of indifference and loneliness when the child whose world she was, prefers new friends to her or feels rejected when her teenage kids don't want to be seen with her. There are moments of nervousness and heartache a mother goes through as she guides and encourages her children in educational pursuits or to take up new challenges in their careers.

The lessons of Godliness, other centredness and integrity inculcated painstakingly day in and day out through her patience and personal example are not lost when a proud mother sees the life of goodness take root in her children, a life which sees God in the neediest, and the same patience reflected in them when confronted with difficulties. A mother is filled with joy and gratitude for the fruitful lives of her children as she rejoices with Mother Mary, "For He that is mighty has done great things for me."

Mother of Youth/Adults now takes on the role of guide, mentor and friend to her children for their state of life. She accompanies them, showing restraint so as to give them the freedom in their life choices and family responsibilities. Blessed is the mother who can hold on to their children while letting them go, recognising the time when she now has to share her child. Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, the memories of Jesus impressed upon her heart were always with her leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her Son's side.

When children leave home, a mom faces an empty nest, she truly learns to let go and yet be humble enough to learn a lesson or two, and most of all to connect to God for her own soul and for those who will always be her children. We find that a "mother is not listened to or helped in daily life, rarely considered central to society in her role. Rather, often the readiness of mothers to make sacrifices for their children is taken advantage of so as to "save" on social spending" (Pope

Francis GA 2015).

Special Mothers: Motherhood is a special call! Some mothers need to be specially lauded, respected and thanked - Mothers who rear children as single mother or as a widow, mothers who go all the way to love the children they adopt sometimes despite having their own, mother in laws who attempt to connect and love their new family, grandmoms who shower their maternal love on their grandchildren, god-mothers who diligently strive to lead their god child to God and most of all to Women Religious who selflessly give a maternal companionship to orphans, destitute and marginalised children deprived of love and company of their natural parents. On Mother's Day, let's cherish, understand and pray for all mothers, strive to give them the love and respect they deserve. May Mother Mary's maternal intermediation strengthen the bonds in the mother-child relationship!

(This article has references from the Apostolic Letter, MULIERIS DIGNITATEM, of St. John Paul II, on the Dignity and Vocation of Women.)



Severina Peres has considerable experience in the banking industry and enjoys writing short articles based on Encyclicals and Church Documents. She is also interested in assisting senior citizens.

AGNEL CO-OPERATORS

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Rev. Fr. Superior, Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandstand, Bandra (W), Mumbai-400 050.

School

It is not just the place where you study Einstein's Theory of Relativity, rather an institution that takes learning beyond the walls of classrooms. Here skills are honed and identities strengthened. The many competitions, be they in sports, curricular and other co-curricular activities conducted at different levels, encourage networking between students of different categories, thereby allowing for a peek into a world different from one's own. "Education is not preparation for life;

Education is life itself." – John Dewey.

Children

Once you are enrolled for formal schooling, it ensures you are nurtured from a young age, in a befitting manner which will help to

keep distractions at bay. What better way to build your character than through the daily routine of School? As President Woodrow Wilson put it so succinctly – "Character is not ready made. It is created bit by bit in the manufacture of daily duty."

Interactions with your peers can build friendships for life. Working together as you pursue the myriad ventures that encompass school life, will help in fine tuning your talents and allowing your creativity to blossom. It is at School that you learn to figure out how to build a 'Champion Team' rather than remain a team of champions. You can learn lessons of life through the spirit of participation and co-operation, while broadening your horizons at the same time.

School empowers you to pause in the rat race for marks and achievements, focussing instead on working for a cause, and not just applause in society, which can be brought about through wholesome participation in Outreach programmes, Social Service and Interactions with the less fortunate. At School, you are fortified to fight the demons of injustice, crime, addiction etc.

-Ninette D'Souza

by imbibing the values of Tolerance, Equality, Unity in Diversity amongst others.

The euphoric experiences of: expressing yourself freely without judgement or condemnation, making goofy mistakes, writing answers to questions totally unrelated to the subject; forget about the topic, keeping names and telling tales, claiming to hate that uniform but not wanting to let go of it once in college, not willing to accept that boring PE (Physical Education) can actually keep you physically fit and mentally sharp ... all

make for indelible memories.

Plodding through 12 years of a regular drill interspersed with holidays, primes you to be disciplined, to take personal and social responsibility through a change in y o ur tho ught processes, accentuates

your oneness with others while allowing for acceptance of differences. All of this ensures you become 'An Agent Of Change For A Better Tomorrow,' something India desperately needs right now.

Teachers

You are a role model for many children. So, in you they must see someone who always tries to do their best even when the end is not in sight, someone who inspires them to be what they know they can be, someone who uses their God given talents not just to train children for competitions but participates in them as well. It is an undisputed fact that many teachers have won laurels in Performing Arts like music, both vocal and instrumental, public speaking, dramatics, dance etc., when in school and college.

There are opportunities to continue to receive accolades even as a professional teacher. I stand testimony to that. Win or lose, just your participation will ensure that you rise notches higher in the eyes of your students. If you have been a sportsperson, do show an avid interest in whatever sporting activities happen in your school. I am of the firm belief that even in this day of high-end technology, the teacher continues to remain the most important factor in a classroom, hence it goes without saying, a little extra effort wouldn't go amiss.

Students admire teachers who are professionally dynamic so, step up and volunteer for that seminar, training programme, conclave even if it means giving up a holiday. A stagnant teacher cannot mentor children, let alone be a role model because children are by nature, curious. At all costs avoid carrying over baggage from the previous year. Classrooms are literally to be treated as Confessionals! What happens within, stays there. Nothing should find its way to the ears of even the closest colleague.

Keeping nicknames for teachers is an intrinsic part of school life. All of us have indulged in this to some extent or the other, even Ms. Goody two shoes! And yet as Teachers, we need to refrain from doing so. Unless it's endearments like 'Darling, Sweetheart' and the like. It is a good idea to fast from using the tongue, instead let the two eyes, two ears and a heart overflowing with love dictate how your chosen vocation will pan out in the new academic year. (**Teachers reading this please don't consider this a preaching, these are my reflections after living out my own vocation for close to 30 years.*)

Parents

Please remember teachers are human. Often, we leave sick family members unattended at home and report to school for varied reasons. If you or your child had an altercation with 'X' teacher, there is no need for it to become public fodder, in the by lanes and especially on social media. A teacher is tasked with moulding the hearts and minds of children, for which I am sure you will agree, DISCIPLINE is a vital tool. You and your child should step into the new year with a clean slate.

Avoid comparisons between teachers. Each one is unique with individual strengths and weaknesses and a style of their own. It is ridiculous for parents to trumpet one teachers' capability because your child likes the teacher and ridicule another. The teacher is meant to be a facilitator of Education, with a responsibility to open up the child's mind. It is up to children to learn and make the best of what is being given to them.

Keep in touch with not just your child's class teacher but even with the subject teachers, without being meddlesome. This includes keeping a tab on your child's performance at tuition/coaching classes as well. Trust me the 'masti' and 'complaints' will be a lot less once your child realises that s/he is being looked after, from both ends. Take your child's teachers into confidence, if you are facing a problem. Children tend to open up more to their teachers rather than to their parents.

Prayer

A school is an edifice not just of knowledge but of life itself. Hence do pray for oneself and for one another. Pray for: energy to face whatever may transpire; diligence and self-discipline to do what needs to be done, well, even if there be none to see, none to praise, none to blame, self-respect which will not stoop to produce anything but the best; courage to be patient and not give up hope, when hopes are long in coming through; acceptance of disappointment without bitterness and delay without complaint; courtesy and considerateness which will make it easy to for all to live and work together; wisdom to know when to speak and when to stay silent; quiet serenity to last through the rough and the smooth; peace so that nothing may worry or upset anyone.

Above all, pray for LOVE, so that all through the year nothing may make anyone bitter or unforgiving or unkind.

Each one of you has a year that will unfold wonder, joy, happiness and blessings untold.



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

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Euphoria 2023 - The cultural festival of Fr. CRCE, Bandra

Fr. CRCE's Cultural Flagship event, EUPHORIA, was successfully hosted from 28th to 31st March, 2023. The theme for Euphoria 2023 was CELESTIA, unleashing THE MAGIC OF THE MOON. The theme explored the mystique and allure of the moon, a celebration of the enchanting qualities of the moon, its connection to nature, and the power it holds over our imagination. The cultural days of Euphoria were as follow: 24th March 2023 - Rose Day, 27th March 2023 -Traditional Day, 28th March 2023 - Group Alike Day, and 29th March 2023 - Meme Day. The events were divided into 6 domains. Colleges from all over Mumbai such as Vivekanand Institute of Technology, R.A.I.T, SK College, Vidyalankar Institute of Technology, and Thadomal Shahani Engineering College, participated in the event.

Euphoria was inaugurated on 28th March by the Director, Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza. Asst. Director, Rev. Fr. Trevor Pereira, Principal Dr. Surendra Singh Rathod, the Dean of Students Affairs S.S. Sudhakar and Cultural Staff In-Charge Prof. Garima Tripathi were also in attendance. The Achievers of the Second Year and Third Year for the academic year 2021-22 were felicitated by the dignitaries. The IIC Councils were also felicitated for "Entrepreneurship, Startup, Innovation."

The final day of Euphoria (31st March) was held at Ravindra Natya Mandir, Prabhadevi. Along with the awe-inspiring Class Dances, and the finals of Mr. and Ms. CRCE, this day also marked the Annual Day of 2023. The event was honoured by the presence of the dignitaries and the Chief Guest Ms. Mohini Pal Chowdhury (Global HR at Quantiphi) and the Guest of Honour Ms. Shareen Kitterman (Assistant Management Officer, Embassy of the United States of America). The achievers of the First Year and Final Year for the academic year 21-22 were felicitated by the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour. Honouring the tradition of the Annual Day, Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, and Rev. Fr. Trevor Pereira felicitated the BE All-rounder amongst the boys - Mr. Brycen Fernandes (BE Electronics & Computer Science) and felicitated BE All-rounder amongst the girls -Miss Nicole Dias (BE Computers A) for the year 2022-23. The Director also honoured the teaching and non-teaching staff including Prof. Monica Khanore, Prof. Dileep Chandra and Mrs. Jyothilaxmi for their relentless contributions to Fr. CRCE for the last 25 years.

The Students' Council 2021-2022 was then felicitated by the Principal. Following this was the felicitation and address of the departing president, Mr. Taransingh Rajpal. The most awaited part of the day was the Results & Distribution of the prestigious trophies. The winners were FE Computer B (FE Class), BE Production (Boys Sports), BE Computers A (Girls Sports), BE Electronics and Computer Science (BE, Tech Trophy), BE Computers B (Dance Trophy), Best Fashion Show Trophy - BE Electronics and Computer Science, Mr. and Miss CRCE: Colin D'Souza (BE Computers B) and Gautami Silvery (BE Mechanical), Cultural Trophy - BE Computers B, Best Class Trophy - BE Computers B.

The college experienced the zealous team spirit of student interactions and sportsmanship where students strived to not only organise but also make it a transcendent experience.



AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Annual Accountants' Meet 2023 of Agnel Region held at Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra

The Accountants of Agnel Region had their Annual Meet in the presence of the Statutory Auditors at the Samvad Hall of Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra, Mumbai on 10th March 2023. Local Superiors and representatives from all the locations had joined their accountants for the Meet.

Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, Director of Fr. CRCE, welcomed all the attendees. The meeting was led by the Auditors. The discussion mainly focused on the latest amendments in the Income Tax Law with respect to the annual reporting of Trusts to the Income Tax Department. It was noted that the changes were of utmost importance to ensure seamless continuity of Trusts. The Auditors shared their views and suggestions to implement and comply with the amendments.

The Accountants from around the Region, namely, Mumbai, Pune, Verna, Vashi and Delhi, placed their concerns which were addressed in the meeting which concluded with a goal to better the book-keeping and the reporting.



Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, Director of Fr. CRCE, welcoming all the attendees.

The Auditors were the keynote speakers at the Annual Accountants' Meet 2023.



"Accounting is the language of business." - Warren Buffet

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Vashi

Fr. C. Rodrigues Institute of Technology wins ISGF Innovation Award 2023

Agnel Charities' Fr. C. Rodrigues Institute of Technology (Fr. CRIT), Vashi, Navi Mumbai, has received the national 'ISGF Innovation Award 2023' for a post graduate project titled "Transformer-less Inverter with improved gain suitable for Photovoltaic-Grid Interface" under the category of Smart Technology-Electricity Distribution.

India Smart Grid Forum (ISGF) Innovation Awards, instituted in 2017, is aimed to recognise and celebrate organisations, projects, products and personalities that have set a new benchmark in Electricity, Gas, Water and E-Mobility domains. A team from Fr. CRIT, comprising Dr. Mini Rajeev, Mr. Omkar Patkar, Ms. Shalini Tuscano and Ms. Keerthi Unni received this award at a ceremony organised by ISGF in New Delhi on 3rd March 2023.

In this novel inverter, ground leakage current is eliminated and voltage gain is improved by using switched inductor cell concept at the input side. Therefore, the inverter topology is a strong contender for transformer-less Photovoltaic-Grid interface with lesser number of series connected PV panels at the distribution level.



The winning team at the award ceremony in New Delhi.

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"Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." - Steve Jobs

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The Plea of Nature

Oh! It was a terrible morning, couldn't imagine I'd start my birthday like this, I thought it would be a pleasant, sunny morning of April 2050 but no! To my dismay, I woke up gasping for breath, as I accidentally dislodged my nasal vial while I was in deep slumber. I somehow managed to catch hold of my vial and placed it back in place, but as bad luck was at its peak, the oxygen in my cylinder was over.

Damnnnnnn! With my wobbly gait, I paved my way to the storeroom dragging my oxygen cylinder along to refill it. As I began refilling, the storage tank beeped a loud alarm with a message on screen screaming in bold and capital letters, **OXYGEN OVER!! KINDLY REFILL.** A chill ran through my spine leaving me all numb,

another two minutes without oxygen and I'd be dead, as it wouldn't suffice till I'd reached the Oxygen store. I kept staring at the screen and the alarm kept getting louder and louder... and with a jerk, I was up in my bed!

Gosh!! A nightmare! Thank God, it was a dream and not the face of reality. I opened my eyes, it wasn't 2050, it is 2023! There wasn't any oxygen alarm but it was just my usual cell phone alarm trying to wake me up in time to go to college. No vial! No oxygen cylinders. Just me with my pillow and blanket.

What a horrible nightmare! I thought to myself, if we don't protect our environment, our planet, our mother Earth, the 2050 from my nightmare would come alive. Having no trees, and no pure air available for breathing, would definitely compel us to roam around with oxygen cylinders to aid respiration. What a pity and tragedy!

According to the World Air Quality Report 2021, none of the Indian cities meet the WHO air quality standards. Our water bodies are suffering from a similar fate. The land is being encroached upon without taking into consideration the adverse effects it could have on the sustainability of the future generations. The greedy human nature is overtaking the sense and sensitivity that should prevail towards our mother Earth. We are being reckless towards the environment.

-Tancia Pires

The daily traffic is evidencing our contribution to the growing carbon footprint. We ain't realizing that converting our green forests into concrete jungles is paving the way to our own graves. Animals are losing their habitats, ecosystems are being disrupted, there is bizarre and abrupt climate change, which in turn is melting the glaciers and water levels rising, which will lead to floods and destruction. Polluted rivers flow through our states and people are suffering from water scarcity only due to the senselessness of some industrialists who release tonnes of toxic wastes directly into our scarce water bodies, without even treating it. We are creating a terrible vicious cycle around ourselves, leading to our own downfall. It's high time we become more aware, alert, and sensible.

> This World Environment Day (5th June), let us pledge to become responsible and sensible citizens, and listen to the plea of our nature, pleading us to protect it, let's move towards using cleaner fuels, indulge into proper waste management, start afforestation and use natural resources economically, thus building a healthy environment for us to live in. Since it's rightly said that our planet is our responsibility, it's time now we wake up

to the alarm of a deteriorating planet, and work towards its safety and well-being, thus carving a healthy niche for ourselves to thrive in. Nurture nature, and the nature will nurture you!

To begin with our resolve to protect Mother Earth, can each one of us plant just a fruit bearing plant in our own backyard? We will surely be rewarded with the fruits but, moreover, we will contribute our mite for the protection of our environment.



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

JUST FOR FUN

Hi, I hope you are doing fine. This month of May is the holiday season and most of you are probably going on some vacation. It is also a very hot month. It is a month that we Catholics honour Mother Mary as the 'Queen of May' and many special devotions are conducted during this month, especially the recitation of the Rosary. Who can forget the deliciousness of mangoes, the King of Fruits, readily available during this month? So with that cheerful thought in mind, let's begin...



QuizTime

1. Name the number one tourist destination in India?

2. Which city in India is the coolest to visit in May?

3. Name the number one

mango variety in the world.

4. Name the three countries which have mango as the national fruit.

5. Name the country which has the mango tree as the national tree.





Smile Please

1.When people hear that my husband and I just celebrated o u r 60th wedding anniversary, they inevitably ask us the secret to our long and successful marriage. In response, my husband will smile sweetly and nod my way and say, "We both love me!"

2. Real estate agent: I have a very cheap apartment for you.

Client: By the week or the month?

Real estate agent: By the garbage dump....

3. On a crowded bus, a man noticed a young man shutting his eyes.

Man: What's the matter? Is everything okay?

Young man: No, I am okay. It is just that I hate to see old ladies standing.

-Christine D'Sylva

4. A politician is a person who will lay down your life for their country.

5. What is the difference between a politician and an actor? One leads the land, the other lands the lead.





Riddles

1. Which letter in the alphabet has the most water?

2. Three doctors say that Tom is their brother. However,

Tom says he has no brothers. Is Tom lying?

3. Which two words combined together have the most letters?

4. I have thirteen hearts but no lungs or intestines. What am I?



Brain Teasers



1. A man stands on one side of the river and his dog is on the other side, yet after calling out to him, the dog crosses the river without getting wet. How is this possible?

2. A + A = 120

A + B = 70

A+B+C=90

What is the value of C?

3. I add nine to five and get two. The answer is correct but how?

4. Your parents have six sons including you. Each son has one sister. How many family members are there in your family?



All about Mangoes

If anyone had to question you about one of the most delicious foods of Asia, the answer would most likely be the mango.

The mango in its original wild form came from north-east India and Myanmar.



The name Mango comes from Tamil. From mankay or mangay, it gradually became mango by the Portuguese.

The Portuguese who came to India around 500 years ago, discovered the mango.

They liked it so much and wanted more of it. Thus they began to experiment with new varieties of mango and thus today we have the delicious Alphonso Mango. This is the result of their hard work. So the next time you eat Alphonso mangoes, you know who to thank.

Indians enjoyed the fruit for around 3,000 years and Indians wrote about this fruit in their books like the Upanishad.

Mangoes are viewed as a symbol of good luck and mango leaves put up at the front door of homes are said to bring good luck.

The mango tree is renowned to make wishes come true. Mangoes are rich in anti-oxidants and contain many important vitamins. They contain one gram of fat and are best eaten in moderation. Aam panna which is popular in India is dried mango in layers and is supposed to be cooling for our system.



The Sacred Rosary

This month of May is the perfect opportunity to say our Rosary. It is beneficial if every family member has his or her own personal Rosary. The Rosary is like a mini Bible and helps us reflect on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

It is said that there are fifteen promises of Mary for all those who recite the Rosary.

Let us list some of them:

*I promise my special protection and the greatest of graces to all those who recite the Rosary.

*The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the Rosary shall not perish.

*I shall deliver from Purgatory those who have been devoted to the Rosary.

*All those who propagate the Rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.

These are just some of the wonderful promises given to us. We must not fail to recite the Rosary even one mystery a day will suffice, if done with faith and devotion.

"Attitude is the little thing that makes a big difference."- Winston Churchill

"Ability is what you are capable of doing, motivation determines what you do and attitude determines how well you do it."- Lou Hoki

Well, that is all for this month. Take care and see you the next month!



Answers

Quiz

1. Taj Mahal in Agra, Delhi 2. Ooty

3. Alphonso Mango 4. India, Philippines and Pakistan

5. Bangladesh

Riddles

1. The letter C

2. Tom is not lying. The three doctors are his sisters.

3. Post office 4. Pack of cards

Brain Teasers

- 1. The water is frozen
- 2.20
- 3. If you add five hours to 9 am, you get 2 pm

4. Nine members because there is only one sister



Christine is an author of over 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.

BE THE SALT AND LIGHT TO THE WORLD

In the Sermon On The Mount, Jesus called upon his followers to be the salt and light to the world around them. Our world today is in darkness. Every day, we hear of international terrorism, arms race, burgeoning violence in society, economic exploitation of the poor, hunger, disease, drugs, man-made environmental disasters, and so on. We have a mission to fulfil, a responsibility to make our country, and the world,

a better place by preserving all that is good as given to us through God's word. We are to be people not to make others proud of us, but who think and put the "kingdom of God" first. That is what being "salt" and "light" is all about. However, we can only dothis if we are prepared. These are Jesus' words: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty. It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A

city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5:13-16).

Jesus emphasises to the disciples that they have both the calling and the responsibility to be influencers in the world. Salt is used for seasoning so as to bring out the taste in food. Christians bring flavour and meaning to life. In our pleasure-crazed culture, people are finding life dull and boring, no worldly pleasure can satisfy. Christians reveal to the world that life without Christ is tasteless and unsatisfying. The real meaning to life is in Christ.

There is little room for those who are Christians, but have lost their saltiness, or their "edge". Without the testimony of lives lived out with integrity and consistency with the principles that Christians claim to follow, the testimony of our -Ibonio D'Souza

lips is useless. But be clear: this does not require us to be perfect: knowing our sinfulness, and knowing our need to confess it and be cleansed of it is a vital part of the Christian gospel. As "salt", Christians are to counteract the power of sin. As "light", we are to illuminate or make visible. Our lives are to be an ongoing witness to the reality of Christ's presence in our lives. When we love others as ourselves, and we do good



without growing weary, we are lights shining. It is important, however, to know that it is not our light, but the reflection of the light of the world, Jesus Christ Himself, that people will see in us. Man, today thinks himself so enlightened because of the knowledge he has attained. The tragedy of our times has been that we have concentrated solely upon one aspect of knowledge. Our knowledge has been of mechanical things, scientific things and

knowledge of life in a biological sense. But man's knowledge of the real factors that make life,

has not increased at all. Naturally ,man cannot apply the knowledge he has to the spiritual realm, and the spiritual side of man is the all important part of man. Christians are called to rise and shine. Christians are to be torch bearers in a dark world. One should not try to hide the light which God has lit in our lives. Rather, we should shine so that others may see our good deeds and praise God. Shining does not mean

self-propaganda, self-publicity, selfglorification, but bearing fruit in our life, bringing life and light to others. It is about our deeds in society - in politics, in culture and in social life.



Ibonio D'Souza is the author of the widely read motivational tome 'Rise And Shinethe lotus way', columnist, and a social activist.

Apostles of Christ – IV & V

STS. JAMES & PHILIP, APOSTLES

-Leon Bent



Philip and James were both apostles, and both served Christ faithfully during the very early days of the Church. Philip seems to have been an enthusiastic person. He was the one who brought his friend Nathanael to Jesus, insisting to Nathanael that he had found the person about whom Moses had written.

James also was the first apostle to shed his blood for Christ. He was martyred in A.D. 44 (Acts 12:2) in Jerusalem. His martyrdom won him the title by which we distinguish him from the other apostle of the same name: "Saint James the Greater." His feast day is July 25.

After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Philip is said to have travelled to Asia Minor, the area we now call Turkey, to tell others about Jesus' life and teachings. He died as a martyr for our faith. We honour Philip and James the Less as saints on May 3.

Philip the Apostle (Greek: Φίλιππος; Aramaic: [•] Coptic, Philippos) was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus according to the New Testament. Later Christian traditions describe Philip as the apostle who preached in Greece, Syria, and Phrygia.

The Entrance Antiphon of the Mass, states, "*These* are the holy men whom the Lord chose in his own perfect love; to them he gave eternal glory, alleluia."

The Mass tells us that the example of the Apostles is the most certain and direct path to heaven. They suffered and were persecuted, but they placed their confidence in God and now they rejoice in heaven. We too must have confidence in God and not be troubled in our adversities. In our Father's house there are many mansions, and if we follow the way indicated by Him, Christ will come at the end of our life and take us to Himself.

St. Philip

The Apostle Philip was one of Christ's first disciples, called soon after his Master's baptism in the Jordan. The fourth Gospel gives the following detail: "The next day Jesus was about to leave for Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him: Follow Me. Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the town of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him: We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote, Jesus the Son of Joseph of Nazareth. And Nathanael said to him: Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him: Come and see" (John 1:43ff). *—The Church's Year of Grace*, **Pius Parsch**

St. Philip is eighth in the Apostolic list of the Roman Canon; in the Synoptic Gospels he is named after the two groups of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14). In St. John (I:43-44), we read that he was called after St. Peter to follow Jesus, and the Gospel adds he was of Bethsaida, as were Andrew and Peter. Philip introduced Nathaniel, who we know as the Apostle Bartholomew to Jesus (cf. St. Bartholomew). This same Gospel of St. John mentions Philip once again (John 14:9), in the passage, read at Mass, which serves also as the Antiphon of the Alleluia and for the Communion: "Philip, he that sees Me sees the Father also"; elsewhere (John 12:21) it tells us that certain Gentiles wishing to see Jesus had recourse to Philip, and in chapter 6 Jesus says to Philip, before the multiplication of the loaves, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"

These little incidents, though they tell us nothing about St. Philip's inner life, show us that in the intimate companionship of the Apostles he played a distinct part. The Breviary story tells us that evangelized Phyrgia, and that, at Hierapolis, he was fastened to a cross and then stoned. It adds that his relics, with those of St. James, were taken to Rome and placed in the Basilica of the Twelve Apostles. This church was once one of the most venerated in Rome. It corresponds to the famous church of Byzantium called the *Apostoleion* or Church of the Apostles. St. Julius I (341-352_erected it, Pelagius I (556-561) rebuilt it, and finally John III (561-574) dedicated it to the memory of all the Apostles, especially SS. Philip and James, whose relics were enshrined therein. –Excerpted from The Year's Liturgy, Volume II, Fernand Cabrol, OSB

St. James the Less

St. James the Less, a brother of the Apostle Jude, was of Cana of Galilee. He is the author of one of the Catholic Epistles in the New Testament. He was favored by an appearance of the Risen Christ (I Cor. 15:7). After the dispersion of the Apostles he was made Bishop of Jerusalem. He was visited by St. Paul (Gal. 1:19). He spoke after Peter at the meeting of the Apostles (Acts 15:13). When he refused to deny the Divinity of Christ, the Jews cast him down from the terrace of the temple and clubbed him to death. The Breviary contains a very moving description of his death. "When he was ninety-six years old and had governed the Church for thirty years in a most holy manner, the Jews sought to stone him, then took him to the pinnacle of the temple and cast him off headlong. As he lay there half dead, with legs broken by the fall, he lifted his hands toward heaven and prayed to God for the salvation of his enemies, saying: Lord, forgive them for they know not what they do! While the apostle was still praying, a fuller struck his head a mortal blow." His relics now rest next to those of St. Philip in the church of the Holy Apostles in Rome, and their names are mentioned in the first list in the Canon of the Mass. **–Excerpted from** The Church's Year of Grace, Pius Parsch

The James here associated with St. Philip is St. James the Less, so-called to distinguish him from St. James the Greater, the brother of St. John, of whom we speak on his feast-day, July 25. As to St. James the Less, his role, during the first years of Christianity, was far more important than St. Philip's. His position as one of the "brethren" or cousins of Our Lord was alone sufficient to make him an outstanding figure. Although certain incidents of his life-story are disputed, he is usually considered to have been the first Bishop of Jerusalem, the city wherein he was martyred. His mortifications and his ascetic life won for him the

title of the Just. St. Paul, who met him at Jerusalem, speaks of the apparition with which he was favoured after Christ's Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7).

Among the Catholic Epistles there is one attributed to him. It is thought to be of a later date than the Epistles of St. Paul, and was probably written towards A.D. 60. The author seems to have had in mind those who wrongly claimed St. Paul's authority to teach that Faith without Good Works was sufficient for salvation. St. James speaks of certain practical matters and insists on the necessity of good works, especially those of charity.

The Mass is proper to the day. Its chief feature is Our Lord's speech to St. Philip: "Have I been so

long a time with you and have you not known me? Philip, he that sees me sees the Father also." Several antiphons repeat this text. The Gospel of the day gives the passage (John 14:6-14). It is an extract from Christ's discourse at the Last Supper, wherein answering the questions of Thomas and Philip, He explains the bond uniting Him to His heavenly Father. Then Philip, who has not yet grasped the mystery of the Unity of the Father and the Son in the Divine Nature, asks in his simplicity: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Our Lord reiterates His teaching, "I am

in the Father and the Father in me." "He that sees me sees the Father also." Theologians appeal to these words to establish the doctrine, technically known as *perichoresis* in the Greek, and in the Latin as *circumincessio*, in virtue of which the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father. Thus St. Philip's question leads to the Gospel teaching of the theology of the Blessed Trinity.

The Alleluia ad Communion antiphons, as we have said, repeat Christ's answer to this question, and we realize that the Roman cantors seized the opportunity of this feast to bring this doctrine into high relief.

-Excerpted from The Year's Liturgy, Volume II, Fernand Cabrol, OSB



Leon Bent was awarded the "Silver Pen Award," in the year 2000, for Published Writings on Social Issues, at the hands of Ivan Cardinal Dias. He also won "The Cardinal Dias Award for Research in Mariology," in 2018, at the hands of Oswald Cardinal Gracias. Leon contributes Articles on a regular basis, to various Journals in India and Overseas, and Digital Platforms around the world. **NEWS**

Christians demand rights, dignity – protest at Azad Maidan, Mumbai

-Sunil D'Cruz



On 12th April 2023, over 40 Christian organisations from the state of Maharashtra assembled at Azad Maidan and protested attacks on the community.

According to a community (UCF) toll-free helpline number, a human rights group based in New Delhi which monitors atrocities against Christians in India, there were 597 incidents of violence against Christians from 21 states, last year alone, till the end of December 2022.

Organised by the Samast Christi Samaj, an umbrella organisation of different Christian organisations, the representation and protests expressed deep concern at the escalation in violence against Christian personnel, places of worship, churches and their institutions across India and in Maharashtra, using the bogey of conversion. "There are continued waves of vile hate speech and targeted violence which includes physical and verbal assaults on religious leaders and members, damage to and desecration of places of worship, disruption of prayer services and restrictions on religious gatherings, false accusation of forced and fraudulent religious conversions," says the memorandum.

The slogan for the protest was "Enough is Enough," atrocities against the Christian community must be stopped and everyone's rights should be safeguarded. Representatives from the community from various districts and denominations in Maharashtra addressed the gathering.

A memorandum was presented to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Eknath Shinde. The specific demands are:

1.Strengthen human rights monitoring mechanisms by setting up a state level redressal commission headed by a Retired High Court Judge.

2. Government of Maharashtra must nominate at least four representatives from amongst the Christian community in the Legislative Council and Local Self-Government bodies for adequate representation.

3. Scholarships for Christian community students to prepare for competitive exams like UPSC, MPSC on the lines of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Research, Training and Human Development Institute (SARTHI), as provided for the Maratha Community and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Research and Training Institute (BARTI) for the SC/ST community.

4. Government of Maharashtra passed a resolution CSW-2360 dated 6th July 1960 (Social Welfare Department) which provided equivalent status of schedule caste to the Neo Buddhist community. On the same lines/grounds of Parity, the Christian community should be given equivalent status with immediate effect to cease social discrimination.

5. Census of the Christian community on the basis of religion and their respective caste in the upcoming census.

6. Speedy closure of cases where false allegations have been levied against Christians, for instance, in the case of Late Father Stan Swamy who worked tirelessly for the Adivasis and the



downtrodden who died in prison and many others who continue to face wrongful detentions and prosecutions.

7. Reconstruction of churches /Places of worship demolished illegally.

8. Appropriate and adequate compensation to Christian individuals and institutions that are targeted for their religious identity.

9. Strict action, arrest and prosecution against vigilante mobs who round up individuals, trespass religious properties and spew hate speeches.

10. Basic preliminary investigation may necessarily be conducted by the police in cases alleging religious conversions before the registration of FIRs.

11. Restoration of the St. Francis Xavier Chapel and installation of the Statue of St. Francis at Golibar, Santacruz East, Mumbai. We demand lodging of an FIR immediately against the Builder and those responsible for the demolition which was done on 09 March 2023.

12. St. Peter's Seaside Cemetery at Bandra – Cancellation and withdrawal of the amendment to the DP Plan made in September 22 and ensure not an inch of land is taken of the more than 100-year-old cemetery.

13. Restoration of the Pre-Matric Scholarships for Minorities cancelled by the Centre.

14. All the districts/talukas of Maharashtra including Mumbai and Thane should be allocated land for Christian Cemeteries.

15. Proportionate Christian Representations in the more than 40 Maharashtra State Corporations and Commissions. 16. Representative of Anglo-Indian community should be immediately appointed in the Maharashtra State Assembly.

17. False cases against Pastors/members in Alandi, Pune and Other Cases in Aurangabad, Buldhana where pre-planned attacks of framing Pastors and Christians in false charges and preventing them from conducting prayer services and attacking them physically.

18. Jeri Meri Christian Cemetery, Saki Naka, Andheri East: This Cemetery has been in use since 1980. However, the Cemetery has been encroached and an FIR has been lodged on 18/03/2023. We demand the said encroachment should be cleared as we have lack of space for the graves, for burial of Christians.

19. Restoration of the crumbling ancient 500-yearold Church of St. John the Baptist, Marol in SEEPZ, MIDC by the Maharashtra State and be opened throughout the year for devotees and pilgrims for visitation and prayers.

20. Anti-Conversion Law: Urging you not to proceed with such a Law in Maharashtra as it results in discrimination and vigilante violence. We are one. Please do not divide us in the name of religion.



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



FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

VILE PARLE: I am very thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession, for favours received. A thanksgiving offering has been given to the Ashram.

-S. N. Bhat

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

JUHU: 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.

-J. Coutinho

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

MUMBAI: We are very thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for helping us fulfil our dreams and blessing our family abundantly. We have come to the Ashram and made an offering.

-Joeprakash & Family

THANKSGIVING FOR BEING THERE ALWAYS

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

-P. Gonsalves

THANKSGIVING FOR FINDING SOLUTIONS

SANTACRUZ: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have received many favours. In gratitude, I have made a love offering to Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-J. Goveas

FAVOURS RECEIVED

BANDRA: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have received several favours. A thanksgiving offering has been sent to the Ashram.

-V. Albuquerque

BLESSED ABUNDANTLY

DADAR: Ven. Fr. Agnel has helped me receive many favours. A love offering has been given at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-V. Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS GRANTED

KURLA: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for helping me in many ways. I have come to the Ashram and made an offering.

- Rocky Britto & Family

THANKSGIVING FOR BEING GUIDED ON THE RIGHT PATH

KERALA: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my prayers have been answered. A thanksgiving offering has been given to the Ashram.

-G. Mathew

THANKSGIVING FOR SUPPORT RECEIVED

MIRA ROAD: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for supporting our family. With a grateful heart, I have come to the Ashram and made a love offering.

-V. Correa

THANKSGIVING FOR A HAPPY FAMILY

VASAI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, the prayer requests of our family have been granted. A thanksgiving offering has been sent to the Ashram.

-C. & J. D'Abreo

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESS

GUJARAT: Ven. Fr. Agnel has been kind enough to intercede on my behalf. My family and I have been successful in whatever we are doing. I make it a point to visit Fr. Agnel Ashram, whenever I am in Mumbai. A love offering has been sent to the Ashram.

-M. J. Gamit

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Bob's Banter

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Raj's breakfast was burnt! and the coffee tasted like sludge. Furious, he got into his car to drive to work, and a few kilometres down the road, heard the loud sound of a bang.

The old man at the puncture shop, looked at Raj with quiet patience, "Quick!" shouted Raj, "get the puncture done! I have a busy day ahead!" The man gave Raj a smile, and beckoned him to sit on the bench, next to some old tires. "I have no time to sit," Raj shouted. "I have so many things to do!" The old man smiled at Raj. "Sir" he said, "that's why the puncture happened! You were meant to rest awhile!"

"I have other things to do than rest," Raj said. "I didn't need this puncture."

"Sir!" said the old man, "I have repaired punctures

efficiency. "You are a philosopher," Raj mused, "But I'm listening."

"When you got your puncture," said the old man, "you cursed your car, kicked your tires and then cried inside with frustration?"

"Yes," Raj admitted.

"Then you saw my little shop?"

"I was lucky your shop was nearby."

"We puncture wallahs are always nearby. But did you realize you were suddenly made to forcibly stop and take a rest?"

"I guess that's what is happening," Raj said. "But what about my appointments? My work?" "Can wait," said the puncture man. "Nature realized you needed a break, and before your



throughout my life, and have never seen anyone who wanted a puncture to take place."

"Whoever would want a puncture to take place?" Raj asked sarcastically.

The old man smiled as he looked into Raj's face, "It is a theory I have developed sir, that a puncture is nature's way of saying you need a break!" "Couldn't nature use a better method?" Raj whispered angrily looking at his watch. "I am sure she tried," said the old man, "but did you ever listen? Look at how you are rushing to work. Look at how you are fretting and fuming! I am sure at this rate, I may soon be repairing the puncture of the ambulance taking you to the hospital, or the hearse carrying you to the cemetery!"

Raj looked at the old man and noticed that though he talked, he worked with a quiet rhythm and body blew up, your tire did." The old man left the tube in the tub of water and came to Raj. "Have a cup of tea, sir," he said. "I do rightly think that whenever you are forced to get delayed, either a puncture, or having to take shelter without an umbrella, or even a flu and a few days in bed, is nature's safety valve!"Raj smiled, sipped the tea and very distinctly heard his heart give a sigh of relief in getting some forced rest, as he watched the philosopher tire repair man at work! He smiled as he thought that even a repair job was a time to recharge..!

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**

Balbhavan Boys, Bandra, creating a splash at the Water Park

Balbhavan Picnic

Yashshree Resort, Thane District, on 14th March 2023 Regn. No. of Publication RNI-9473/64 Date of Publication 10th of every month Date of posting 14th & 15th of every month Single copy Price Rs. 15/-Annual Subscription Rs. 150/-Total pages including cover : 28

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Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Hungary (28 - 30 April 2023)



Pope Francis, left, is welcomed by the President of Hungary Katalin Novák, centre, and the Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban (standing extreme right), in the square of Sandor Palace in Budapest.



Pope Francis signs the Book of Honour. Standing alongside His Holiness is the President of Hungary Katalin Novák.



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