

FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

September 2023

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Building our lives on the solid foundation of "EDUCATION"

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BIRTHDAY OF MOTHER MARY - BANDRA FEAST



Dear Friends and Well-Wishers,

Come September and it fills our hearts with joy to celebrate the birthday of Mother Mary, our help and hope.

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We wish you a Happy Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary and assure you of our daily prayers for your special intentions by our children.

With a grateful heart,

Fr. Superior

Fr. Agnel Ashram

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ADVOCATING HOPE

Every generation has attempted to project that theirs was better than the present generation. Although this has never been validated, one can find some explanation in the fact that human perceptions change in time, and so does the assessment of people about the past events. Regardless of what we might say about the past, it must be acknowledged that the world and the times we live in today, are fundamentally altered, from what it was 15-20 years ago, not only about what we think and do, but much more about how we do it.

When the computer invaded our peaceful world in the last quarter of the 19th century and became a household name, its perception changed from that of awe to something without which we cannot survive. The mobile phone, from the nuisance that it was, because of its power to be a nag on our schedule, became the unavoidable, unputdownable, indispensable, reliable, welcome companion. Not only our perceptions, but our needs changed, our lifestyles although in far greater control, no longer render us free, to do and behave as we want to be. We have become by choice, slaves of devices and habits which we hate as much as we love.

Communication at all times, from anywhere to anywhere is available on demand, right from where we are, almost face-to-face, and what Michael Crichton portrayed in his novels has become a reality. Travel at unimaginable speeds and efficiency make the earth flat, and the social media that ride with us, freely, even without our consent, have made our mental and social horizons, confused, complex, blurred, embarrassingly exposed and worse, toxic. Between our little planet earth that is becoming more toxic each day due to our greedy overuse and misuse, and our social media that spew venom and

hate and spread prejudice, and which have become part of our social structure - it is difficult to predict which is worse, and whose toxicity will destroy us, first. Obscurity has apparently become more real than clarity and impending havoc is a quasi predictable predicament.

All catastrophic conflagrations both of physical or social nature that overtook mankind have mercifully ended with a situation that brought hope. Perhaps the only visible reason that enabled such an ending, in each case, appears to be, the societal tabus, or what one might call the 'raison generale', the belief that mankind is made to be sane and survive as such. History tells us of wars that lasted for several years, and in our contemporary world, students of history find it difficult to imagine how it had all happened – how could so many people stay involved, in constant active warfare for so long, for no visible gain, because such a scenario defies our sense of sanity. Look at what is happening in Ukraine, and even what is happening in Manipur – does any one of them comply with our idea of a sane world? And yet it is happening, with no end in sight, and life goes on for people who otherwise should have been concerned with the insensitivity of the situation. It appears that our perceptions have made peace with the inevitable.

Something in our social and human psyche is gradually changing, we are being immunized against what is inhuman, unacceptable and contrary to our understanding of ourselves as human kind. Throughout history, perceptions have always been changing, and the biggest example is what was once considered moral behavior, and what deviant behavior, and how it is perceived today. Both ends of the spectrum have made peace, with one another, and that is perhaps understandable. But collective human

cruelty and sustained unopposed oppression of fellow humans have been considered abhorrent to mankind. Apartheid and slavery that were prevalent in bygone times, have been collectively condemned as contrary to being human. History credits the slogan of the French revolutionaries 'egalite, liberte, fraternite' as the three ideas that forever would change the course of history. As the result of that overawing triple idea, every single known instrument of collective wisdom that we normally call 'Constitutions' or the 'The Basic Law of a Land' has asserted the allegiance of humanity to it.

Hate against those who are considered 'the other', 'diverse', 'of other faiths', is nurtured and promoted as something justified. Spreading prejudice is official, as much as casual public lynchings, and other such individual and collective actions, such as the use of bulldozer, as a social punitive action, have gained official approval. The difference between the 'waves' of hate that happened during the colonial occupations, or foreign invasions, or even the nazi holocaust, of the Pol Pot phenomenon, the Tutsi and Hutu massacres, etc and other such cruel and heinous happenings, which were universally acknowledged as aberrations, and what is happening now, is evident. A systematic xenophobia, slow, steady, silent or open indoctrination has a far more radically dehumanizing effect on the human mind. Hateful actions have always been considered alien to human behavior, but no longer. Prejudice and hate have assumed such humongous proportions that they have somehow corrupted the very psyche of humanity and more and more people even in public fora are meekly watching the cancer grow, because we are either tired or have grown fatally insensitive. In order to arouse hate, one needs an object, but after that objective is achieved, hate becomes endemic and seeks more victims.

The only remedy is the '*advocacy of hope*'. The course of human history has found meaning because it is universally believed that it is designed to project itself into the future, to the beyond. The shape and contours of that 'beyond'

may not be clear, but the 'beyond' itself is universally accepted and desired as the ultimate bliss or by whatever name you may call it. The Indian 'Satchitanandam' is a very significant description. The element that feeds that yearning is 'hope'. Hope is the only superseding force that exists as a solitary energy capable of neutralizing 'hate', not as a counter to 'hate' but as a something that can be cultivated and nurtured in human minds, that it refuses to yield to 'hate'. The desire to remain 'human' and to strive to keep that flame active at all costs could perhaps be the only antidote against a humanity that is slowly denying its fundamental core—being human, being sensitive, being kind, having the courage to forgive the past and overcoming prejudice. Our world needs that redemption, the advocacy of hope, where there is no hate, no prejudice and no insensitivity to other fellows' pain and suffering.

When Plato invented the 'idea' as the most powerful force of existence and thinking, little did he realize that one day, that 'IDEA' would be a weapon of destruction when it is wielded by tyrants but could also be a 'FORCE' that could stand up to the worst form of destructive or corruptive power, threatening humanity. Education can contribute in a big way to combat any adverse form of influence that seeks to destroy humanity's core, the right to be human. And if one were to consider that every single place where instruction is given, can also be a place of 'ideation', there is reason to hope that all is not lost. The advocacy of hope is the need of the day – you need it, we need it, and together we can make a difference because we hope we are humans.

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TEACHERS ARE LIKE STARS

-Ninette D'Souza

A teacher took a group of students to the roof of their school to look at the stars through a telescope. Many exclamations of awe and wonder passed the lips of both, teacher and children. One little girl said with feeling, "Teacher, I really and truly want to be a star." "Why child?" asked the teacher. "Those stars are lucky," replied the child. "What makes you say that?" asked the teacher. "Because I can see my teacher really loves these stars," came the honest reply.

How humbling to think that 'Teachers' can be the biggest motivating force for their students. When we believe in what we do and accept responsibility for our behaviour and actions, we are enabled to polish our strengths and master our difficulties. Thus we make friends of our adversaries and gain the love and respect of those who know us best. Once we are into teaching, no teacher worth his/her salt wants to give up. As we begin each new day of moulding and caring, of leaving indelible prints, there is a lamp of hope we are lighting, not just in our hearts, but in the world. Thanks to the Vocation of Teaching, miracles are in the making day after day, year after year. So I guess it would not be wrong to say that **Teachers are like stars that not only illumine, but also direct and guide young minds to greater heights.**

In our techno driven, push button existence, is it possible to really help students grow in maturity and become aware of their innate potential and their limitations? I'd like to think it is. A few suggestions to make this possible: A pat on the back for the smallest task well performed, creating a climate of understanding and acceptance without judgement, being available to students even after school hours, sharing personal inconveniences and the ability powered by divine assistance to get through the most difficult situations, keeping in touch with parents of troubled children, insisting on them educating themselves even against odds (especially the girl child) to become independent, sharing personal

goals set and the degree of their achievement, constantly practicing good habits and displaying values which they will catch, allowing freedom of thought and expression at least within the classroom to build their confidence, encouraging use of God given talents even if on a small scale, keeping prejudices (wrongly picked from colleagues) at bay, taking the trouble to clear misconceptions about oneself (legacy of students past), being a good listener even if all they want to do is let off steam (a hard task for teachers who generally shoot off advice at the slightest opportunity), allowing a teacher's natural counselling ability to take over rather than distancing oneself from a problem, teaching them that accepting their failures and accompanying others in theirs, are the most rewarding tasks in a fiercely competitive world.



My own teaching experience has convinced me that we may have many little geniuses who fashioned by our words and minds, our hands and hearts will hopefully grow into the splendid humans God created them to be.

One hundred years from now; it will not matter, what kind of car I drove, the kind of house I lived in, the way I dressed, how much money I had. What will really matter is that the world is a better place because I, a Teacher was important in the life of a child.

My dear teacher friends, as you get ready to be acknowledged and celebrated on yet another 'Teacher's Day', thank God for choosing you to be His Co-worker. Pray that with you, your students will constantly mouth the refrain: I'll be the best of whatever I am, Be the best, I can be the best!!!



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

THE CHURCH REJOICES: NATIVITY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

-Fr. Allam Sagar Manoj Kumar

As we celebrate the Birthday of Blessed Virgin Mary, we have every reason to rejoice at Mary's birth and a cause for celebration. It was a holy birth since the Virgin Mary was sanctified from the very first moment of her existence; her birth is the prelude for the imminent coming of our Saviour; with her arrival on the human scene, a new age is about to begin. Therefore, she is the great blessing coming from God for humanity.

The Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary is one of the oldest Marian solemnities. It is based on the second century (175 A.D.) apocryphal book "Protoevangelium of James". It reflects the traditions of the early Church, although it is not considered an inspired book. According to this book, Mary's parents were Joachim and Anne. Mary was born either in Jerusalem or in Sephoris, three miles north of Bethlehem. The "Annunciation" is believed to have taken place later in the house of Mary's parents. The feast originated in the 5th century in Syria or Palestine. St. Romanus of Syria is supposed to have brought it to Rome. The Roman Church adopted it in the 7th century and fixed it on 8th September. It is found in the 8th and 9th centuries Gregorian Sacramentary.

It is the birthday celebration of the Mother of Jesus, our heavenly Mother and Mother of the Church. It is the birthday of an ordinary woman who was chosen to become the mother of an extraordinary divine child. The Church celebrates the death day of saints as their feast day, considering it as their "birthday in heaven." The three exceptions are Jesus' birthday (Christmas), Mary's birthday and John the Baptist's birthday. Mary's birthday is celebrated because of her immaculate conception. Indeed, Sacred Scripture states that Mary was a descendant of David and the Evangelist Matthew also supports this truth in his genealogy (Mic. 5: 1- 4; Rom 8: 28-30; Mt 1: 1-16, 18-23, Romans 1:3).

Let us now understand some of the key messages from the solemnity of Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary.

1) Let the children give a suitable birthday gift to their heavenly mother. Every mother wants her children to inherit and acquire all her good qualities. Hence the best birthday gift to Mary is to become holy children of a holy mother.

2) A day to start practicing Mary's virtues. Let us practice her virtues of trusting faith in the power of God (Nothing is impossible for God Lk. 1:37), perfect obedience to the will of God (Be it done to me according your will Lk. 1:38), spirit of sacrificial and sharing love and acceptance of suffering with cent percent commitment to her heroic mission.

The Church has celebrated Mary's birth since at least the sixth century. An 8th September birth was chosen because the Eastern Church begins its Church year with September. The 8th September date helped determine the date for the feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8th December (nine months earlier).

On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, Scripture does not give an account of Mary's birth. However, the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James fills in the gap. This work has no historical value, but it does reflect the development of Christian piety. According to this account, Sts. Joachim and Anne are infertile but pray for a child. They receive the promise of a child that will advance God's plan of salvation for the world. Such a story, like many biblical counterparts, stresses the special presence of God in Mary's life from the beginning.

St. Augustine connects Mary's birth with Jesus' saving work. He tells the earth to rejoice and shine forth in the light of her birth. "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth, the nature inherited from our first parents is changed." The opening prayer at Holy Mass speaks of the birth of Mary's Son as the dawn of our salvation and asks for an increase of peace.

We can see every human birth as a call for new hope in the world. The love of two human beings namely, Sts. Joachim and Anne, has joined with God in his creative work. The loving parents have shown hope in a world filled with travail. The new child has the potential to be a channel of God's love and peace to the world. This is all true in a magnificent way in Mary. If Jesus is the perfect expression of God's love, Mary is the foreshadowing of that love. If Jesus has brought the fullness of salvation, Mary is its dawning. Birthday celebrations bring happiness to the celebrant as well as to family and friends. Next to the birth of Jesus, Mary's birth offers the greatest possible happiness to the world. Each time we celebrate her birth, we can confidently hope for an increase of peace in our hearts and in the world at large.



Fr. Allam Sagar Manoj Kumar is from the Diocese of Guntur. He has authored two books on Important Feast Days in the Liturgical year and contributed Articles to various National and Local magazines. He is also available for talks and retreats: allamgnt2020@gmail.com

DID JESUS LAUGH?

-Fr. Fio Mascarenhas SJ

To most Christians, the humor of Jesus is unknown. We tend to shy away from visions of our Lord smiling and engaging us in laughter. Yet there is ample evidence in the Gospels that Jesus desires this important aspect of his own humanity to shine forth: *"For the Word was made flesh, and lived amongst us"* (Jn 1:14), and moreover, Jesus *"became like us in every respect... except sin"* (Heb 2:17, 4:15).

Perhaps we have not read the Gospels carefully enough, with the emotional intelligence needed to resonate with Jesus' feelings. Perhaps we have allowed ourselves to see only his solemnity, his divine teachings given always with a serious face, his fierce zeal for religion and the things of God. True, the Gospel writers give much space to a sombre Jesus, but if we read carefully (and sometimes between the lines), we will find that in fact Jesus was a most joyful person, and had a great sense of humor!

In this respect, let us ask, could Jesus really be a "model" for us disciples if he was not an obviously "happy son of God?" His Vicar on earth, Pope Francis, indirectly provides us with an answer:

"A Christian without joy is either not a Christian or he is sick. There's no other type! He/she is not doing well, health-wise! A healthy Christian is a joyful Christian. Joy is like the seal of a Christian. Even in pain, tribulations, even in persecutions... Who gives this joy? The Holy Spirit! He is the great forgotten in our lives! May the Lord give us this grace to always be aware of the Holy Spirit in us, the Spirit who teaches us to love, and fills us with joy"(Homily, 22 May 2014).

He further explains:

"If one doesn't have a sense of humor, it's very difficult to be happy... A sense of humor is fundamental to be able to breathe, because it is linked to the capacity to enjoy life, to be enthusiastic... A sense of humor also helps us to be in good humor, and if we are in good humor it's easier to live with others and with ourselves... A sense of humor is like the water that springs sparkling naturally from the source; one perceives life, movement" (His book, *"God Is Young"*).

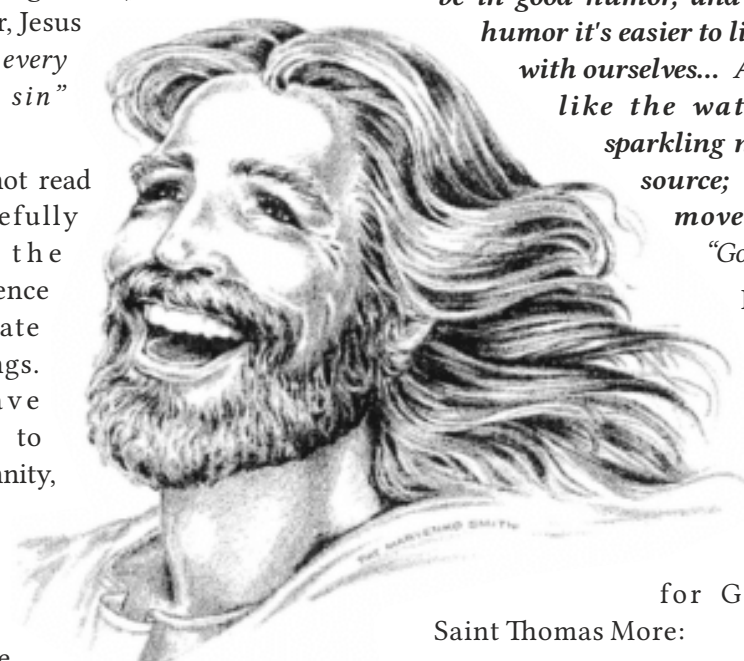
Pope Francis has also confided that every day for the past 40 years, he himself has prayed the following "Prayer for Good Humor" of

Saint Thomas More:

"Grant me, O Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest. Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humor to maintain it. Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good and that doesn't frighten easily at the sight of evil, but rather finds the means to put things back in their place. Give me a soul that knows not boredom, grumblings, sighs and laments, nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called "I." Grant me, O Lord, a sense of good humor. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke, to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others."

One of the evangelists, Luke, has thought it important enough to record an occasion when *"Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit..."* (10:21). But if Jesus was all the time *"filled with the Holy Spirit"* (4:1), he must have been blessed with the temperament of a very happy person!

We can conclude this also because, by his intense



and never-omitted personal prayer (early in the mornings or late at night after a very busy day) he constantly experienced his Abba Father affirming him, *“You are my beloved son, in whom I find my delight”* (Mk 1:11). This revelation surely brought him deep consolation and made him a truly joyful human person! The *“spirit of sonship”* (Rom 8:16) within him that made him cry out *“Abba, Father”* in every circumstance of his life brought him what Pope Francis describes as *“a sense of humor like the water that springs sparkling naturally from the source!”*

We must never forget that the Gospels are NOT biographies, but are written to give us theological reconstructions of Jesus' salvific actions and teachings. Jn 21:25 puts it clearly, *“There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”* So, to understand that Jesus was in fact a very happy person, with a great sense of humor, we must re-read his conversations in the Gospels (e.g., the Zacchaeus incident) in a contemplative spirit and try to visualize him speaking – with what feelings, what tone of voice, what facial expressions? (For this, we can use the Imaginative Prayer method of St. Ignatius of Loyola, known as Application of the Senses). Then we will realize that Jesus was not at all a habitually grim person! Rather, Jesus' inner joy shone forth and attracted people to himself, and that he certainly used humor to teach, heal, convert, and redeem!

For example, when talking to Thomas after he rose from the dead: was it with anger or with a twinkle in his eye that he said, *“Put your hand into my side...”* (Jn 20:27); or again, when he said to Peter who was about to sink, *“Why did you doubt?”* (Mt 14:31). Innumerable other examples can be cited. St Thomas More's words, *“Grant me, O Lord, the grace to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others”* were surely verified first of all in Jesus himself, our true Model, for he was fully

human while being fully divine, and *“like us in every way except sin.”*

There's nothing less attractive than a humorless Christian, the type that is mostly tight lipped, judgmental, unsmiling, puritanical, who views light-heartedness as heresy. But this is not wholesome Christianity. An important “fruit of the Spirit” is joy, and Jesus used humor to teach about the kingdom of his Father. Humor and profundity are not mutually exclusive.

The humor of Jesus is subtle, nearly imperceptible at first glance. The Sermon on the Mount, for instance, doesn't begin with a joke to warm up the



crowd, because the gospels aren't funny – the story of our salvation, the death and resurrection of our Lord, is serious business. That is precisely why Jesus made his message so accessible. Parables, with their use of common language and commentary

on everyday situations, spoke directly to people. A master storyteller would never forsake humor as a means to reach an audience. Jesus recognized that humor is as equal a part of the human condition as suffering and joy.

So, be convinced, yes, Jesus laughed!

Finally, here is a lovely prayer for us to pray daily: From the Church's *Weekday Missal*, 8th Week in Ordinary Time, alternative Opening Prayer of the Mass:

“Father in heaven, form in us the likeness of your Son and deepen his life within us. Send us as witnesses of Gospel joy into a world of fragile peace and broken promises. Touch the hearts of all men and women with your love, that they in turn may love one another. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.”



Fr Fiorello Mascarenhas SJ,
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The acronym “**ASAP**” commonly used in online chats, means “As soon as possible” and is used to convey urgency. ‘ASAP’ can also convey ‘**Always Say a Prayer**’, ‘**As Soon As Possible**.’

Always Say a Prayer - Why Prayer???

Prayer is our lifeline with God. Prayer is our highest privilege, our gravest responsibility; and the greatest power God has put into our hands (*The Kneeling Christian*).

The Holy Bible recounts innumerable occasions of men and women who seek God, beseech Him, inviting God into their endeavours through Prayer - ordinary men and women, prophets, apostles, Kings, holy men and women, and most of all our Lord Jesus who made prayer His priority, praying often and always, till the very end on the Cross of Calvary.

We have not been commanded to work, to keep watch and to fast constantly. But it has been laid down that **we are to pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17, CCC 2742)**. But we cannot pray at all times if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it (CCC 2697). The value of Personal Prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, Family Prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, cannot be underscored and is irreplaceable in the life of a Christian. **What about us who are blessed with the gift and outpouring of the Holy Spirit? If we do not allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, we fall back into slavery of sin (CCC 2744). There are varied moments which call us to prayer, for example:**

1. When you hear the Church bells, it is a call to prayer.
2. If you sense someone coming to your mind during the day or night, it is always possible to pray, prayer always presupposes effort (Is 62:6).
3. While listening to the News or reading the Newspaper, we can allow the Holy Spirit to pray within us. When you hear the sound of a siren of an ambulance passing by, let's pause to pray.
4. Pray for your Parish needs, as you hear announcements in church.
5. When you find Scripture verses inundating your mind, pray those Scriptures by the power of the Holy Spirit.
6. The vagaries of nature and climate changes, the unheard cries of the voiceless and persecuted; compel us to pray ceaselessly.
7. Praying through one's own dilemma, pain or loss for others facing similar situations, we become prayer warriors, interceding for many as we enlarge the place of our tent (Is 54: 2,3).

8. As we watch Television or browse the Internet. Recently I saw a TV Actor resembling a lady I know. I felt prompted to pray for her as she was going through a challenging phase and prayed for the Actor too.

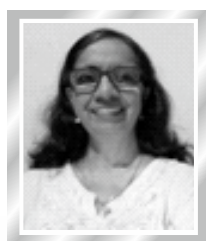
9. When passing schools, hospitals, government offices, we pray for these institutions, praying for people passing us on the road, praying in advance for the one whom we may be led to evangelize, praying for a neighbour when passing their home.

St. John Chrysostom enlightens us with his words: “It is possible to offer fervent prayer even while walking in public or strolling alone, or seated in your shop ... while buying or selling ... or even while cooking.”

Why pray ASAP (as soon as possible, at once without delay)

Prayer is life of the new heart. It ought to animate us at every moment (CCC 2697). The word 'immediately', which appears in the Gospel of St. Mark 41 times, brings home the fact that God expects immediate action to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. A heart in love with God and desirous of sharing His love will be watchful to His promptings. St. Faustina writes in her diary that she immediately sensed in her soul when someone was praying for her; and likewise she sensed in her soul when some soul asked her for prayer, even though they do not speak to her about it. She felt a sense of certain disquiet as if someone were calling her, and when she prayed she obtained peace (# 155).

Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part (CCC2725). We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. **If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in His Name (CCC 2725).** Try ASAP: ASAP. God will keep you in perfect peace, as you put your trust in Him. As I focus on Jesus and praying according to the promptings and nudges of the Holy Spirit, I realize indeed that God is at work in me to unleash His power and fulfil His purposes. It lifts me beyond my worries and needs, for God is always caring about my interests and is concerned with everything about me.



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

Matthew the Evangelist

-Leon Bent

Beatitudes, Kingdom of Heaven, Commission

Matthew was a Jew who worked for the occupying Roman forces, collecting taxes from fellow Jews. The Romans were not scrupulous about what the “tax farmers” got for themselves. Hence the latter, known as “publicans,” were generally hated as traitors by their fellow Jews, for their unscrupulous ways and ill-gotten wealth. The Pharisees lumped them with “sinners” (see Matthew 9:11-13). Nevertheless, Matthew was one of the twelve apostles – the first to respond to the “Call” to follow Jesus. So, it was shocking to hear Jesus “Call” such a man, to be one of his intimate followers. He wrote the first Gospel, recording the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Assuming that the identification of Matthew with Levi is correct, Matthew (probably meaning “Yahweh's Gift”) would appear to be the Christian name of Levi (called by Mark “Levi, the son of Alphaeus”), who had been employed as a tax collector in the service of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee.

The Gospel of Matthew is the first book of the New Testament, and one of the three synoptic Gospels. About 15 years after Mark, in about the year 85 CE, Matthew composed his work, drawing on a variety of sources, including Mark, and from a collection of sayings that, scholars later called “Q”, for *Quelle*, meaning source. It tells how Israel's Messiah, Jesus, comes to his people but is rejected by them and how, after his resurrection, he sent the apostles and disciples to the gentiles instead. A winged man, or angel, came to represent St Matthew, because his book opens with the human descendants of Jesus.

Writing for a Jewish-Christian audience, Matthew's main concern was to present Jesus as a teacher, even greater than Moses. The evangelist who composed the Gospel of Matthew, was probably a Jewish Christian, possibly a scribe.

The Beatitudes: A Blueprint for Holiness

Biblical scholars point out that, both, the first and the last Beatitudes referred to the kingdom of heaven. They saw these ‘bookending’ the other six Beatitudes, and suggested that everything in these other six clauses, may give glimpses of what it means to dwell fully within the kingdom. The Kingdom of Heaven is not some pie-in-the-sky-dream, Jesus already established it in the here-and-now: The Matthean Beatitudes (Mt. 5:1–10)!

The Matthean structure of beginning and closing the Beatitudes, with the same refrain, ‘theirs is the kingdom of heaven,’ stands out. This is the proclamation about the present reality leading to future possibilities. The repetition of the common refrain for the other six Beatitudes, at first seems to be voiced in a different tense: they shall have, they shall be, they shall see. These were not rewards for which they were waiting. They are rewards received in the present moment, too!

The translation in *The Jerusalem Bible* of the opening word of each clause that, is so memorably repeated, *makarios* in the Greek, was of great concern among the introverted-intuitive types group. The unfamiliar translation of *makarios* as happy caused

considerable excitement and disagreement. Matthew, author of our Good News today, wrote in Greek, and the word he used was “*makarios*.” It means “divinely joy-filled and supremely blessed,” or happiness that comes from the divine. The group explored a number of meanings for the word ‘happy’ before dismissing the concept as insubstantial and lightweight.

Blessed is a much richer and more inviting concept that, describes a deep state of righteous fruitfulness, as a reward for a right relationship with God. Going straight for the big picture someone suggested that, Jesus is the Beatitudes: Jesus embodies all eight ‘kingdom’ virtues.



Saint Matthew

Even as these thoughts and ideas continued to generate energy, the tension between the translations of *makarios*, as happiness and blessedness could not be laid to rest. That same tension came back into play when the focus passed from the merciful to those who mourn. The argument went like this: I am in mourning, and, therefore, am not happy but that, does not prevent me from feeling blessed: A State of Supreme Joy and Exuberance! The ancient Greek word for "blessed" is *makarios*, which was originally used to describe those who lived in another world, far from the problems and worries of others. Those who were "blessed" seemed to be free from earthly cares and struggles.

'Blessed are those ...' this search resulted in a cascade of reflections on the power of the root meaning of blessing. The Greek word is "*eulogia*," which means to speak well of or to praise. It is often used in the context of a matchless gift or an unexpected favour that, is bestowed on someone.

The idea of blessing connects immediately, even if its meaning is not clear; saying the word 'blessing' to someone warms the heart. It comes as comfort. People really want to be blessed. Blessing and blessedness are really rich in texture and flavour – it is something that is bestowed on you from outside. It is impossible to exult when you are mourning, but God can still pour blessings on you. Introverted intuition had by now woven a rich tapestry of ideas that seemed to be a blessing to a group. Blessing means the experiencing of divine kindness, mercy, or goodness. In other words, God wants to bless you. Paul says in Ephesians 1:3-4, "Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

Attention then returned to the poetic structure of the Beatitudes and to the powerful use of repetition. So, the attention turned to the kind of speakers who draw on, and employ the power of repetition. On this account, Jesus was positioned as a left-wing, counter-cultural revolutionary, a radical Rabbi, whose oratory was both, inspiring and exciting for the crowd. Jesus was empowering the multitude to stand up for the kingdom. Such a stand may bring pain and suffering in the first instance, but in the long term it will bring the reward of eternal bliss.

The Kingdom of Heaven

The Sermon on the Mount indicates how inextricably God's reign is interwoven with "righteousness" (kingdom: 5:3, 10, 19, 20; 6:10, 33; 7:21; conscientiousness and reverence: 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33). The "rule of God" and "righteousness", as its human correlate, are, in fact, the two key

concepts in the Sermon on the Mount. That they intrinsically belong together, is especially clear from 6:33, where "righteousness" is an attribute of the kingdom, and seeking *the kingdom and its righteousness* is depicted as the highest priority of our existence.

Matthew's message of the kingdom of heaven did not take place in a vacuum. It was targeted at the specific needs of his audience. The "Jewish" character of Matthew's Gospel has often drawn attention to this fact. This is evident from, *inter alia*, the many quotations and allusions from the Old Testament, the Hebrew/Aramaic expressions which were left untranslated (e.g. *raka* in 5:22; *korban* in 17:6 – cf. Mk. 7: 11, where a translation is provided), his positive attitude towards the law (cf. 5:17-18), his emphasis on right relationship with God (e.g. 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33 etc.), his special attention to Israel (10:5-6; 27:25), his portrayal of Jesus as the expected Messiah (1: 1-17 etc.), and his respect for Jewish sensitivities as illustrated, for example, by his use of the divine passive (e.g. 5:4,6,7,9). These and many more features indicate that, the writer is a Jewish-Christian, writing for mainly Jewish-Christians. He writes, from somewhere in Syria or the adjacent Upper Galilee, to fellow Jewish Christian compatriots who are experiencing growing opposition from neighbouring Jewish communities.

In the period after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, an increasing separation between church and synagogue took place, eventually culminating in the *birkat ha-minim* (a phrase that literally means 'the benediction of the heretics' but is actually a euphemism for a screaming imprecation or spoken curse against them...in approximately 85 AD), in which God's curse was invoked on all traitors or apostates, especially on Jewish-Christians.

This meaningful interconnection of God's holiness and love can be called typical of Matthew's concept of God, and, therefore, also his view of the kingdom. Another feature of the God-determined character of the kingdom is its cosmic scope: God is the Creator, the horizon of his kingdom is glorious and grandiose in character. The coming of the "kingdom" is not merely directed towards saving souls for heaven. In the Sermon on the Mount righteousness required that, the citizens of God's kingdom, cover the totality of human existence. And in the concluding verses of Matthew, Jesus speaks as the mighty King whose authority covers the entire universe, and whose commission encompasses "all nations."

Matthew 28: 19-20: The Great Commission is the Latin *commissiō* ("sending together, a task, a mission") that, was originally assigned to Jesus' apostles. The central task is to make disciples. To do this, one must go to the lost, and then baptize, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach believers to obey Jesus' commands.

God's reigning activity is always dynamic, and even the sphere of this activity is never static. The "Kingdom of Heaven" indicates God's active reign. Or, put differently: it implies the active realisation of God's will. In the same vein, the second petition in the "Our Father," namely that, 'God's kingdom come,' is immediately followed by the prayer that 'his will be done.'

The Jewish setting of Matthew also explains his preference for the term "kingdom of heaven," rather than "kingdom of God". Matthew uses "kingdom of heaven" 32 times.

An alternative understanding of the qualification "of heaven" might be that, Matthew wanted to stress the absolutely incomparable, transcendent, cosmic-universal character of the reign of God in contrast to 'earthly' ones. It, therefore, qualifies the kingdom as, God-centred, God-determined, the product of God's personal being and activity.

God in contrast to 'earthly' ones. It, therefore, qualifies the kingdom as, God-centred, God-determined, the product of God's personal being and activity.

The Ultimate Commission: The Key to the Gospel

The whole Gospel Matthew describes Jesus as the 'one with authority,' and readers of Matthew have been prepared for, and will not be surprised at the risen Lord's claim that, all authority has been given to him. Before the resurrection, according to her, his authority is derivative and "limited" (9:8; 26:53).

There are evangelical visions in Matthew. The magi go to Jerusalem to venerate the new-born King, although their action is centripetal in character (2:1-12). John the Baptist also appears on the scene and preaches the kingdom of heaven to his contemporaries (3:1-12). Jesus' ministry includes preaching the "good news" of the kingdom (4:17, 23; 9:35; 11:1). Jesus sends his disciples to the people of Israel (10:5-6). Jesus encourages his disciples to pray for harvest workers (9:35-38). Disciples are compared to salt and light (5:13-16), which "reflect a missionary outlook." The worldwide official announcement of the Gospel is presupposed in Matthew (24:14; 26:13).

One vital aspect of the kingdom's demand still requires attention: the task of proclaiming the

Gospel of the kingdom of heaven. According to Matthew, both John the Baptist and Jesus started their preaching by announcing the coming of the kingdom (3:2; 4: 17). In the sending out of the twelve, the disciples are commissioned to make the same announcement (10:7), thus becoming an extension of Jesus' own activity.

In Matthew 4:23 and 9:35, "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom" is placed midway between the 'teaching and the healing activity' of Jesus, indicating that, "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom," is Jesus' central activity, and it consists of teaching and healing.

Matthew believed it necessary to put special emphasis on the necessity of obeying the kingdom demand, that is, of a lifestyle portraying the righteousness which the king expects of his people. It could be said that many Christians, especially in the western world, are not impressed by the track record of the Church. They are tired of mere words. At this stage, they need to see a convincing alternative. Jesus' final mandate provides just this impetus!

Later, in the ultimate commission, he now claims full authority. In the final scene of the book of Matthew, the risen Lord commands his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations Matthew 28:16-20 "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." The Great Commission is the Latin *commissiō*, "sending together, attractive witnesses on a task, a mission."

This could be provided by the attractive "being" of Christians in the world; by a lifestyle of "righteousness," which portrays the transforming power of God, working through his Spirit. This was Matthew's message about the radical demands of, "the Beatitudes, the Kingdom and his Final Command!" Of course, they should continue preaching the "good news" to all nations, but their credibility would only be restored by a really convincing lifestyle, which exhibits "exceeding righteousness," the essence of which, is the manifestation of the boundless love of God in all spheres of life.



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.

Anshuman Jhingran becomes youngest swimmer to cross the North Channel



Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School, Vashi has been at the helm of Indian swimming for over two decades now. Ever since the Agnel swimming pool in Vashi was blessed by Rt. Rev. Dr. Alex Dias, Bishop Emeritus of Port Blair, Andamans, the school has been churning national and international swimmers year after year. **Fr. Agnel, Vashi has to its credit over 900 medals and numerous records at the National level and 22 medals at the international level. 6 swimmers as well as the swimming coach Gokul Kamath, himself an ex-student of the school, have been honoured with the Shiv Chhatrapati award, the highest honour for sports in Maharashtra.**

The Agnel pool trains hundreds of swimmers from all schools every year, through its learn to swim program. Swimmers coached at the centre also take part in open water swimming, in both India as well as abroad. One such prodigal swimmer who made India proud and entered into the **Guinness Book of World Records is Anshuman Jhingran.**

Having joined Fr. Agnel school at the age of 10, Anshuman came into the limelight when he broke the Maharashtra state record in the 50m butterfly at the age of 12. He went on to represent Maharashtra at the Nationals at the age of 14. An arm fracture put him out for a few months, after which he took to open water swimming. In 2021, Anshuman swam a record 7 sea swims in one month totalling 206km in the Arabian Sea, creating a new record. He went on to swim the Palk Strait, the sea between Sri Lanka and India in 2022 before embarking on an ambitious plan to swim the seven oceans. The North Channel, the sea between northern Ireland and Scotland was the first on the list. This posed an entirely different challenge as he now had to swim in cold water and needed acclimatization before

attempting such swims. Anshuman accompanied by his mother and coach travelled to Jersey, UK to train and get acclimatised to the ocean temperature. The North Channel is one of the toughest open water swims in the world and the channel is known for its unpredictable currents as well as the abundance of jellyfish and other marine life including the poisonous lions mane jellyfish.

Anshuman moved on to Donaghadee, Northern Ireland, well prepared for the North Channel crossing. He took the leap on 17th July from the sandy coast of Donaghadee and made his way across the chilly waters towards Scotland. It was smooth sailing for him for the first few hours until the tide changed and the undercurrents slowed him down. To add to his woes, he suffered cramps, as well as jellyfish stings. **He finally reached the rocky shore of Portpatrick, Scotland, having successfully crossed the North Channel in 11 hours and 28 minutes.**

Anshuman became the third Indian to complete the crossing and the youngest swimmer in the world to do so, earning him a title for the Guinness World Record. Anshuman now endeavours to cross the Catalina Channel, off the coast of Los Angeles. He is now a role model for younger swimmers, who dream of emulating the feat and putting India on the world map of swimming. Anshuman continues to train on a daily basis at the Agnel's pool with an ambition to complete all the Ocean 7 crossings (North Channel, Cook Strait, Kaiwi Channel, English Channel, Catalina Channel, Tsugaru Strait and the Strait of Gibraltar) within the next two years which will make him the youngest swimmer in the world to do so.

-Sunil D'Cruz

On the International Day of Peace (21st September), we look at the tireless efforts undertaken by Nobel Peace laureate and internationally acclaimed child rights activist and social reformer, Shri Kailash Satyarthi, who leads the global movement to end child slavery and exploitation of children since 1980, through his Children's Foundation. He gave up a lucrative career as an Electrical Engineer for initiating a crusade against child servitude.

Looking back on his journey towards child empowerment and how it all began, Shri Kailash Satyarthi says, "On my first day of school, I saw another boy of my age working as a shoeshine boy, instead of attending class. It disturbed me so much that one day, I mustered the courage to ask the boy's father, a cobbler, as to why he didn't send him to school. The answer left an indelible mark on me. He told me you are born to go to school, we are born to work. I was shocked. This incident left an indelible imprint on my mind."

He added, "Though I went on to become an engineer, I wanted to work against child labour. There was no legislation against the social evil. Even the United Nations never took up the cause till the 1980s. The notion of child rights came only in 1989 when the UN Convention on the rights of the child was adopted."

Appealing to the world to bring a smile to the faces of children, especially those who have been robbed of their childhood due to forced labour, he urged everyone to do their bit.

Globalisation of Compassion

Highlighting the importance of globalisation of compassion, Shri Satyarthi said, "When you feel the suffering of others as your own, that is empathy. When you try to take action to end that suffering, that is compassion. India should be the

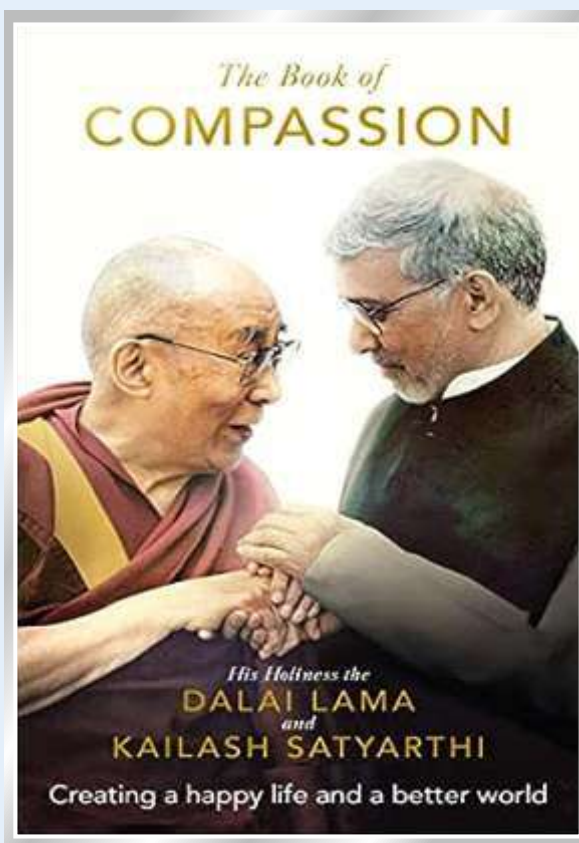
land to globalise compassion. We should globalise our values and morals."

The Book of Compassion, to be published next year, is based on a conversation between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Shri Satyarthi, where they discuss how to cultivate compassion and why concern for others is the key factor in improving our day-to-day lives.

Dedicating the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize to the nation

In a humble gesture, child rights activist Kailash

Satyarthi dedicated the honour to the nation by presenting his medal to Late President Pranab Mukherjee in New Delhi, after receiving the award. Visitors to the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum will now be able to get a glimpse of the Nobel Peace Prize medal, in 18 carats gold and weighing 196 grams.





2014 Nobel Peace Prize Winner Shri Kailash Satyarthi handing over his gold medal to late President Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

Shri Satyarthi is a leading force in advancing the Human Fraternity initiative launched by His Holiness Pope Francis, head of the Roman Catholic Church, and His Eminence Ahmed Al-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, among others.

Shri Kailash Satyarthi's mission in life is that every child is:

- *free to be a child,*
- *free to grow and develop,*
- *free to eat, sleep, see daylight,*
- *free to laugh and cry,*
- *free to play, free to learn,*
- *free to go to school, and above all,*
- *free to dream.*

All the great religions tell us to care for children. Jesus said: "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to them." The Holy Quran says: "Kill not your children because of poverty."

On the occasion of the International Peace Day, Shri Kailash Satyarthi's message to India and the world is "Peace is possible when we learn to respect diversity, create a

collective sense of moral responsibility and accountability, and globalise compassion."



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

-Tony Menezes

The International Day of Charity is celebrated every year on 5th of September. In order to honour the vital work that charities do around the world, in 2012, the United Nations decided to designate an International Day of Charity as an official day of recognition and appreciation for the good work that charities do.

The reason for choosing this date is that it is the death anniversary of Mother Teresa of Kolkata who devoted her whole life to charity work and in 1979 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for work undertaken in the struggle to overcome poverty and distress, which also constitute a threat to peace." Thus on December 17, 2012 at the initiative of Hungary - the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution by consensus, to designate 5th September, as the International Day of Charity.

The primary purpose of the International Day of Charity is to create awareness amongst people, ensure a common platform for charitable activities worldwide for individuals, philanthropists, and charity related volunteer organisations.

Charity is vital to humanity, as it helps us to reach out to all segments of society in assisting those who need our help the most. Charity, like the notions of volunteerism and philanthropy, provides real time social bonding and contributes to the creation of inclusive and resilient societies. That is why International Day of Charity is so important. Every year, charities the world over help to save and improve people's lives by fighting disease, assisting in poverty alleviation, promoting education and healthcare, providing disaster relief, protecting and supporting children, besides giving hope to millions of people in need.

Charitable activities can take many forms including donating money, volunteering one's time, providing resources and offering skill set. The International Day of Charity reminds us that even the smallest acts of compassion can make a substantial impact on improving the lives of others.

Through charity, individuals and organisations can foster a sense of unity and solidarity across borders, promote the values of empathy and compassion by fostering a culture of giving that transcends differences and promotes common

good. Additionally, charities often collaborate with governments and international organisations to create sustainable solutions to pressing issues amplifying their effect.

HOW AS INDIVIDUALS, WE CAN GET INVOLVED IN THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CHARITY:

1. Empty your closet: Clear out all your old unwanted household items and sell them. Donate this money to a charity in your neighbourhood. In the process you will give yourself a cleaner house too!

2. Organise a food sale: Get your talented buddies together and organise a food event. Ask them to donate their cakes, tray cakes, biscuits. Sell and use the money collected for charitable work.

3. Run for it: Cobble up a sponsorship and organise a run with your friends, be it a marathon, half a marathon or end of the road or block and back. Donate the sponsorship money to a charity of your choice.

4. Sell your artistic wares: Get all your talented, creative friends together and sell your wares. It's a great way to raise money for a worthy cause.

5. Organise Raffles: A good way of raising money for charity is by selling tickets with numbers on them and rewarding the lucky winner - sell them to your office colleagues, friends and people in your neighbourhood. Pick a lucky number and give away a prize, be it homemade goodies or artistic wares.

In conclusion, the International Day of Charity serves as a reminder of our shared responsibility to help those in need. It encourages individuals and organisations to engage in acts of kindness and generosity that can transform lives and create a more just and equitable world. By promoting the spirit of charity, we can make a positive difference and inspire positive change on both local and global scale.



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

St. Magdalene of Canossa – Aflame with Love

-Ninette D'Souza

Unbounded love and self-effacing humility are the ingredients that form the alchemy of the persona of St. Magdalene of Canossa. The commemoration of her semi quinentennial birth anniversary began this year.

St. Magdalene's life can be summed up in two virtues: Charity in Humility and Humility in Charity. A reflection on the life of Mary will reveal a similar charity that never tired of reaching out to others and sharing with them the riches of life. Of the many titles bestowed on Magdalene, the one that appealed to me the most is, 'Weaver of Hope and Life'. Doesn't this title also sum up the persona of Mary, our Blessed Mother?

"Live relying on God and were you to lose everything you would find it all again in Him." These inspiring words were what Magdalene who was born on March 1, 1774, in Verona, abided by all her life. As the third child born into an aristocratic family that was looking forward to the birth of a male child, Magdalene experienced rejection right

from her birth. She lost her father in an accident at the age of five. Her mother for reasons best known to herself, remarried leaving behind five children. This meant that Magdalene lived through a harsh upbringing at the hands of a governess, one fraught with trials and tribulations both physical and emotional.

Magdalene time and again stood up for all that was right in the eyes of God, unmindful of the punishments meted out to her. As an adolescent she suffered a mysterious crippling illness from which she recovered miraculously. **Through all of this, Magdalene found in God a fatherly love that never dies and in Mary, Mother of Sorrows, a mother whose healing touch would never leave her.** She also began to mould her thoughts, words and actions based on the life

of Mary. This time of intense pain and suffering led to her making a firm decision to offer herself to God as a Religious. Her life had never been easy, and much less in the years she spent deciphering her Vocation. Her life was lived in a missionary spirit, with a zeal to go anywhere and do anything to make Christ known and loved. Her faith journey was truly demanding and often painful, yet she never abandoned her faith in God, who led her to sanctity step by step.

I see a vivid similarity in the life of Mary who

neither understood nor questioned all that happened in her life after her momentous 'YES' to God. All she did was ponder everything in the silence of her heart. It was the same Virgin Mary, Mother of Faith, who accompanied Magdalene on her journey of entrusting herself to the crucified Lord. In Mary, Magdalene found comfort, support and answers to decisive choices, as she searched for the glory of God and for the salvation of her brothers and sisters.



Semiquinentennial Birth Anniversary
of St. Magdalene of Canossa, 1774-2024 (250 years)

Magdalene lived in a society that was dominated by the arrogance of privileges. She used the aura of her patrician upbringing to become the protagonist of a spiritual change. Leaving the luxury of her palace and the trappings of wealth, she set up base in San Zeno, one of the poorest districts in Verona. With some like-minded companions whom she affectionately called, 'Daughters of Charity' she engaged in the task of revealing God's love for humanity. This she did by giving of herself without reserve, for the redemption of the many who had been abandoned in their poverty, for those exploited by the egoism of the rich and for those oppressed by the reigning evils of a materialistic society in war-stricken Italy, that was just beginning to regroup.

Besides her enlightening experiences of

communion with God and the crucified Christ, the little joys made up of gestures of goodness and total self-giving to the least and the poorest maximised her potential to be a totally fulfilled, 'Woman and Believer'. When in refuge in Venice she was rewarded with a vision which paved the way for her Life's mission. She saw the Blessed Mother surrounded by six Religious, who were led two by two to a Church filled with children, youth and adults; then to a hospital and finally to a hall filled with bedraggled children. The women were instructed to attend to all three groups, while paying special attention to the poor. Magdalene responded to the vision with alacrity and founded the congregations of the Sons and Daughters of Charity. Magdalene's extensive efforts ensured that she and all who followed her became capable of responding to the Faith ... a zealous, burning Faith that would animate them at all times.

The Canossian charisms and I go back a long way. By the time I was ready to begin my formal schooling, my parents had already booked a flat in Marinagar, Mahim. Hence, they took admission for me at Canossa High School. I still remember my daily travels for 4 years from Marine Lines where we had been living to Mahim. Regrets to be travelling so far or thoughts of putting me in a school closer home never occurred to them. They were convinced they had made the right choice for their daughter. A school that would be responsible for my all round growth and development.

We shifted to Marinagar when I was in Std III. I passed out of Canossa and soon as a trained teacher, joined the Staff of my Alma Mater in moulding and shaping the countless hearts and minds that passed through our hands. At Canossa, I was blessed to understand that Teaching is a Vocation, a divine call to serve the children entrusted to our care. I was helped to realize it is an honour to be a co-worker with God in making the children secure in who they are – each one a

masterpiece of God!!!

"Perfect love is the bond of unity," opined Magdalene. She was a person of numerous and profound relationships, who was constantly in dialogue with all those who could help her start and consolidate her apostolic works. As a Canossian educator, I was privileged to observe



first-hand how important it is to seek dialogue amongst ourselves. While working together is never easy, DIALOGUE is a precious instrument in the search for the good of everyone. I discerned that a simple question, a proposal or advice given in love is worth more than an imposition or judgement given in haste. Such attitudes free people, I learnt, thus allowing for greater acceptance, even when what has to be said is not what the other person expects to hear. While I was not completely successful in putting this into practice, while at school,

I am still working on it.

Today as a Canossian ex-student and ex-teacher, it is with an inexplicable sense of pride and joy that I have penned this pean to Magdalene. **The commemoration of her semiquincentennial birth anniversary began this year.** During my tenure at Canossa, I had myriad opportunities to learn and discover a woman who was a visionary way ahead of her times. Magdalene's vision implied a missionary spirit and her zeal to make Christ known and loved is today manifested in 35 countries spanning 5 continents. St. Magdalene deemed by then Pope (now Saint) John Paul II as, 'a prophet of charity' lived a life of truth and love. Are these not the very qualities desperately needed to heal our bruised and broken world today?

The Angels : Princes of Paradise

-Jacqueline Kelly

God has created powerful beings who are wholly spirit, the angels. God created the angels in His love, to look upon Him and to live eternally with Him. The angels could not do that by their own power, hence God gave them a share in His own divine life.

But, before the angels were allowed to see God they had first to be tested. Some of the angels failed the test and revolted against God. As punishment, they were thrown down into hell. They are called evil spirits. Their leader is the devil (Satan, which means in Hebrew, the Enemy). The evil spirits hate God and us, and seek to do us harm in body and soul.

The angels who remained true to God see God now, adore Him and praise Him in eternal happiness. They love God and serve Him, fighting for His kingdom. They make known to us God's will, protect us in body and soul, encourage us to do good and pray for us. Angels support us when we seek their help (Hebrews 1:14), protect us from physical harm and give us the strength to overcome difficulties. They have unlimited power and great wisdom (Psalm 103:20). They interpret our life situations. We pray especially for the intercession of the angels whose names were given to us in baptism.

It is forbidden to give divine honour or worship the angels, for this belongs to God alone (Revelations 19:10; 22:9). They are servants in the House of God. They only obey what the Lord says. We find it difficult to believe in angels except through the God-given gift of faith. Angels are beyond the scope of any scientific investigation. The mystery of angels is disclosed only through God's plan. Angels, like saints are honoured, not adored.

According to Scripture, we will see angels appearing in human form, usually as young men or companions. We also read about angels who are heavenly beings wrapped in celestial splendour or white garments. Made in the image and likeness of God, angels are the most marvellous of God's creatures because they closely resemble the

nature of God. Christ says: "**See that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say to you, their angels in heaven, are always in the presence of my Father who is in heaven**" (Matthew 18:10).

Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican Friar (A.D. 1225-1274) has been called the "angelic doctor" because his theories about angels are still recognized in Christian angelology. Angels neither age nor die (Luke 20:36). No angel is older than another. They do not multiply. They were created holy, without sin, and before Adam and Eve. They are spirit beings, unseen, unless God gives the ability to see them or unless they manifest themselves.

Angels are higher in intelligence, power and movement, yet angels serve men as "*Ministering Spirits*" (Hebrews 1:14).

How can we show that the angels know what passes on earth?

We can show that the angels know what passes on earth from the Words of Christ: "*There shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.*"

THE NINE CHOIRS OF ANGELS

Their duties as angels:

First group:

Seraphim created to adore God.

Cherubim created to adore God.

Thrones created to watch over lawful leaders.

Second group:

Dominations help us to overcome our sinful behaviours, during Lent they help us to practice penance.

Virtues created to assist those who strive for a particular virtue.

Powers Guardian angels of priests.

Third group:

Principalities created to watch over parishes.

Archangels assist in teaching the faith.

Angels God gave us our guardian angels, and they are said to be our personality perfected.



Choirs of Angels

Theologians further subdivided the choir of angels into three triads with specific concerns:

The first triad: Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones concern themselves with contemplating the glory of God. It is the six-winged Seraphim who sings the Sanctus, “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts” (Isaiah 6:3).

The second triad: Dominations, Virtues and Powers - known as the “angels of creation” because they concern themselves with the ordering of the universe and a plurality of causes.

The third triad: Principalities, Archangels and Angels concern themselves with the minute ordering of the universe and specific causes, including the welfare of people. Each human being, each church, and each country has a Guardian Angel.

The Hebrew word for angel is *mal'ach*, and the Greek word is *angelos*. Both mean “messenger.” The other words used for angels are Seraphim (Isaiah 6:2), Cherubim (Ezekiel 10:1-3) and Ministering Spirits (Hebrew 1:13).

Holy Ones: The unfallen angels are also spoken of as “Holy Ones” (Psalm 89: 5, 7).

Host: It is derived from the Hebrew word *tsaba* which means armies, hosts (refers to the idea of warfare).

Sons of God: Unfallen angels are also called “sons of God” as they were brought into existence by the creation of God (Job 1:6; 38:7) and they possess a personality like God.

A highly organized hierarchy of angels is referred to with the word “thrones” (*qronoi*), “powers” (*kuriotites*), “rulers” (*arcai*) and “authorities” (*exousiai*). In Scripture, there is mention of “assembly” and “Council of angels” (Psalm 89:5,7). Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12) means “shining one” or “Star of the morning”. He was originally placed in a position of authority over the Cherubim surrounding the Throne of God. Evil angels are mentioned in (Ephesians 6:12).

There are 7 Archangels (Tobias 12:15). We know the names of three of them from Scripture.

Michael whose name means “Who is like God”.

(Daniel, Epistle of St. Jude, Apocalypse of St. John). We revere Archangel Michael as the leader of the angels. (Jude 9). He is the angel warrior battling against Satan and the evil spirits, and he protects the faithful at the time of death. He is also called “Chief Prince” (Daniel 10:13). He is the Patron of mariners, soldiers and police.

Gabriel whose name means “Strength of God” or “Man of God” [Daniel 9:21; Luke 1:26]. Gabriel seems to be God's special messenger of His Kingdom. He reveals and interprets God's purpose. Angel Gabriel and Saint Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Spirit, made the first part of the Hail Mary. The Church of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, made the second part of the Hail Mary. He is the Patron of messengers, postal workers and media people.



The Archangels : Michael, Raphael & Gabriel

Raphael means “Healing of God”. It was Archangel Raphael, who not only guided Tobias in finding his wife, Sarah, he also counselled them to pray together to ask God's blessings on their marriage. He cured Tobit of his blindness. He was also the angel who healed

the earth when it was defiled by the sins of the fallen angel [Enoch 10:17]. He is the Patron of doctors, nurses, travellers and bearer of holy joy and messenger of peace.

The Apocryphal Book of Enoch lists the other four angels as: **Uriel, Raguel, Sariel and Jeramiel**. All their names end in “el” which means “shining light” in Hebrew.

The Catholic Church celebrates the presence of angels in our lives and also at our death.

“The angels are always near to those who are grieving, to whisper to them that their loved ones are safe in the hands of God.” - Quoted in The Angel's Little Instruction Book by Eileen Elias Freeman, 1994.

Jacqueline Kelly is a regular contributor of articles to different publications.

The month of September is an important month for Christians because we celebrate the birthday of our blessed Mother Mary on 8th September.

Mount Mary's basilica in Bandra bears testimony to people's ardent faith in the miraculous intervention of Our Lady. All religions come to pay their respects in this church and also in the celebration of Bandra Feast.

This month is when our rains cease by the 21st or so. We must not forget to thank God if the rains were plentiful this year which they were.

So on that happy note let's begin ...

All about Fairs



The historical roots of the Frankfurt Trade Fair dates back to 1240 when Emperor Frederick II granted the city the trade fair privilege. This

makes it the oldest fair in the world.

The Bandra Fair is a very popular fair and throngs of people from various parts of Mumbai attend this fair.

It begins on the Sunday following the 8th of September, the nativity of Mother Mary. This fair is estimated to be around 300 years old.

According to legend, this fair started when a statue of Mother was found floating in the Arabian Sea between 1700 and 1760, and a Koli fisherman had dreamt about it years earlier.

However, although this fair is popular yet the residents residing at the locality do complain a great deal about the pollution, the mosquitoes that increase and the lack of transport during these days of the fair.

However, it still continues to flourish and is looked forward by both the elderly and the kids with great enthusiasm.

Brain Teasers



1. A sundial has the fewest moving particles of any timepiece. Which has the most?

2. A family has two parents, eight sons with one sister.

How many members are there?

3. What do an island and the letter t have in common?

4. How can a man who shaves several times a day still have a long beard?

5. A Farmer had 17 sheep. All but eight ran away. How many are left?

6. $A+B=27$.

$B=$ Half of A .

$B+C=13$.

$C=$ Double of 2.

What is the value of A ?

Smile Please



1. Team work is important, it helps you to put the blame on someone else.

2. Did you hear about the claustrophobic astronaut? He just

needed a little space.

3. The bank kept calling me to give me compliments. They said I had an 'outstanding balance'!

4. An old man had eight strands of hair on his head. He went to the barber's shop.

The barber sarcastically asked, "Shall I cut or count?"

The old man: "Colour it!"

Moral: Life is to enjoy all you have.

5. Murder of English. Here are a few examples.

Will you hang the calendar or I will hang myself.

Give me a blue pen of any colour.

Open the window - Let the Air Force come in.

Both of you stand together separately.

Shark Bait

During a research experiment, a marine biologist placed a shark into a large holding tank and then released several small bait fish into the tank.



As expected, the shark quickly swam around the tank and ate all the smaller fish.

The marine biologist then inserted a strong piece of clear fibreglass into the tank, creating two separate partitions.

She put the shark on one side of the glass and the smaller bait new fish on the other.

Again the shark quickly attacked. However, this time he slammed into the fibreglass divider and bounced off. Undeterred, he kept on attacking every few minutes but to no avail.

The bait fish swam around, unharmed.

After about an hour, the shark gave up.

This experiment was repeated several dozen times over the next few weeks. Eventually the shark got less aggressive and made fewer attempts to attack the bait fish.

He got tired of hitting against the fibreglass divider and so ceased attacking.

The marine biologist then removed the fibreglass divider and the bait fish swam on their side.

The shark still did not attack. He was now trained to believe that a barrier existed between it and the bait fish. The bait fish swam freely, safe from harm.

What do we learn? We learn that like the shark we give up after a series of setbacks and failures. But these should not deter us. Each setback is an opportunity to learn and not let a barrier develop in our minds. This barrier becomes psychological and we come to expect failure even when there is every opportunity to succeed. Nothing is impossible if we put our minds and hearts to something.

Riddles

1. What can you catch but not throw?
2. You walk into a room that has a match, kerosene lamp, candle and a fireplace. What would you light first?
3. If your uncle's sister is not your aunt, what relation is she to you?
4. What is so fragile that saying it breaks it?



What is the Good Word?

1. The biggest lake in the world.
2. A remarkable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent casual connection.
3. Complete the simile. As heavy as
4. Complete the analogy. A sword is the weapon of a warrior; a pen is the weapon of a
Rose is to a flower as blue is to
5. Complete the metaphor.

A person who is worthless in a family. He is the of the family.

Linguistic Quiz

Test your linguistic knowledge

1. Miss and Mr in French.
2. Dear in Italian.
3. Peter in Spanish.



Quiz



1. Who were the parents of Mother Mary?
2. Name the angel who visited Mother Mary?
3. In which place did Mother Mary die?
4. Who was the spouse of Mother Mary?
5. When Mary died, her body was taken up to Heaven. What is this feast day called?

That's all for this month. Take care, till next month.

Answers

Brain Teasers

1. Hourglass with thousands of sand particles.
2. Eleven.
3. They are both in the middle of water.
4. A barber.
5. Eight.
6. Eighteen.

Riddles

1. A cold.
2. Match.
3. Your mother.
4. Silence.

What is the Good Word?

1. Caspian Sea. 2. A coincidence. 3. Lead.
4. A writer, a colour. 5. Black Sheep.

Linguistic Quiz

1. Mademoiselle, Monsieur. 2. Cara. 3. Pedro.

Quiz

1. St. Anne and St. Joachim. 2. Angel Gabriel
3. Jerusalem. 4. St. Joseph. 5. The Assumption Feast.



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.



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

K. A. Antony, Ottappalam, Kerala

I had submitted a petition for the good result of my daughter in her pharmacy examination in the U.K. You assured me of your prayers through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel and placed my petition in front of his relic. We are happy to inform you that our daughter passed the exam with good marks, though it was tough, through the kind intercession of Fr. Agnel and your prayers. In thanksgiving, I have sent Rs.15,000 towards the sponsorship program for a child in Balbhavan. I also instructed my daughter to continue this sponsorship scheme for a few more years with her earnings. I request your prayers to find a good life partner for my daughter. Please keep me and my family members in your prayers.

Sosamma Saji, Al Ain, U.A.E.

I am sending you my regular donation of Rs. 40,000 via cheque. Please pray for my family and may we continue to receive the blessings of Fr. Agnel, who through his powerful intercession has granted so many of our special favours and petitions.

Heet Patel, Borivali (West), Mumbai

I am pleased to donate Rs.15,000 towards the Yearly Sponsorship of one boy of the Balbhavan Orphanage, for his education, maintenance, care and training, for one year.

Sharvil Alex Faroz, Vasai (West)

We are donating Rs. 50,000 via cheque to Fr. Agnel Ashram and the Balbhavan Orphanage, for the upkeep and well-being of the children. May Ven. Fr. Agnel intercede for us and grant our prayer requests.

Shane Fernandes, Borivali (West), Mumbai

I wish to donate to Fr. Agnel Ashram and Balbhavan Orphanage, a small amount of Rs. 20,000, in our effort to provide monetary support, towards the training and education facilities that Fr. Agnel Ashram provides.

Praveen Madhur Srivastava, Kandivali (East), Mumbai

In keeping with my regular monthly donations, I offer my financial support of Rs. 65,000, sent through NEFT Bank Transfer, to Fr. Agnel Ashram. I am ever grateful for numerous favours received, through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnelo.

Veera J. Ghadially, Tardeo, Mumbai

Please accept my cheque of Rs.10,000 towards the Mini Sponsorship Scheme for 2 boys (i.e. Rs.5,000 for each boy). I am honoured to contribute financially, towards your tireless efforts to educate and care for these boys.



FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

MUMBAI: Thank you Jesus for answering my prayers, through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel and healing me of my abdominal hernia. I was getting pain all around my stomach. My doctor asked me to do Sonography. My reports were absolutely normal. In thanksgiving, an offering has been made at the Ashram.

-D. Cardozo

THANKSGIVING FOR SECURING A GOOD JOB

MUMBAI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have successfully completed my education and have been blessed with a good job. With a grateful heart, I have made an offering at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-S. Gupta

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD ACADEMIC RESULTS

VASAI: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing my child Sharon with success in her exams. I have come to the Ashram and made an offering.

-S. Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESSFUL SURGERY

MUMBAI: My prayers have been answered. My surgery was successful, through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. A thanksgiving offering has been made at the Ashram.

-R. Aloj

BLESSINGS ON FAMILY

MUMBAI: 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 offered six Masses in thanksgiving.

-B. Rodrigues

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

MUMBAI: We have been blessed with many favours through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. An offering has been made to the Ashram.

-R. Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR A NEW HOUSE

UTTAN: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed us with our heart's desire, a new home. We are indeed grateful for this big favour received and have made a thanksgiving offering to the Ashram.

-A. Andrade

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

GOA: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my family and I have been blessed abundantly. A thanksgiving offering has been sent to the Ashram.

-F. D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

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

-C. Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED

COLABA: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have received many favours. A love offering has been given at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-Capt. E. Rebello

THANKSGIVING FOR BEING BLESSED

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

-A. Creado

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD HEALTH AND SECURE JOB

THANE: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed me immensely with a good job. My family is keeping good health too. We are indeed grateful for all the favours received and have made a thanksgiving offering at the Ashram.

- M. Soans

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

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

-C. Colaco

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS ON BUSINESS

BANDRA: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed our business to be successful. A thanksgiving offering has been given to the Ashram.

-D'Souza & Associates

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

A. Joseph	Mumbai	20,000	A. Kuttikadan	Thane	1,500	V. Lobo	Mumbai	1,000
S. Sawant	Mumbai	20,000	J. D'Souza	Mumbai	1,500	A. Nadar	Mumbai	1,000
L. Bijoy	Mumbai	15,000	Jude	Thane	1,500	M. Gaikwad	Thane	900
K. Saldanha	Mumbai	11,000	John	Mumbai	1,500	Shreeji Ghanshayam	Mumbai	900
E. Noronha	Navi Mumbai	10,000	M. Joseph	Kerala	1,500	A. Braganza	Mumbai	800
J. Machado	Mumbai	10,000	P. Mendes	Mumbai	1,500	A. Pereira	Vasai	800
S. Rane	Maharashtra	10,000	R. Joseph	Kerala	1,500	R. Pachickara/Neena	Kerala	800
G. Tandon	Thane	8,000	R. Zaman	Kolkata	1,500	Violet/Virginia	Gujarat	800
N. Verlekar	Mumbai	8,000	Jacob	Mumbai	1,250	G. Fonseca	Mumbai	750
S. Patel	Mumbai	7,800	M. D'Mello	Thane	1,250	P. Nazareth	Karnataka	700
F. Solanki	Maharashtra	6,000	R. Patel	Mumbai	1,250	L. Savarimuthu	Tamil Nadu	600
J. Parmar	Mumbai	6,000	M. D'Souza	Pune	1,200	K. Kotkar	Mumbai	551
M. Fernandes	Mumbai	6,000	M. Kolar	Thane	1,111	A. Bana	Mumbai	501
A. Aloz	Vasai	5,555	A. Khair	Pune	1,101	D. Homavazir	Mumbai	501
Z. Bharucha	Vasai	5,011	G. D'Cruz	Mumbai	1,002	M. Kurian	Karnataka	501
C. Alvares	Mumbai	5,000	A. Barsey	Thane	1,000	M. Mistry	Nashik	501
H. Monteiro	Mumbai	5,000	A. Christian	Gujarat	1,000	M. Naik	Mumbai	501
J. Jose	Kerala	5,000	A. Dias	Mumbai	1,000	Mansi	Mumbai	501
J. Nazareth	Mumbai	5,000	A. Lobo	Mumbai	1,000	A. Amolik	Mumbai	500
J. Puthur	Kerala	5,000	A. Mistry	Mumbai	1,000	A. Attara	Mumbai	500
Jane	Mumbai	5,000	A. Muller	Mumbai	1,000	A. D'Almeida	Thane	500
L. Mendonca	Mumbai	5,000	A. Pinto	Mumbai	1,000	A. Dedhia	Mumbai	500
M. Fernandes	Mumbai	5,000	A. Rodrigues	Mumbai	1,000	A. Fernando	Tamil Nadu	500
M. Noronha	Mumbai	5,000	A. Santhappan	Tamil Nadu	1,000	A. Gadai	Thane	500
Mathew	Vasai	5,000	A. Thomson	Kerala	1,000	A. Honavar	Mumbai	500
Montina	Mumbai	5,000	A. Ubale	Navi Mumbai	1,000	A. Mahajahn	Mumbai	500
N. Krishnan	Thane	5,000	Ayden	UK	1,000	A. Parmar	Mumbai	500
P. Tuscand	Thane	5,000	B. Bhadriricha	Mumbai	1,000	Ajin	Mumbai	500
R. Alex	Mumbai	5,000	B. Dutt	Kolkata	1,000	B. D'Cruz	Kerala	500
R. Parikh	Mumbai	5,000	B. Pereira	Thane	1,000	B. Martin	Orissa	500
R. Shelke	Pune	5,000	C. Rodrigues	Goa	1,000	B. Monteiro	Mumbai	500
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5,000	C. Soares	Mumbai	1,000	D. Baranwal	Mumbai	500
V. Almeida	Vasai	5,000	Capt. E. Rebello	Mumbai	1,000	D. Gonsalves	Vasai	500
V. Rasquinha	Mumbai	5,000	D. Alphonso	Mumbai	1,000	D. Inasu	Kerala	500
C. Engles	Punjab	4,000	D. Murzello	Mumbai	1,000	G. John	Vasai	500
C. Monteiro	Mumbai	4,000	Darragh Smail & Co.	Kerala	1,000	G. Kuruvila	Kerala	500
Jaison-Lifeway	Kerala	4,000	E. Gonsalves	Mumbai	1,000	G. Mathew	Gujarat	500
Melroy	Mumbai	4,000	E. Pious	Kerala	1,000	G. Veeramani	Tamil Nadu	500
R. Rao	Thane	4,000	Freejo M.	Kerala	1,000	H. D'Souza	Vasai	500
A. Thomas	Kerala	3,500	G. Arputharaj	Tamil Nadu	1,000	I. Adaikalam	Odisha	500
A. D'Souza	Goa	3,000	G. Machado	Vasai	1,000	J. Baptist	Tamil Nadu	500
G. Kelawalla	Mumbai	3,000	G. Menezes	Thane	1,000	J. Kurian	Kerala	500
L. Chasia	Mumbai	3,000	H. Gupta	Mumbai	1,000	J. Mascarenhas	Mumbai	500
O. Mascarenhas	Canada	3,000	H. Manek	Mumbai	1,000	K. Tulika	Gujarat	500
S. Inigo	Tamil Nadu	3,000	H. Mytheya	Karnataka	1,000	K. Valsamma	Kerala	500
S. Matla	Mumbai	3,000	H. Shukla	Mumbai	1,000	K. Varkey	Kerala	500
Techno Prod.	Chennai	3,000	J. Fernandes	Mumbai	1,000	Kochala I.	Kerala	500
B. Couto	Kerala	3,000	J. Jamble	Mumbai	1,000	Leslie	Vasai	500
Fittech Industries	Mumbai	2,900	J. Thomas	Kerala	1,000	M. Bareja	Mumbai	500
Irudayaraj M.	Tamil Nadu	2,500	K. Jayakumar	Kerala	1,000	M. Gaurea	Mumbai	500
S. Gonsalves	Vasai	2,500	K. Surti	Mumbai	1,000	M. Gregory	Kerala	500
V. Varghese	Mumbai	2,500	L. Dias	Mumbai	1,000	M. Soans	Thane	500
H. Pereira	Mumbai	2,400	L. Machado	Vasai	1,000	M. Thakkar	Mumbai	500
A. D'Souza	Mumbai	2,000	M. Antony	Kerala	1,000	Machado & Sons	Tamil Nadu	500
A. Elavia	Mumbai	2,000	M. Cardoz	Mumbai	1,000	N. Amolik	Ahmednagar	500
A. Gonsalves	Vasai	2,000	M. Helen	Kerala	1,000	N. Seth	Nashik	500
A. Surve	Maharashtra	2,000	M. Mathai	Kerala	1,000	N. Tribhuvan	Pune	500
C. D'Souza	Mumbai	2,000	Mallika	Kerala	1,000	N. Trivedi	Mumbai	500
E. Elavia	Mumbai	2,000	N. Dastoor	Mumbai	1,000	Neelasha	Mumbai	500
F. Thekketh	Kerala	2,000	O. Lopes	Vasai	1,000	P. Baby	Kerala	500
G. Patel	Mumbai	2,000	O. Nazareth	Karnataka	1,000	P. Bardeskar	Pune	500
G. Rajesh	Ahmednagar	2,000	P. Baghel	Mumbai	1,000	P. Panchal	Mumbai	500
G. Thomas	Thane	2,000	P. Barbosa	Gujarat	1,000	P. Shah	Mumbai	500
H. Kenny	Mumbai	2,000	P. D'Souza	Mumbai	1,000	Perfect Chemical	Kerala	500
I. Fernandes	Mumbai	2,000	P. Vora	Mumbai	1,000	Piyush P.	Mumbai	500
John	Mumbai	2,000	P. Johnson	Kerala	1,000	R. D'Souza	Mumbai	500
J. Rodrigues	Palghar	2,000	R. Poojari	Mumbai	1,000	R. Victor	Tamil Nadu	500
Jaison P.	Kerala	2,000	Riju A.X.	Kerala	1,000	Raju X.	Kerala	500
K. Thomas	Kerala	2,000	S. Macwan	Gujarat	1,000	Reagan	Mumbai	500
Neethu	Kerala	2,000	S. Madhavan	Kerala	1,000	S. Lopes	Maharashtra	500
Norbert	Mumbai	2,000	S. Nadar	Mumbai	1,000	S. Sandhu	Mumbai	500
P. Hendricks	Tamil Nadu	2,000	S. Stephen	Tamil Nadu	1,000	S. Shinde	Ahmednagar	500
R. Francis	Kerala	2,000	S. Tiwari	Palghar	1,000	Shajan J.	Kerala	500
S. Rodrigues	Palghar	2,000	Sanway	Mumbai	1,000	Stella	Pondicherry	500
S. Saunur	Mumbai	2,000	Sharon	Mumbai	1,000	T. Machado	Vasai	500
T. Thaikadavil	Mumbai	2,000	Sunil	Mumbai	1,000	T. Patel	Mumbai	500
A. Jadhav	Kerala	1,500	T. Alexander	Kerala	1,000			

Bob's Banter

by Robert Clements

You Will Never Grow Old..!

*You will never grow old,
While there's love in your heart.
Time may silver your golden hair,
As you dream in an old rocking-chair,
You will never grow old.
Don't be fretful, or regretful,
That you will grow old much too soon.
With a love, dear, to dream of, dear,
You'll stay like a rosebud in June.*

My dad was no great singer, but he loved to sing to my mom, and I still remember dad singing these lyrics of Nat King Cole to my mother, many moons ago. And as I thought of those lines about growing old, I chanced to read an article on ageing by General Douglas Mac Arthur:

'Youth is not entirely a time of life; it is a state of mind. It is not wholly a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips, or supple knees. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigour of the

your fear.

As young as your hope, as old as your despair.

In the central place of your heart there is a recording chamber; so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer and courage, so long you are young!

When the wires are all down and your heart is covered with the despair of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then and only then are you grown old!'




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emotions, a freshness of the deep springs of life. It means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity, of an appetite for adventure over love of ease.

Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up interest, wrinkles the soul!

Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair....these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust.

Whatever your years, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing childlike appetite for 'what next,' and the joy and the game of life.

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt.

As young as your self-confidence, as old as

A woman asked Robertson McQuikin, "Why does God allow us to get old?" Robertson replied, "I think God has planned the strength and beauty of youth to be physical, but the strength and beauty when growing older is spiritual. We gradually lose the strength and beauty that is temporary so that we'll be able to concentrate on the strength and beauty that is forever!"

So even as I reminisce on my dad and his singing, I realise that it's a different strength and beauty we should be building up as we get older, a strength that will give us a knowledge of eternity and a beauty that will reflect the God we walk with..!

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



GLOBAL RECOGNITION FOR TEAM VAAYUSHAstra OF FR. CONCEICAO RODRIGUES COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The exploration of space has always fascinated mankind. While the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has made every Indian proud with the successful moon landing of **Chandrayaan-3**, we look at the scientific approach of the students of the educational institutions, run by **Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra**.

Fr. Agnel Technical College's (Polytechnic) Machine Shop had fabricated a component needed for the effective launching of Aryabhata, India's first satellite, on 19th April 1975.

Moreover, since 2013, **Team Vaayushastra** has been representing **Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering** in the advanced class of the SAE Aero Design Competition, held annually in the United States of America, consistently securing a position in the top 10 teams, worldwide.

Formed entirely of undergraduate students from the college, the team focus on designing and constructing cutting-edge **unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)** which are best suited to accomplish their respective missions.

Last year, due to the Covid-19 situation, **Team Vaayushastra** participated in Virtual Technical Presentation and Design Report rounds of the competition. Achieving amazing scores in these rounds, the team achieved 4th rank in the Design Report, 6th in the Technical Presentation, as well as an overall rank of 5th globally.

This year, the problem statement (Advanced Class) was to build an aircraft to combat wildfire situations. By maximizing its capacity to carry water and an autonomous delivery aircraft under 500 gms, which would contain parts for a Ground Transport Vehicle that can transport the water to any location in the shortest possible time. Therefore for SAE 2023, the team developed 3 unique vehicles, namely, 1. Primary Aircraft (PA). 2. A smaller autonomous aircraft (PADA) 3. Ground Transport Vehicle (GTV).

The plane – **BUMBLEBEE** competed in every round of SAE Aero Design West at Lakeland, Florida, USA to the best of its limit and secured an official ranking of 11th worldwide.

CRCE'S TEAM VAAYUSHAstra WITH THEIR PRIMARY AIRCRAFT "BUMBLEBEE".



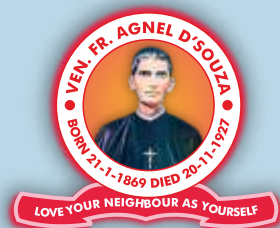
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The 43rd apostolic journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Mongolia



Pope Francis shakes hands with Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh during a meeting in the Ikh Mongol Hall of the State Palace in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on 2nd September, 2023. His Holiness is the first Pope to visit Mongolia, to minister to one of the world's newest and smallest Catholic communities, of just around 1,500 people.



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