

FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

APRIL 2024



*World
Health Day*



“Eat Right, Stay Healthy”

APRIL 2024

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Read the signs of the times: Be responsible citizens

-Fr. M.K. George, SJ

"At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading [*perscrutandi*] the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel if it is to carry out its task," said Vatican II in *Gaudium et Spes* (art.4).

Today living in India, especially as the general elections come, Christians especially, and every citizen, have the responsibility to read the signs of the times and respond as responsible citizens.

India today

The Rich-Poor Divide

The Oxfam Report 2023 says, 'while India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, it is also one of the most unequal countries... The richest have cornered a huge part of the wealth created through crony capitalism and inheritance. They are getting richer at a much faster pace while poor are still struggling to earn a minimum wage and access quality education and healthcare services, which continue to suffer from chronic under-investment.' Worse affected due to this gap are women and children. Just one statistic will suffice to prove these statements. The top 10 per cent of the Indian population holds 77 per cent of the total national wealth. Seventy-three per cent of the wealth generated in 2017 went to the richest 1 per cent, while 670 million Indians who comprise the poorest half of the population saw only a one per cent increase in their wealth.

Democracy is failing

India is failing as a democratic country. The Sweden-based V-Dem Institute has in its latest report on democracy called India an "electoral autocracy." Diminishing of freedom of expression, the media, and civil society are the clearest signs of a failing democracy. Elections are held. However, once elections are over, when the elected behave like autocrats, we have 'elected autocracies.'

Recent events also show subtle and hidden subversion of the Constitution of India. Laws and regulations are passed in clear violation of the Constitution. Electoral Bonds are a clear example. The secular character of India is being sacrificed for the majority religion. Minorities are living in fear. The government buys media and they will only publish news favourable to the ruling party. Just one instance, now for over a month,

thousands of farmers are on strike on the streets of North India. No media reports on them. On an average, 30 farmers commit suicide every day in India during the last ten years.

Corruption is rampant and even those who gained power promising to end corruption have become more corrupt. Legislators are bought and sold. Constitutional institutions are used for maintaining power. A divisive agenda is rising in the country.

The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of religion. But day in and day out, we hear of persecution of Christians, Muslims, and other minorities just because they believe in and practice a different religion. Writing in *The New York Times* (20.3.24), Sonia Faleiro says, 'India's democracy is teetering on an edge. Violence against Muslims, Christians and Dalits has been normalised. The harassment of journalists, the incarceration of human rights activists and police violence against protestors have all but wrenched the country from the path chosen by its founding leaders.'

Pope Francis challenges

"Catholics must get involved in politics even if it may be "dirty, frustrating and fraught with failure," Pope Francis said. Christians cannot shy away from their responsibility to be responsible citizens and be active in political life. 'Christians have a duty to work for the common good in the world of politics', the pope said, adding that that does not mean forming a Catholic political party.

The current call

The call to every Christian, in fact every believer, is to read the signs of the times, reflect in the light of faith and respond to them by electing men and women who will work to protect our Constitutional values of a 'sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic' and the common good.

Act now, it is already late!



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A young lad's life seemed devastated with the after-effects of an illness which crippled his legs. His parents hailing from Goa, though of another faith, had recourse to the intercession of Venerable Agnelo. The medical treatment began to have an effect. Their faith was rewarded, God's intervention was seen and the young man was restored to health. Today, he is a grandfather! God cares enough to heal and restore. Jesus went out of His way to meet the sick and restore their health. We can choose to put our full trust in God and seek the remedies of prayer, care and medical treatment.

Man's life comes from God; it is His gift, His image and imprint, a sharing in His breath of life. God therefore is the sole Lord of this life: man cannot do with it as he wills" (Evangelium Vitae 1995). Government, Corporate, Political powers may seem weak at times in their role to safeguard lives. Disasters of war and conflicts, flooding of nuclear weapons, biological warfare are a result of decisions and choices.

We are commanded to Choose Life "that you and your descendants may live" (Deut 30:19). Every person, every organization, every country and the whole world needs to look for moments to reflect, discern and choose...(Pope Francis 2021). So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead (Jm 2:17). Here is some A,B,C, we can do:

Adopt Pro-Life: Health is a human right. Disease and sickness cause traumas, both physical, mental and emotional. The need of changes in lifestyle, production and consumption is essential to combat the human causes which produce or aggravate drastic climate change and recurring natural disasters (Laudato Si). **Eat right to stay healthy. Have plenty of vegetables and salads. Avoid junk food.**

Our obligation is to use the earth's goods responsibly: Saying No to single use items and plastic bags, **having home-cooked meals on time with your family** to prevent and reduce waste of food - remembering the undernourished.

There is a weekly program aired on EWTN by host Fr. Leo Patalinghug bringing people together one meal at a time in a fun, family focused Ministry (platinggrace.com). Working on limiting use of gadget/screen time and engage in activities for personal well-being like cycling or walking or gardening, avoiding use of fire crackers which irritate the respiratory tract can be pro-life options.

Be Goodwill Volunteers: Giant strides are seen in medical research and cure for diseases, yet there is

still a divide between the privileged having easy access to health facilities and the poor on the other hand who languish without timely medical aid and facilities. Graham Staines, an Australian native, came to live in India to help the rejected and distanced leprosy ridden and give them a meaningful existence. He valued the right to health of these forsaken ones. We are called to recognize that other living beings have a value of their own in God's eyes (Laudato Si 69).

We could identify people who need medical attention, and keep a handy list of medical facilities offered free or discounted. "Let us try to be close to those who are exhausted, to those who are desperate, without hope" (Pope Francis). Let's look after each other - victims of natural disasters, safe passage and accommodation to vulnerable migrants often stressed and ill, pregnant women deprived of medical attention and many more.

Cheer up the Caregivers:

Recently the Women's Cell in my parish visited Women Caregivers, felicitating them for their dedication and selfless service to their sick family member. Prolonged round-the-clock, 24x7 role by caregivers, without any break, is a severe strain on them and in the bargain

their own health deteriorates. Empathy towards the Caregivers, listening to them in silence, substituting for them, giving them an outing, providing a meal etc can lighten their burdens and bring a smile. Here is a call to us to embrace a culture of solidarity with those under stress.

World Health Day held on 7th April each year, hopes to draw worldwide attention to global health. **The theme for World Health Day 2024** is 'My health, my right'. Never hesitate to ask for help for your own self first and help others who are struggling in regaining lost health. **PILGRIMS OF HOPE**, we make our way towards the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025, we are reminded of the words of St. Augustine, "Hope has two beautiful daughters; Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain the same."



Severina Peres enjoys writing short articles based on faith and daily living. She is also interested in assisting senior citizens.

Resurrection

- Preview and After-Effects

-Dr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ

Every year, the Church celebrates the feast of the **Transfiguration of Jesus**. In that mysterious vision given to Peter, James and John (Mt 17:1-8, etc., 2 Pet 1:16-18), the Holy Spirit anticipated what God would do later for **Jesus, on Easter Sunday!** In the scene, Jesus is glorified, **seen as human, and also as divine**. Through this event, we are able to get a brief view of what it will be like to see God at the end of time, and how we will be transformed when we are reunited with our bodies.

The real purpose of the Transfiguration was to display the glory of God, as much as the apostles could bear to see it, *before Christ's Passion*. For us today, the meaning of the event it foreshadowed (Jesus' Resurrection) lies in the words of the Father: **"This is my Son, the beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"** (Matt 17:5). Of course, the apostles could not understand the vision of Jesus Transfigured while he was still healing and teaching on earth. So Jesus warned them, **"Tell no one about the vision, until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead"** (Matt 17:9). It is only the Easter event that will make it understandable.

It is this Risen Jesus' consoling and challenging Good News which the Deceiver, using a seductive mass media and the secularized culture of our times, does its best to contradict today. Being *"the accuser of the brethren"* (Rev.12:10), Satan deceives us into believing (wrongly) that God does not *really* love or care for us individually. That is why in the Transfiguration event, the Father ends by saying, **"Listen to Jesus!"**

After the Resurrection, the appearances of the Risen Lord to so many disciples (to more than 500, says St. Paul), were no longer "mysterious visions" (like the Transfiguration scene) but, in each case, a consoling and empowering reality. **"Jesus Christ our Lord was designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness, BY HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD"** (Rom 1:4). St. Paul also insists, **"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile... But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead!"** So, "because He lives" we can live a new life in the Spirit, and face life victoriously!

This is true not for Christians only, **but for all of humanity**. The Resurrected Jesus has become a power-house of amazing grace. Ask yourself, what would our world be like without Jesus Christ? His *Good News* and his *Real Presence* in time and space as *the Risen Lord* have vastly changed human history! The Resurrected Jesus' legacy is so huge that it far exceeds our ability to calculate its full impact upon humanity.

The founding of Christianity, in the power of the Spirit of the Risen Jesus, has led to a massive setting up and expansion of hospitals, humanitarian organizations, educational institutions and charities. All over the world, and to its farthest corners, through the work of caring and dedicated missionaries, very influential "good works" were often founded by Christians in the name of Jesus. Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkata and her Missionaries of Charity, as well as innumerable other Catholic Religious orders, and Protestant groups, have taken Christian pastoral social action to inspiring heights. And our great universities were founded by disciples

of Jesus Christ, for it was Christians (*and the Jesuits!*) who started schools and attempted to bring education to all.

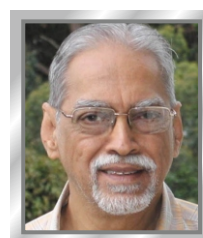
Martin Luther King Jr. was inspired by the Spirit of the Risen Jesus to fight for equality among "whites and blacks." Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela helped to end the evil of Apartheid. And by their very influential encyclicals, Popes Leo XIII, John XXIII, St. John Paul II, and now our Pope Francis, have all contributed significantly to creating a tidal wave of social action for the betterment of society (and of the environment)!

Furthermore, Christian music, art, and architecture dominates the West: who can forget Michaelangelo's paintings in the Sistine Chapel and his *Pieta* in St Peter's Basilica, or Gounod's *Ave Maria*, Handel's *Halleluia* chorus, Mozart's *Requiem*, etc? Christian values shaped our civilization. Christian scientists paved the way into a new world. Christian values led to mass education, healthcare and development... the list goes on and on. The possibilities of research into "what the Risen Jesus has done for our world" are endless!

This story is *ongoing*, for the action of the Spirit of the Risen Lord has become the single most important influence in the development of the modern world. As Pope John Paul II wisely maintained, **"The Spirit's presence and activity affect not only individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions. Indeed, the Spirit is at the origin of the noble ideals and undertakings which benefit humanity on its journey through history"** (RM, n.28).

And *today too*, Jesus continues to bring "good news to the poor," through committed and courageous disciples who are fighting for the dignity of the unborn and the elderly, for the sanctity of marriage and wholesome family life, for the encouragement of the world's youth, and for innumerable other worthy causes that can enhance the quality of human life! No right-thinking person, therefore, can dispute that in the resurrected Jesus, we have One who has virtually changed every aspect of human life.

No wonder the Second Vatican Council can declare, "The Church believes that Christ, who died and was raised up for all, can through his Spirit offer human beings the light and the strength to measure up to their supreme destiny. The Church holds that in her most benign Lord and Master can be found *the key, the focal point, and the goal of all human history*. The Church also maintains that beneath all changes there are so many realities which *do not change and which have their ultimate foundation in Christ, who is the same, yesterday, today, and forever*" (GS, n.10). Alleluia!



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Festivals are the carriers of peace and joy

-Jubel D'Cruz

Festivals are the carriers of peace and joy in all communities. All nations of the world have certain religious and cultural festivals. However, India is one of the largest countries to celebrate numerous festivals.

As India is a very cultural and diverse country, so are the festivals. They divide into three general categories of national, religious and seasonal.

As we can divide the Indian festivals into national, religious and seasonal, we see how they differ from each other. In general, national festivals are celebrated in honour of reputable people and events. The religious ones follow legends of faiths and their beliefs. The seasonal ones are celebrated with each season that we experience that varies from region to region.

India is the land of agriculture, and food plays a major role in almost all celebrations. As an agriculture-heavy economy, farmers and harvests hold relevance in our culture. This is why the spring harvest season is celebrated with great enthusiasm.

National Festivals

The national festivals include Republic Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti and many more. These festivals are celebrated all over India. All the citizens of the country celebrate them irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, colour and sex. Everyone celebrates them with great patriotism. These festivals are gazetted holidays all over the country and are enjoyed with great enthusiasm.

Moreover, they help in setting aside the differences of the countrymen and unite each other like never before. The capital of India, New Delhi, is the seat of national festivals. For instance, it witnesses the grand parade of the Republic Day celebrations. The flag hoisting takes place in New Delhi, which is broadcast live on national television for the whole country to watch.

Religious Festivals

The religious festivals are one of the most famous festivals, not only throughout India, but all over the world. Some of the most prominent religious festivals are Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, Dussehra, Durga Puja, Eid-ul-Fitr, Christmas, Easter, Guru Nanak Jayanti, Navroz, Gudi Padwa and Holi.

Baisakhi in Punjab, Ugadi in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Bihu in Assam, Vishu in

Kerala, not only celebrate the New Year but also the harvest festival and the advent of Spring. In addition, there is Basant Panchami which people celebrate throughout North India and West Bengal, as well. It marks the onset of the spring season that sees flowers blooming in their fullest glory and the fields turning lush green.

Diwali, the festival of lights, and Holi are the most prominent festivals in Hinduism. They are very colourful and filled with the spirit of fun. Eid-ul-Fitr is an Islamic festival which marks the end of

Ramadan. It is about delectable dishes and family gatherings. Christmas celebrates the birthday of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity.

Guru Nanak Jayanti celebrates the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev, founder of Sikhism. Bihu is a festival of Assam. Likewise, Tamil Nadu celebrates Pongal, Kerala celebrates Onam and West Bengal celebrates Bengali New Year (Pôhela Boishakh). Goa is known for the Carnival and Shimoga Festival.



Festivals bring people together

Festivals are very important. They make us forget our cultural and religious differences. They unite people and they come together for the sole purpose of celebration and happiness. Other than that, festivals also help us embrace our culture and religion. They are very helpful in breaking the monotony of life.

Moreover, people look forward to festivals all the year round. They spark joy and give people something to look forward to.

In short, festivals fill our lives with colours and enthusiasm. They bring us closer every year and eliminate any feelings of communal hatred. They also strengthen the bonds of the community and remove the malice from people's hearts. Therefore, festivals are quite important and must be celebrated with great joy and passion.



Jubel D'Cruz is a freelance writer and the author of several books for children. He lives in Mumbai.

Jesus Christ, Our Perfect Example

- Ibonio D'Souza

Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary in a small village, Bethlehem, in a remote corner of the world. That humble birth fulfilled the hopes and dreams of all of us. He was the Son of God with infinite knowledge and power, yet He was also mortal and susceptible to hunger and pain. Jesus Christ fully experienced the challenges and sorrows of this life. He knows each of us and understands us perfectly.

Even as a young man, Jesus was teaching the word of God. At 12 years old, He taught in the temple, and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding. When Jesus began His ministry, He fasted in the wilderness for 40 days. He was tempted by the devil and overcame that temptation. He was also baptised in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. Although Jesus was without sin, He was still baptised by immersion in order to teach us obedience to God. After Jesus's baptism, God declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Jesus healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and even brought the dead back to life. More importantly, He made these miracles possible. Although His works were considered blasphemous behaviour by the Jewish priests, Jesus continually reminded people that His works were aligned with God's will so "that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).

Jesus is also the perfect example of love. During His life on the earth, He cared for the poor, He healed the sick (see Luke 17:12-19), and He never turned away little children (see Matthew 19:13-14). His love is endless and available to all of us. Jesus taught that we must forgive. Even as He died on the cross, Jesus forgave the people who killed Him.

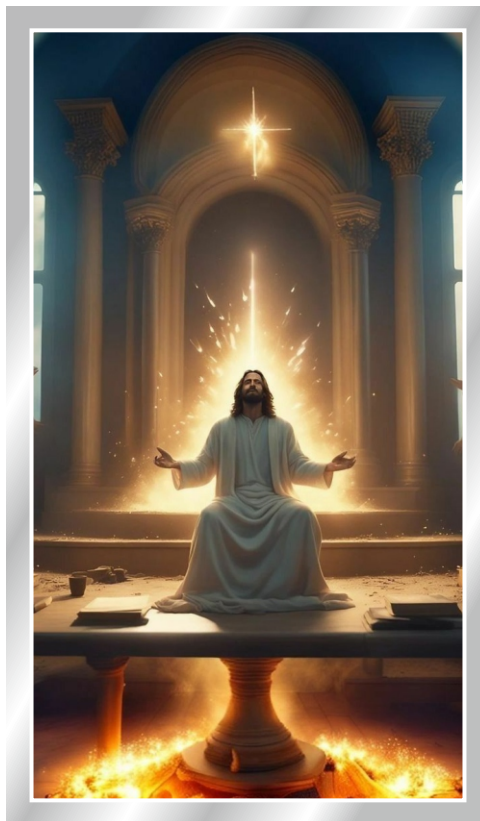
Jesus healed the sick, walked on water, raised the dead, calmed the sea, and turned water into wine. Those miracles fulfilled ancient prophecies and demonstrated His divinity. They also show Jesus Christ's infinite compassion for us. With all this assurance, we can know that He is our God and that He has power over all His creations. We can have

faith in Him to perform miracles in our lives today.

Jesus was the greatest teacher who ever lived. He often used parables, or stories, to teach important lessons that we can still learn from today. His teachings were far ahead of His time. He taught us to love our enemies. He taught us to forgive. He taught us to see people beyond their race, age, gender, or nationality. He taught us to love God and to love our neighbour. But more importantly, He showed love in everything He did.

The night before He was crucified, Jesus retreated to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. There, he felt the weight of every sin and pain known to humankind and suffered for every person who has ever lived. Afterwards, Jesus was betrayed, arrested, mocked, beaten, and crucified on the cross - all of which He allowed in order to fulfil God's will. "I lay down my life," the Lord said, "that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17-18). Even as Jesus was being killed by His own people, He cried out that God might have mercy on them.

Three days after His death, Jesus rose from the tomb and appeared to His friends and followers. Because Jesus lives again, we too will be resurrected one day. He broke the bands of death when he rose from the tomb that first Easter morning. Because of His sacrifice and resurrection, we can meet our daily challenges with faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We can know that there are no lost causes, there are no endings, and none of us are beyond His perfect love and infinite power to save.



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

Transformed by Love – From Supper to Sacrifice

The Truth of the Eucharist for Married Lovers

-Leon Bent

More than a Meal

"Jesus did not redeem the world with beautiful words, but with his suffering and death," then Cardinal Ratzinger said to a group of catechists in 2000. "His passion is the inexhaustible source of life for the world; the Passion gives power to Jesus' words....Whoever omits the Cross, omits the essence of Christianity (see 1 Cor.2:2)."

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "Address on the New Evangelization, at the Jubilee of Catechists" (December, 12, 2000).

Without the Eucharist you cannot understand the Cross. If you omit the Cross, you leave out what Christianity is, quintessentially. If you exclude the Eucharist, however, you bypass what explains, how Christ's death became the means to our salvation.

So, how does a Roman execution become a holy sacrifice? And, not just any holy sacrifice, but the supreme self-emptying sacrificial love of all time. He fulfilled the Passover supper of the Old Testament into the Passover of the New Covenant or Testament: a promise of redemption by God to people as individuals, rather than as a nation and on the basis of God's grace rather than a person's adherence to the Law.

The situation became extremely confusing at the end of the Meal, when Jesus took the third Cup of Blessing, and said, "This is the Chalice of my Blood of the New and Eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many."

The Crucifixion was more than an Execution

The answer to this question became plain just hours later, on Good Friday. On the Cross, Jesus' body was given up, and his blood poured out. On Calvary, as our High Priest, he offered himself as a sacrifice, the Sacrifice of the New Covenant, the Lamb of God.

Calvary is a sacrifice, if it's the culmination of Christ giving himself away, not primarily as a victim of injustice, but rather as a victim of love. This is a mighty example for Couples wedded to Christ, in and through the Sacrament of Matrimony. If we have sacrificial love there will be no un-forgiveness, no long-standing misunderstanding and frequently riding roughshod over open, bleeding wounds, no running to the Marriage Tribunal and Civil Marriage Courts, no living separately, bleeding inside, but showing a heroic exterior. All we have to do is sit at the foot of the Cross. Marriage derives its meaning from living in the shadow of the Crucified Christ - Resurrected Christ. Nothing more, nothing else. *This is why frequenting the Eucharist every day, but especially on Sunday, is a must for every Christian, more particularly, conjugal couples.*

The mystery of the Eucharist is what transforms

Jesus' suffering from a bloody execution into a holy sacrifice: The Resurrection.

Scott Hahn, *Evangelizing Catholics, A Mission Manual for the New Evangelization*, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Indiana, U.S.A., 155-157.

St. Paul tells us in Romans, the Resurrection was necessary, because it is the means by which we die and rise to new life in Christ. For Catholics, salvation means so much more than being redeemed from sin. It's not just what we're saved from, but what we're saved for. It's not just to watch Jesus experience this new resurrected life, but also to share in it ourselves.

"We were buried, therefore, with him by baptism into death, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life. So, you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rom.6:4, 11).

In other words, the Resurrection was necessary to complete our work of salvation. St. Paul explicitly states that, Romans 4:25 that

Jesus was "put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification." This is to say, Jesus' death is not the only aspect of his saving work. His resurrection is just as essential. Our salvation involves two elements: the payment rendered on the Cross for the debt for our sin and his resurrection for the sake of our justification.

Christ's resurrection was not simply for our own sake. It was more than a vindication for him; it was a gift to us, a gift that makes it possible for our humanity to be united to his divinity.

The Catechism explains of the Catholic Church:

The Paschal Mystery has two aspects: By his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us a way to a new life. This new life is above reinstates us in God's grace....Justification consists in, both, victory over death caused by sin become Christ's brethren....and a new participation in grace (cf.2:4-5; 1 Pet.1-3). It brings about filial adoption, so that, men become Christ's brethren....We are brethren not by nature, but by the gift of grace, because this adoptive filiation gains us a real share in the life of the only Son, which was fully revealed in his Resurrection(CCC 654).

And, where is that gift given to us? In the Eucharist.

More than Resurrection

Scripture tells us that the Resurrection of the Lord's body is so much more than a corpse coming back to life. The Resurrection is the glorification of his sacred humanity. It's a humanity, deified and deifying. It is also what makes his sacred humanity communicable to us. It's what makes the glorified body, dare we say, edible by us.

In the Eucharist, it is the Resurrected Lord that,



comes to us. The Holy sacrifice of the Mass is one and the same sacrifice offered at Calvary, but the Jesus we receive in the Eucharist, is not the bleeding, battered Jesus, who hung on the Cross. It's Jesus the High Priest of heaven and the Lamb of God. In the Mass, he is the one offering, and the one offered – and he offers himself, not as a reward for our righteousness, but as a remedy for our sins, our weaknesses and our failures.

Scott Hahn, *Evangelizing Catholics, A Mission Manual for the New Evangelization*, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Indiana, U.S.A., 158.

Why does he do that? One reason: Love! Love is the key to unlocking the Paschal Mystery. Love is the truth that underlies it all - from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, to a Tuesday – morning Mass.

One drop of Jesus' precious blood was enough to redeem the whole human race. One act of obedience was all it took. But Jesus gave so much more than that. He gave everything to pay a debt we couldn't pay. That should have incurred for us an even greater debt. We should owe more in the wake of his passion and death. We should bear a greater debt. But we don't.

Scott Hahn, *Evangelizing Catholics, A Mission Manual for the New Evangelization*, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Indiana, U.S.A., 159.

We don't because God's love was superabundant. His executioner's malice was great, but his love was greater. The magnanimity of his love outweighed the guilt of those who crucified.

Reflecting on this truth, Pope Benedict wrote, "The Cross reminds us that there is no true love without suffering, there is no gift of life without pain." **Pope Benedict XVI, "General Audience Remarks," September 17, 2008.**

Married Couples, please take note. We must learn to suffer in a manner, at least to some degree. Then, we will not consider that there is such a state, as *incompatibility*, in marriage.

If Christ's love is what his suffering as a sacrifice, then Maundy Thursday is, when he institutes the sacrament of love, Good Friday is when he endures the suffering of love, and Easter Sunday is when he provides us with the sacrament that, enables us to love in a way that, is truly Godlike, and to share in a life that is truly divine.

Etymology. Middle English *maunde*, from Old French *mandé*, from Latin *mandatum* command, order; from the words spoken by Jesus to his disciples after washing their feet at the Last Supper, "a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another" (John 13:34 Authorized Version). The ceremony of washing the feet of the poor, esp. commemorating Jesus' washing of His disciples' feet on Maundy Thursday. Also called: *maundy money*. Money distributed as alms in conjunction with the ceremony of maundy or on Maundy Thursday. The Maundy part comes straight from Latin - specifically, the word *mandatum*, which means "command, order." *Mandatum* is also the source of the word *mandate*.

Because of the Resurrection, we become "partakers of divine nature" (2 Pet.1:40), at every Mass, every day of our lives.

Please get this right. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass isn't just in the New Testament. It is the New Testament. The Eucharist is the New Testament. This is what Jesus says in the Gospel, as he institutes the Eucharist: "This...is the New

Covenant in my blood" (Lk.22:20). The Latin word for covenant is "*testamentum*." And, the only time these words appear together in the New Testament, is right here.

Not surprisingly, the disciples and the early Fathers followed Christ's example, referring to the Eucharist as the "New Testament."

At the Last Supper, Jesus didn't say, "Write this in memory of me." Rather, he said, "Do this in Memory of me." And this is what the disciples did. Only a handful of them authored books of the Bible. But, from the beginning, they celebrated Mass. They made Jesus known in the Breaking of the Bread as seen in the Breaking of the Bread.

The Eucharist is for all. It illuminates Jesus' suffering on the Cross, revealing to us, as St. Thomas Aquinas said, that it is not how much Jesus suffered on the Cross that saves us; it's how much he loved us from the Cross. It's the love of the Son, expressed through the obedience of his suffering that redeemed us.

The Eucharist gives us the capacity to love with a love that is not only natural, but supernatural, to enter into the inner logic of God's love and accept suffering, to carry our Crosses. Again, the Eucharist is what transforms us into living sacrifices, enabling us to enter a life that, is divine and do what we would never be able to do on our own.

Scott Hahn, *Evangelizing Catholics, A Mission Manual for the New Evangelization*, Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Indiana, U.S.A., 160-161.

This is why God the Father wants everyone to enter into a covenantal union with him, and receive his life through the Eucharist, through the sacrifice of the New Covenant, so that, he can evangelize us, week after week, making it possible for us to offer our own lives back to him as living sacrifices.

This is what we must proclaim in the New Evangelization. And, at every Mass, we're called to discover it for ourselves, to remember it, and to live it anew.

What we proclaim – the folly of the Cross – is foolishness to those who seek wisdom and a stumbling stone to those looking for signs of power. A long time ago Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "God's success comes about through the Cross, and is always found under that sign.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, The Heart of Life*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1003.

"Enter by the narrow gate," Jesus tells us. "For the Gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that, leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Mt.7:13-14).

This is Jesus' take on the road to heaven: the gate is narrow and those who find it are few.



Leon Bent repeatedly contributes Researched Articles to Newsletters, Theological Journals, and manifold Online Portals, in India and worldwide – sometimes with a reach of 40 million!

Joseph

(Genesis 37:1 – 50:26)

- A Tale of Redemption and Reconciliation

- Fr. Trevor D'Souza, OFM (Franciscan)

The Blessing of Joseph: God's Promise of Addition

Joseph, YOSEF in Hebrew, which means “may he (God) add (other sons)” (Genesis 30:24). The life of Joseph, son of Jacob, as depicted in the Old Testament, is a remarkable tale of resilience, redemption, and reconciliation. From his early years marked by familial discord to his eventual rise to prominence in Egypt, Joseph's journey is a testament to the transformative power of faith and the providence of God.

The Birth of Promise: Joseph's Arrival Amidst Strife

Joseph's story begins with his birth to Jacob and Rachel, his mother, after a prolonged period of waiting (Genesis 30:1-24). As the eleventh son among his brothers, Joseph grew up in a household rife with tension, jealousy, and resentment. Despite being the favoured son of his father, Jacob's favouritism towards Joseph, symbolized by the gift of a multi-coloured coat, only served to deepen the rift between him and his brothers (Genesis 37:3-4).

The Dreams of Destiny: Joseph's Turning Point

The turning point in Joseph's life came when he began to share his dreams, which foretold his future greatness and the eventual subjugation of his brothers. Enraged by what they perceived as Joseph's arrogance and superiority, his brothers conspired to kill him. However, through the intervention of Reuben, Joseph was spared from death but sold into slavery instead (Genesis 37:19-28).

Faith Amidst Adversity: Joseph's Triumph in Egypt

In Egypt, Joseph faced further trials and tribulations, including false accusations and imprisonment. Yet, even in the depths of despair, Joseph remained steadfast in his faith and integrity. His ability to interpret dreams ultimately caught the attention of Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, leading to his appointment as the overseer of Pharaoh's affairs (Genesis 39-40).

Divine Revelation: Joseph's Prophecy of Plenty and Famine

Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams, which predicted seven years of plenty followed by

seven years of famine, proved to be pivotal in securing Egypt's future. Through prudent planning and foresight, Joseph ensured that Egypt was prepared for the impending famine, thereby saving countless lives (Genesis 41).

Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Joseph's Triumph Over Betrayal

However, Joseph's journey towards reconciliation with his family was not without its challenges. When his brothers came to Egypt seeking food during the famine, they did not recognize Joseph, who had risen to a position of power and authority. Yet, despite their past betrayal, Joseph chose to extend forgiveness and reconciliation towards his brothers, recognizing that God's hand was at work in their lives (Genesis 42-45).

Healing and Restoration: Joseph's Family Reunited

The reunion between Joseph and his family marked a profound moment of healing and restoration. With Jacob's blessing, Joseph's family settled in the land of Goshen, where they prospered under his care.

Joseph's unwavering faith and commitment to God's plan ensured that his family would thrive in their adopted land (Genesis 45-47).

Legacy of Forgiveness: Joseph's Enduring Faithfulness

As Joseph's life drew to a close, he left behind a legacy of forgiveness, reconciliation, and faithfulness. His story serves as a timeless reminder of the transformative power of forgiveness and the importance of trusting in God's providence. In the end, Joseph's journey from adversity to triumph stands as a testament to the enduring faithfulness of God and the ultimate fulfilment of His divine plan (Genesis 50).

The Symbolism of the Coat: Joseph's Journey to Restoration

Joseph received a vibrant, multi-coloured coat from his father, symbolizing more than just a garment. This colourful attire mirrored Joseph's own multi-faceted personality, which held significant symbolism for two key reasons. Firstly, Joseph's journey through adversity taught him invaluable virtues and wisdom, moulding him



into a mature individual esteemed for his administrative prowess and authority. Secondly, his pivotal role in reconciling his fractured family brought about much-needed peace to the troubled and bickering household of Israel, ultimately aligning with a divine plan of restoration and unity.

Resources: *Dictionary of the Bible; Reader's Digest, Who's Who in the Bible; Internet sources and AI Tools.*

QUIZ: FAMILY OF JACOB

Hidden in this grid are the names of 16 persons who belong to the family of the patriarch Jacob. Discover these names.

J	O	P	E	R	E	N	S	I	M	E	O	N
L	N	R	J	U	D	A	H	S	H	S	B	A
E	A	A	B	E	U	L	B	A	S	H	E	R
V	P	C	S	N	J	R	E	U	B	E	N	P
I	H	H	A	H	A	S	L	G	E	E	J	T
J	T	E	J	E	C	H	D	A	N	B	A	I
O	A	L	A	H	O	A	A	D	H	I	M	P
S	L	S	Z	E	B	U	L	U	N	L	I	H
E	I	I	S	S	A	C	H	A	R	H	N	E
P	J	S	C	J	R	L	N	A	D	A	R	R
H	U	A	K	Z	I	L	P	A	H	H	A	S
R	D	B	I	L	H	A	H	G	R	H	E	S

ANSWERS

Jacob, Joseph, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Bilhah, Rachel, Dan, Naphtali, Zilpah, Gad, Asher.

J	O	P	E	R	E	N	S	I	M	E	O	N
L	N	R	J	U	D	A	H	S	H	S	B	A
E	A	A	B	E	U	L	B	A	S	H	E	R
V	P	C	S	N	J	R	E	U	B	E	N	P
I	H	H	A	H	A	S	L	G	E	E	J	T
J	T	E	J	E	C	H	D	A	N	B	A	I
O	A	L	A	H	O	A	A	D	H	I	M	P
S	L	S	Z	E	B	U	L	U	N	L	I	H
E	I	I	S	S	A	C	H	A	R	H	N	E
P	J	S	C	J	R	L	N	A	D	A	R	R
H	U	A	K	Z	I	L	P	A	H	H	A	S
R	D	B	I	L	H	A	H	G	R	H	E	S

BIBLE QUIZ ON THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF JOSEPH (OLD TESTAMENT)

1. What was Joseph's father's name?
2. What gift did Joseph's brothers give him?
3. How did Joseph's brothers react when they saw him coming to them in the field?

4. Who saved Joseph from being killed by his brothers?
5. Who sold Joseph to traders heading to Egypt?
6. Who falsely accused Joseph and had him thrown into prison?
7. What skill of Joseph made him valuable in prison?
8. Whose dream did Joseph interpret in prison, which eventually led to his release?
9. What position did Joseph attain in Egypt after interpreting Pharaoh's dream?
10. What was Joseph's father's name changed to?
11. How many brothers did Joseph have?
12. What did Joseph's brothers do when they discovered he was the ruler of Egypt?
13. What did Joseph's brothers do to prove their loyalty to Benjamin?
14. How did Joseph reveal himself to his brothers?
15. Where did Joseph's family settle during the famine?

ANSWERS

1. Jacob (Genesis 37:3)
2. A coat of many colours (Genesis 37:3)
3. They plotted to kill him (Genesis 37:18)
4. Reuben (Genesis 37:21-22)
5. Judah (Genesis 37:26-27)
6. Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:19-20)
7. Interpreting dreams (Genesis 40:8)
8. Pharaoh's chief cupbearer (Genesis 40:9-13)
9. Governor of Egypt (Genesis 41:40-41)
10. Israel (Genesis 35:10)
11. Twelve (Genesis 35:22)
12. They bowed down to him (Genesis 42:6-7)
13. They offered to become slaves in his place (Quote: Genesis 44:33-34)
14. He wept and embraced them (Genesis 45:1-2)
15. Egypt (Genesis 47:11)



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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

This magazine is available online.

Visit us at www.agnelashram.org

Saint Mark: A Winged Lion

-Fr. Allam Sagar Manoj Kumar

The oldest and the shortest of the four Gospels, the Gospel of Mark emphasizes Jesus' rejection by humanity while being God's triumphant envoy. It was written for Gentile converts in Rome after the death of Peter and Paul, sometime between 60 and 70 A.D.

The Acts of the Apostles and various Epistles speak of "Mark" as well as "John Mark." Most scholars believe that Mark and John Mark are the same person and the Gospel writer. Saint Mark is believed to have been born in Cyrenaica, modern-day Libya, which was under Roman rule at the time. "John" is his Jewish name, and "Mark" his Roman name. His father might have died when he was young, and his mother, named Mary,

most likely moved with Mark to Jerusalem. His mother's home might have been the location of the Last Supper and also the place where Peter went after the angel released him from prison. "When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who is called Mark, where there were many people gathered in prayer"

(Acts 12:12). As a teenager, Mark might have been nearby when Jesus was arrested. "Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked" (Mark 14:51-52). Many scholars believe that this young man is Mark. Saint Barnabas, the missionary companion of Saint Paul, was either Mark's cousin or uncle (Colossians 4:10).

A winged lion is Mark's symbol. The lion derives from Mark's description of John the Baptist as a "voice of one crying out in the desert" (Mark 1:3), which artists compared to a roaring lion. The wings come from the application of Ezekiel's vision of four winged creatures (Ezekiel, chapter one) to the evangelists.

It is to Saint Mark that we owe the many pictorial touches which often give such vivid colour to the Gospel scenes, and help us to visualize the very gestures and appearance of our Blessed Lord. It is he alone who notes that in the temptation, Jesus was "with the beasts"; that He slept in the boat "on a pillow"; that He "embraced the little children." He alone preserves for us the command, "Peace, be still!" by which the storm was quelled, and even the very Aramaic words He spoke, the "Ephpheta"

and the "Talitha, cumi!" by which the dumb were made to speak and the dead to rise.

Saint Mark was converted to the Faith by the Prince of the Apostles, whom he later accompanied to Rome, acting there as his secretary or interpreter. When Saint Peter wrote his First Epistle to the churches of Asia, he affectionately joined to his own salutation that of his faithful companion, whom he calls "my son Mark." The Roman people entreated Saint Mark to put in writing for them the substance of Saint Peter's frequent discourses on Our Lord's life. This the Evangelist did under the eye and with the express sanction of the Apostle, and every page of his brief but graphic Gospel so bore the impress of Saint Peter's character, that the Fathers used to name it "Peter's Gospel."

According to later traditions, Mark was ordained a bishop and sent to Alexandria, Egypt, to preach the Gospel that he himself wrote and established the first Church in Africa. He is therefore considered the first bishop of Alexandria. In Alexandria,

Mark encountered the wrath of the local heathens and was martyred after almost twenty years of ministering to them. In fact, Saint Mark was seized and dragged by ropes over stones, and thrown into prison. On the morrow the torture was repeated, and after receiving the consolation of the sight of Angels and the voice of Jesus, Saint Mark went to his reward.

In the eighth century, Saint Bede describes Mark's death in this way: "Afterwards, being arrested for the faith, he was bound, dragged over stones and endured great afflictions. Finally he was confined to prison, where, being comforted by the visit of an angel, and even by an apparition of our Lord himself, he was called to the heavenly kingdom in the eighth year of the reign of Nero."



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

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

-Vashi

Agnel's E-Summit 2024, Aakansha Ki Udaan, a resounding success



Agnel's E-Summit 2024, 'Aakansha Ki Udaan', organized by the E-cell of **Fr. C. Rodrigues Institute of Technology, Vashi**, was a resounding success. It drew participation from colleges across Mumbai on 5th and 6th March, 2024. The event commenced with insightful seminars on topics like Supply Chain Management, Insight AI, and Stock Simplified, featuring distinguished speakers from industry giants like Godrej Interio, AiVanta, and AngryTraders.

Day 2 saw a flurry of engaging events including E-cell vs E-cell, Stock Strive, IPL Auction, WTO Model United Nations, and CodeClash, each

designed to foster entrepreneurship, strategic thinking, and skill development, among participants.

Participation offered numerous benefits such as networking opportunities, free incubation centre visits, recognition, and awards, as well as insights from expert entrepreneurs. The event was made possible through the generous contributions of sponsors like WhatFix Pvt Ltd, Cloud9, Ciba, Collegepond, Vidyalankar, and OEM Update.

Agnel's E-Summit 2024 not only provided a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship but also facilitated meaningful connections and learning experiences for all involved.

School Kit donation drive for Children of Balbhavan, Agnel Technical Education Complex, Vashi

The Electrical Engineering Students Association (EESA) of Fr. C. Rodrigues Institute of Technology, Vashi, organised a School Kit Donation Drive for Children of Balbhavan, Agnel Technical Education Complex, Vashi, on 7th March 2024. The objective of the School Kit Donation Drive was to provide essential school supplies to underprivileged children, ensuring they have the necessary tools to embark on their educational journey. A total of 16 volunteers of EESA came together to carefully assemble school kits which included school bags,

stationery items, tiffins and water bottles for 12 students of Balbhavan.

The students at Balbhavan were very excited to receive their new school kits for their academic journey. They expressed their heartfelt gratitude to all EESA members present at the event. The donation drive was supported by the FCRIIT teaching staff, parents and electrical engineering department students. Also, the donation drive was guided by Electrical Engineering department HOD **Dr. Bindu S.**, EESA incharge **Mrs. Nikita Jadhav** and EESA chairperson **Mr. Prathamesh Yadav**.



Balbhavan boys receiving their school kits.



Balbhavan boys, along with the organisers of the School Kit Donation Drive, Vashi.

'I have seen the Lord'

-Norma Kamath

Mary Magdalene witnessed the gruesome death of Jesus, but undaunted came to the tomb early, on the first day of the week. She saw the stone removed. Perplexed, she ran and gave the news to Peter and John. They saw and believed that Jesus had risen. Even after they left, Mary lingered outside the tomb weeping the loss of one, whom she so dearly loved. Jesus understood her need. He called her by name, 'Mary'. She recognised his voice and turned, replying in Hebrew, 'Rabboni,' which means, Teacher. Jesus told her not to touch him, as he had yet to ascend to his Father and he sent her to give the Good News to his brethren. Filled with the joy of the Risen Lord, she exclaimed, 'I have seen the Lord,' and shared the Good News.

Like Mary, Jesus calls each of us by name. 'I have created you, O Jacob. I have formed you, O Israel. Fear not I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine' (Isaiah 43:1-2.). Can I, like Mary Magdalene, call him Rabboni, Teacher? Have I been taught by the Lord? Can I say, 'I have seen the Lord'.

THE WORD - KEY TO THE KINGDOM

Mary Magdalene, a sinner, had listened intently to the Word, repented for her sins, was healed, and became a close disciple of Jesus. Having entered the Kingdom, she accepted God's call, and with Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and some other women disciples, they accompanied Jesus and the Apostles, as they went to the cities and villages, preaching and giving the good news, and providing for them out of their means (Lk 8:1-3). A faithful disciple, she went up to Calvary, with Mary, the Mother of God, Mary, wife of Cleophas, and John the Apostle and stood with them, at the foot of the Cross. The good thief on the cross, repented for his sins, and began to experience the Kingdom saying, 'Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingly power.' Jesus replied, 'Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

THE KINGDOM OF GOD - EXPLAINED

In the gospels, Jesus often spoke about the Kingdom of God in parables. We are all familiar with the words, 'Thy Kingdom Come' in the 'Our Father.' When Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, he said, 'The time is fulfilled

and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel' (Mt 1:14). To Pilate, Jesus said, 'My Kingdom is not of this world.'

What is this Kingdom Jesus was talking about? 'Rom 4:17 explains, 'The Kingdom of God is not a matter of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 1Cor 4:2 says, 'The Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power.' To Nicodemus (Jn 3:3), he said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'



A PERSONAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

The Kingdom of God is a personal spiritual experience, when a person undergoes deep repentance for sin by receiving humbly the Word of God in his heart with faith. He renounces sin with all its pleasures and attachment, and is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. He begins to participate in the life of the Trinity, and experiences transformation through the divine nature of God. The gifts of God in Baptism (Isaiah 11:1-2) are manifested and the charisms and gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1Cor.12.

On 15th August 1991, Thomas Paul, a businessman and engineer was travelling by train from Mumbai to Jabalpur, seated in the upper berth, listening to the Word of God from a tape recorder. He experienced an anointing of the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in tongues. He heard God's voice in his heart saying, 'Who will go for me?' He immediately accepted God's call. While preaching the gospel on 8th September, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, unknowingly he started preaching the Word of God in Hindi, a language he was not familiar with. He started the Kingdom Publications. He shared how one of his employees, whom he had sacked, came to attack him with a knife. He prayed in tongues. The man grew weak, fell on the ground, disarmed, and begged for pardon. Pardoned, the man sheepishly walked away. This is the power with which the Holy Spirit work (2 Cor 10:3). Thomas Paul preached retreats to priests, and religious, and the Hindi speaking people of North India were blessed through his ministry.

THE SPREAD OF THE KINGDOM

The spiritual experience does not stop with the individual. The aroma of Christ spreads to the community and the whole world. Salvation is not for a few. It is for all humanity. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, 'You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

THE ANOINTING - BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus had put all things under his feet, conquered death, and rose through the mighty power of the Resurrection. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, and is the Lord of Heaven and Earth. He has ushered the Kingdom of God into the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.

At Baptism, and at Confirmation, we have received the anointing of the Spirit. We are baptized into Christ and in Jesus we exercise the roles of priest, prophet and king. As priests, we are called to pray and intercede for others. During the mass, we offer sacrifices in union with the priest, and in union with Christ's sacrifice at Calvary (Rom 12:1-2). As prophet, we speak the Word of

God and share our faith. As king, we take authority in the name of Jesus and gain mastery over ourselves, over God's creation (Gen 1: 28) and over all the power of the enemy (Lk 10:19) and work for the building up of God's Kingdom on earth.

John the Baptist said, 'He who is coming after me is mightier than I. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.' This is the age of the Holy Spirit, the Day of Judgement. The Holy Spirit is at work threshing, and separating the grain from the chaff, the good for eternal life and the bad for eternal fire (Mt 3:11).

THY KINGDOM COME

In preparation for the Jubilee Year in 2025, proclaimed by Pope Francis, let us avail every opportunity to open ourselves to the Kingdom of God.



***Norma Kamath** lives in Bangalore. She experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in 1983 and was called to serve in the intercessory, counselling and healing ministry.*



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Severine Saldanha, Kankandy

I am very much thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for innumerable favours received. Please accept my donation of Rs. 30,000, towards Easter gifts for the Balbhavan children.

I.S Raj & Fly, Bangalore

I have sent a cheque of Rs. 1,000 as a token of thanksgiving for the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel and the good work carried out by Fr. Agnel Ashram, over the decades.

Bertha Fernandes, Mumbai

Kindly accept my donation of Rs. 5,000 as an Easter gift for the Balbhavan children. Fr. Agnel Ashram is the place where they are well cared for and are provided good education.

Seline Mekat, Kottayam

We are pleased to offer a cheque of Rs.10,000 for the welfare of the Balbhavan boys.

Alice, Sharon & Suzanne D'Souza, Mumbai

We are three sisters and are happy to sponsor three Balbhavan boys, by contributing Rs. 1250 each, every month.

Ashok Mehra, Mumbai

A donation of Rs. 2,000 by cheque is given to Fr. Agnel Ashram for the support of the Balbhavan boys. We have always been giving donations for the expenses of the boys under your care.

Reginald D'Souza, Mumbai

We are donating Rs.1000 as an Easter gift for the Balbhavan boys. May they grow into skilled citizens.

Linnet Concessao, Vakola

We are happy to offer an amount of Rs. 20,000 to Fr. Agnel Ashram and Balbhavan, for the good work done by the Ashram, with regard to the upbringing and training of the boys under your care.

Spotlight on Suffering

- Marina Pinto

No one escapes suffering and pain in life. Often, one asks the inevitable question is "Why me, Lord?" The answer lies in the connect between God and me. After all, suffering is where God and all human beings meet. It ensures the moment of God's intervention in our lives as God is always there and in full control.

Suffering is a mystery. It is not to be despised or condemned as a curse which is thrust on us undeservedly. Nor is it a calculated move by a mathematical God who rewards those that do good but punishes the wrong-doers. The life and death of Jesus on the Cross brings in a new perspective on our suffering - God is with us. We need to be reminded that Christ saved us by dying on the Cross for our sins and we too must save others through suffering. By joining with Christ's sufferings, we can cause a supernatural release of the graces merited by Jesus on Calvary, to be applied for the salvation of our fellow men. Thus we become 'co-heirs with Jesus'. In suffering, we align with God in praise and humiliation, so that we become like Him in the radiance of the Resurrection. This then, is the redemptive power of suffering. It unites us with God and manifests the power of God in His glory through us.

Truly, it is not humanly possible to rejoice in suffering but martyrs rejoiced because they participated in the death and passion of Christ and longed for the glory of Heaven and the presence of the Risen Lord. Suffering therefore must not be seen as shame or punishment, but a blessing, a privilege. It sanctifies us and unites us with God. It is best to offer our sufferings and pain, both great and small, at the Eucharist. When the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, our sufferings also get transformed and come back to us as gains, joy and peace. Have we not experienced how the very worst things in life get turned into the very best things that we never imagined or expected? We have a God who does impossible things, if only we surrender everything to His Holy Will.

We must look at suffering differently. We must see it as a gift of God for one's betterment. It is God's way of favouring you in His own special way. A father who disciplines his child does so, not to shame or punish, but by being loving and caring, he wants to ensure that His child reaches his goal, be it earning a medal or a trophy. As St. Ignatius once said, "If God causes you to suffer much, it is a

sign that He intends to make you a saint." Suffering produces endurance, character and hope. It makes us better, not bitter persons. God gives us not suffering that is good for us, but what is best for us, and throughout that rocky journey, God is with us, walking with us and working in us. So pain and suffering raise our endurance levels, toughen us and in a way, make for greater tolerance and acceptance of what befalls us in life.

A beautiful thought to bear in mind is that, when we suffer, Jesus suffers with us. We know that Jesus was broken in body, tormented in mind, and deserted by his close friends. His agonizing

cry on the cross - "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" is bound to have an echo or a ripple effect in our minds and hearts. With St. Paul, we can say, "I will glory in my infirmities that the strength of Christ may dwell in me... for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Suffering is part and parcel of life. It should not break us, make us either rebels or warped persons, who sound like prophets of doom and despair. On the contrary, suffering brings before us the image of the Man of Sorrows, which transforms us along the path of Calvary to meet the Risen Christ.



Dr. Marina Pinto is a former Professor of Public Administration, University of Mumbai. She is an active parishioner of the Church of Our Lady of Salvation, Dadar, Mumbai.

Pope's Vocations Day message: 'Pilgrims of hope, builders of peace'



Pope Francis blesses a Missionary of Charity in Mongolia.

On the 61st World Day of Prayer for Vocations, celebrated on April 21, Pope Francis urges Christians to welcome our shared vocation to sow the seeds of hope and peace in our world.

“Our life finds fulfilment when we discover who we are, what our gifts are, where we can make them bear fruit, and what path we can follow in order to become signs and instruments of love, generous acceptance, beauty, and peace, wherever we find ourselves.”

The Holy Father noted that all Christians are called to welcome our God-given vocation to serve Him in the world, whether it be through the consecrated life, the priesthood, marriage, or even as a single person.

Gratitude, he said, should characterize World Vocations Day celebrations, as we recall the countless Christians who serve God in all walks of life. He especially invited young people to make room for God, so that they might find happiness in His call, which always respects our freedom.

“Let Jesus draw you to Himself,” said the Pope. “Bring Him your important questions by reading the Gospels; let Him challenge you by His presence, which always provokes in us a healthy crisis.”

Synodal aspect to praying for vocations

Pope Francis went on to invite Christians to be “pilgrims of hope” as the Church journeys towards the 2025 Jubilee.

Amid the vast variety of charisms and vocations in the Church, God's people are guided by the Holy Spirit and form the Body of Christ as members of a great family and many parts of a whole, he said.

“In this sense,” he added, “the World Day of Prayer for Vocations has a synodal character: amid the variety of our charisms, we are called to listen to one another and to journey together in order to acknowledge them and to discern where the Spirit is leading us for the benefit of all.”

The Pope also urged everyone to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, so that the Lord may “send out labourers into His harvest.”

As the Church prepares for the Jubilee with a Year of Prayer, Christians should engage daily in a prayer that listens for the voice of God and helps us become “pilgrims of hope and builders of peace.”

Turning to the heart of his message, Pope Francis recalled that Christian pilgrimage means keeping our eyes, minds, and hearts fixed on our goal - which is Christ - and set out every day anew.

Christian passion for life

In conclusion, the Pope invited Christians to “rise up” and awaken from our indifference by embracing our vocation and letting Christ guide our steps.

“Let us be passionate about life,” he said, “and commit ourselves to caring lovingly for those around us, in every place where we live.”

Walking for Peace in Mumbai: 33rd Overnight Pilgrimage With Theme 'Come Follow Me'



Hundreds of Mumbaikars joined the city's 33rd overnight walking pilgrimage, on 16th March and 17th March 2024, held annually during the Lenten season. This year's theme was "Come Follow Me" and the walk began from Cross Maidan at 10.30 pm and ended at Mount Mary Basilica, Bandra around 5.15 am on Sunday morning.

Archbishop of Bombay Oswald Cardinal gracefully flagged off the pilgrimage and blessed all the pilgrims.

Pilgrims walk and pray

The processions included four beautifully-decorated floats, which depicted Mother Mary with angels around her, Jesus carrying the cross, "sorrowful mother" and St Joseph. A 17-foot heavy cross was also carried by the pilgrims. All along the route and through the night, pilgrims sang hymns, and prayed the 'Rosary', 'Stations of the

Cross' and 'Divine Mercy,' in various languages.

Some pilgrims were seen walking the entire route barefoot, to make a good prayerful pilgrimage. Many priests and sisters, too, joined in as pilgrims.

The police and volunteers worked alongside to manage the crowd and surrounding traffic. People of different communities along the route offered water and juices to the faithful. The walk ended at dawn, as the pilgrims joined for mass at Mount Mary Basilica. The walk was organised by Marian Seva Foundation.



Sunil D'Cruz is on the Editorial team of Fr. Agnel Ashram News. He has contributed articles to various local, national and international publications.

Pray *for* **INDIA**

O Heavenly Father, we thank you for our nation. As our nation goes in for general election, we the citizens pray for good leaders, for your choice of leaders, to lead this country with wisdom and sincerity.

Lord, you know better what is good for your people. We accept and believe that "there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God" (Romans 13/1b&c).

We pray Lord for Wisdom to discern and vote for the right candidates.

"O God of our ancestors and Lord of mercy, who have made all things by your word, give us the wisdom that sits by your throne" (Wisdom 9/1,4).

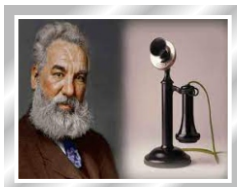
May your Holy Spirit guide every single citizen of India. Grant us leaders who will lead the nation in peace and harmony. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Queen of Heaven and Our Lady of all nations, pray for us.



The month of April means the temperature rises almost unbearably. Yet it is a happy month for we have lots of things to look forward to. Kids have vacations, people go on vacations for relaxation and, of course, we have the popular mangoes as a treat. We also celebrate April 1 as April Fool's Day. So with such positive thoughts, let's begin.....

Quiz



All about inventors

1. Who invented the first gramophone?
2. Who invented the light bulb?
3. Who invented the first electric car?
4. Who invented the first

sewing machine?

5. Who invented the telephone?

Smile Please



1. My teachers told me that I would never amount to much because I procrastinate so much.

I told them, "Just you wait!"

2. Tom: "What job would you like to do?"

Vain pretty girl: "Working

in a mirror factory is something I can totally see myself doing."

3. What happened when a faucet, a tomato and some lettuce ran a race?

The lettuce was ahead, the faucet was running and the tomato was trying to ketchup.

4. Singing in the shower is fun until you get soap in your mouth. Then it is soap opera.

5. Why is Cinderella so bad at playing football?

Because she runs away from the ball.

You can make a difference in the world



Every Sunday morning, Leander took a jog around the local park.

There was a lake located at one corner. Each time he

jogged around, he noticed an elderly lady sitting at the water's edge with a small metal cage.

This Sunday, his curiosity got the better of him, so he walked towards her and as he got closer, he

realised in the metal cage, there were three turtles walking around.

The lady was carefully scrubbing one of them on her lap with a sponge brush.

He asked her, "What are you doing?"

She smiled, "I am cleaning off their shells. Anything on a turtle's shell, whether algae or scum, reduces the turtle's ability to absorb heat and impedes its ability to swim. This can also corrode the turtle shells over time and they weaken."

"Wow! That is so nice of you!"

But I also pointed out asking, "But surely most freshwater turtles live with algae and scum hanging from their shells?"

"Yes, sadly they do."

I asked, "But surely you could spend your time more fruitfully? I mean I know you are kind but ninety-nine percent of turtles living all over the world, do not have this kind of treatment. So what difference does this make?"

The lady giggled as she scrubbed the last piece of algae from the little turtle.

"Sweetie, let me tell you something. If this little guy could talk, he would tell you that I had made all the difference in the world!"

What do we learn?

Each one of us can indeed make a change in the world, however small it may be. It may not seem like much, yet in our own way we can touch other's lives. We can by our good deeds make every day count and make the world a better place. There is never a need to always try to make a great world change that goes down in history, but change can start in small ways that makes a difference to a few lives. Sometimes a few ripples are as noteworthy as big waves.

What is the Good Word?



Important dates in April

1. World Book and Copyright Day.
2. The Date of the International Day of Conscience.
3. World Health Day.
4. World Homeopathy Day.
5. World Veterinary Day.

Homeopathy - an effective alternative medicine



We celebrate World Homeopathy Day this month. There are many who scoff at homeopathy yet many who vouch for its efficacy too. Homeopathy was created in the 18th century by Samuel Hahnemann.

It is basically a medical system based on the belief that the body can heal itself. It is based on the belief that like cures like. In other words, something that brings on symptoms in a healthy person can in a very small dose treat an illness with similar symptoms. This is meant to trigger the body's natural defences. For example, red onions make your eyes water, so it is used in homeopathic remedies for allergies. Lower the dose, the more potent is the medicine. They come in forms of sugar pellets, liquid drops, creams, gels and tablets. This is a true story. A young boy had a pet chicken. The chicken accompanied the family on vacation. However the temperature there in the hill station was low and the chicken suffered from wry neck. Its neck got a spasm and twisted backwards. And it was falling down, near death. Fortunately the young boy's dad had a medical kit containing a homeopathic medicine called Belladonna. The chicken was given a few pills by opening its beak. Incredibly, he recovered in a few minutes and was running around happily.

While it is true that homeopathy may not treat all diseases, yet it has demonstrated great success in curing many diseases effectively going to the root of the problem, compared to allopathy, that can often mask the symptoms and not treat the root cause effectively.

Riddles

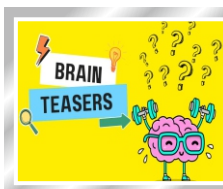


1. What has words but never speaks?
2. The alphabet goes from A to Z but I go from Z to A. What am I?
3. I live in a school but never leave the water. What am I?
4. What can kids make but

never see?

5. A cowboy rode into town on Friday. He stayed for two nights in an inn but rode out on Friday again. How is this possible?

Brain Teasers



1. I have seas without water, coasts without sand, towns without people and mountains without land. What am I?
2. A butcher stands five feet nine and wears a size ten shoes. What does he weigh?
3. Many have heard me but nobody has seen me. I will not speak unless spoken to first. Often you can find me on a mountain side. What am I?
4. What runs but never walks, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, has a bed but never sleeps?
5. If Sunny kept twenty-three mint chocolates in a big basket...On his way home, he gives eight to his

friend, two to his brother and five he has given to a neighbour. Yet he is left with only six chocolates, instead of eight although he never ate any? How come?

6. If $A = 54$, $Y = 34$ and $Z =$ half both their values. Now if $Z - X = 12$, what is the value of both Z and X ?

Perfection is hard to find



Once there lived a man who was a perfectionist. He remained unmarried his whole life. When he reached the age of ninety and was on his death bed, someone asked him out of curiosity, "You never married but

never said why. May I know the reason why?"

The old man nodded, "Yes, you may. I am not against marriage but I was searching for the perfect woman. I searched and searched and my whole life slipped by."

"But on this earth there are millions of women, surely you could have found someone perfect for you?"

The old man now had tears rolling down his eyes. He became emotional. He nodded, "Yes, I did find one."

"Then what happened? Why didn't you marry her?"

The old man sighed, "But to my regret I found that lady was searching for the perfect husband and she did not want me."

What do we learn from this story?

We learn that we all like perfection but we forget we are human and others are human too. We make mistakes, we are not perfect. Therefore, to expect another to be perfect, is often not possible and unless we are perfect ourselves, then we must allow a few negative traits, a few mistakes made by others. We must live and let live by remembering it is human to err but to forgive is divine.

April Fool's Day



The 1st of April is celebrated as April Fool's Day worldwide.

In 1962, the colour television was growing in popularity but still new. Swedish broadcasters took advantage of the many mysteries

abounding on the colour television. People were only used to black and white televisions.

On April, 1, Kjell Stensson, the technical expert of Swedish's only channel, Sveriges Television, told viewers that they could convert their black and white sets into a colour one by simply putting a nylon stocking over the screen.

He even demonstrated this technique live by placing a fine meshed material over the screen. He told the viewers that nylon stockings would suffice.

Thousands of viewers today recall searching for

nylon stockings and attempting to turn their black and white televisions into colour. Later, they understood it was an April Fool's hoax. Are you going to play any April Fool's prank this year? If you do, perhaps you can let us know if it was successful.

Fun facts about mangoes



Mangoes are a delight in the summer months in our country.

1. India is the largest producer of mangoes in the world, producing over 18 million tonnes of the fruit.
2. The oldest mango tree is 300 years old and is found in East Kandesh in Central India. This ancient tree still produces fruit!
3. Alphonso mangoes are the most popular mangoes and is known as the King of Mangoes.
4. The famous French artist Henri Matisse was so captivated by this fruit that several of his paintings immortalized their beauty.
5. In 1984, NASA sent a mango seed aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger as part of an experiment to study the effects of zero gravity on plant growth. The seedling that sprouted grew into a full-fledged

mango tree, proving even in the vast expanse of space, the allure of mangoes knows no bounds.

That is all for this month. Take care. Till next month.

Answers

Quiz

1. Emil Berliner. 2. Thomas Edison. 3. Robert Anderson. 4. Elias Howe. 5. Alexander Graham Bell.

What's the Good Word?

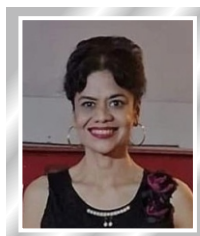
1. April 23. 2. April 5. 3. April 7. 4. April 10. 5. April 27.

Riddles

1. A book. 2. Zebra. 3. Dolphin. 4. Noise. 5. Friday was his horse.

Brain Teasers

1. Map. 2. Meat. 3. River. 4. Echo. 5. The basket had a small hole and two chocolates fell down. 6. Z= 44, X=32.



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.

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Fr. Agnel's Blessings

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY FROM SURGERY

BORIVALI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have fully recovered from surgery. Lord Jesus filled me with strength and courage, during this difficult time. I am now feeling well and my normal self.

- Ruby Aloj

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

TAMIL NADU: Thank you Ven. Fr. Agnel for all the favours received, through your kind intercession. I feel truly blessed, loved and cared for.

-William

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESSFUL WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF SON

MUMBAI: I am thankful to Fr. Agnel for the wedding anniversary celebration of my son going off well. May the couple be blessed always with a happy married life.

-Sangeeta Gupta

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

PUNE: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my family has been blessed abundantly in many ways. Whenever I am in Mumbai, I make it a point to visit Fr. Agnel Ashram and the Samadhi of Fr. Agnel.

-Prernna Moses

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

VASHI: I am very much thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for helping my son complete his education and on my husband's retirement. Both enter a new phase of life.

-Jacinta Francis

THANKSGIVING FOR REACHING CANADA SAFELY

MUMBAI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have reached Canada safely. My dream has been fulfilled and I am thankful to the Venerable.

-James Nirmala

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

MUMBAI: Nearly every day, I receive blessings in one way or the other, through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. I am indeed grateful for all the favours received and most importantly, the gift of life.

-Roque Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESS IN THEOLOGY EXAMS

MUMBAI: I am thankful to Fr. Agnel for helping me pass my Theology Old Testament exams. I have been edified by the Word of God and my faith has been strengthened.

-Fiza Pathan

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD HEALTH OF BABY

VIRAR: I would like to offer thanksgiving to Ven. Fr. Agnel for keeping my baby in good health. It gives me great joy to see a happy child.

-Ashley Murzello

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

ANDHERI: I have been blessed in every way through the kind intercession of Fr. Agnel. I always turn to the Venerable for strength and courage, in times of need.

-Preeti Rebello

THANKSGIVING FOR SALE OF PLOT AND GOOD HEALTH

BANDRA: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, we were able to find a good buyer for our plot. Our family is also blessed with good health.

-Mary Grace Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

MIRA ROAD: I would like to thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing me in every way, day in and day out.

-Maria Monserrate

THANKSGIVING FOR GIFT OF A CHILD

MUMBAI: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed me with my own bundle of joy, my heart's desire. I am indeed thankful to the Venerable for one of the biggest blessings of my life.

-Keeona Almeida

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD JOB

VASHI: My prayers have been answered. Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, after months of searching, I have secured a good job. I have faith in the Venerable.

-Doris Bhopal

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

GOA: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have obtained many favours. All praise and glory to Lord Jesus.

-Bernadina Paul

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

Praveen M.	Mumbai	54000	Nanda B.	Mumbai	2000	Charveek P.	Mumbai	1000
Severine S.	Karnataka	30000	Jayendra B.	Mumbai	2000	K. Kelawalla	Mumbai	1000
Hutoxi Z.	Vasai	11000	Peter H.	Tamil Nadu	2000	Jinal Patel	Mumbai	1000
Pravin G.	Mumbai	11111	Fatima A.	Kerala	2000	Sangita G.	Mumbai	1000
Pettenal C.	Mumbai	10200	Dicky A.	Mumbai	2000	Ghanshyan K.	Mumbai	1000
Parag Ved	Mumbai	10000	Johny M.	Kerala	2000	Ankit G.	Mumbai	1000
Selene M.	Kerala	10000	Gabriel M.	Vasai	2000	Fittech Industries	Mumbai	1000
Susan E.	Dubai	10000	Arjasp R.	Mumbai	2000	Gavin P.	Mumbai	1000
Suman P.	Kerala	10000	Gaurang M.	Mumbai	2000	Sharon D.	Mumbai	1000
Hugh G.	Mumbai	10000	Armaity G.	Mumbai	2000	Santhappan A.	Tamil Nadu	1000
Philomina P.	Karnataka	10000	Maria A.	Vasai	2000	Vasudev B.	Mumbai	1000
Precilla F.	Mumbai	10000	Adolf P.	Mumbai	2000	Monica D.	Mumbai	1000
Sebastian K. S.	Kerala	10000	Rija Anna	Kerala	2000	Irudayaraj M.	Tamil Nadu	1000
Carolina R.	Mumbai	10000	Senthil S.	Mumbai	2000	Theresa R.	Mumbai	1000
Davis T.J.	Kerala	10000	Heli Shah	Mumbai	2000	Teeja T.	Kerala	1000
Daryl P.	Mumbai	9900	Mary P. M.	Kerala	2000	Callet D.	Mumbai	1000
Fredric L.	Mumbai	6000	Isaiah S.	Mumbai	2000	Mary H.	Mumbai	1000
Warren F.	Mumbai	6000	Neethu	Gujarat	2000	Rincy F.	Vasai	1000
Gaurang B.	Mumbai	5100	Vissia Pais	Karnataka	2000	L. Agnale	Tamil Nadu	1000
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5100	Mercy D.	Mumbai	2000	Anthony N.	Mumbai	1000
Beena G.	Kerala	5000	Ashok R.	Mumbai	2000	Peter D'Souza	Goa	1000
Yul R.	Dubai	5000	Anthony N.	Mumbai	2000	Alvecias D.	Vasai	1000
Walter F.	Mumbai	5000	Noreen K.	Mumbai	2000	Alvina L.	Vasai	1000
Ayesha P.	Mumbai	5000	Solly T.	Kerala	2000	Jestine S.	Tamil Nadu	1000
Mary Paul	Thane	5000	Flemy T.	Kerala	2000	George X.	Kerala	1000
Sarita D.	Mumbai	5000	Fulbaria	Diu	2000	John Thomas	Kerala	1000
Bertha F.	Mumbai	5000	N.G. Asher	Vasai	2000	Mumtaz S.	Mumbai	1000
Rajkumar	Vasai	5000	Kanga N.	Mumbai	1500	G. Maria S.	Tamil Nadu	1000
Lawrence L.	Karnataka	5000	Wilfred D.	Mumbai	1500	Antony M.	Kerala	1000
Rakesh P.	Mumbai	5000	Attely A.	Thane	1500	Latika Salvi	Mumbai	1000
Rukshana A.	Mumbai	5000	Marian F.	Mumbai	1500	Agnel B.	Kerala	1000
Sameer G.	Mumbai	5000	Manis	Mumbai	1300	Diana F.	Mumbai	1000
Dinky S.	Mumbai	5000	Beena J.	Mumbai	1250	Pheona G.	Mumbai	1000
Michael P.	Mumbai	5000	Alice D.	Mumbai	1250	Darab	Mumbai	1000
Blossom L.	Vasai	5000	Sharon D.	Mumbai	1250	Chhaya K.	Mumbai	1000
Samantha S.	Virar	5000	Suzanne D.	Mumbai	1250	Ajitkumar M.	Gujarat	1000
Sarah S.	Mumbai	5000	K.G. Rao	Andhra Pradesh	1200	Hem Shah	Mumbai	1000
Ashirwad T.	Karnataka	5000	Jacob D.	Mumbai	1200	Neelam P.	Mumbai	1000
Jacob A.	Kerala	5000	Cozihom	Mumbai	1100	I. S. Paul	Karnataka	1000
Rajendra K.	Mumbai	5000	Rasulbee J.	Raigad	1100	Darragh S.	Kerala	1000
Manaz F.	Mumbai	5000	Beroze F.	Mumbai	1001	Rajesh D.	Mumbai	1000
Michael P.	Vasai	5000	Laxmi P.	Mumbai	1005	Saahil A.	Bengal	1000
Techno Products	Tamil Nadu	3000	K. Pauly	Mumbai	1000	Renuka S.	Mumbai	500
Maria K.	Mumbai	3000	Pooja J.	Mumbai	1000	Clive M.	Mumbai	500
Saji C.	Dubai	3000	Abey E.	Kerala	1000	James	Kerala	500
Jason W.	Mumbai	2500	Sajan M.	Kerala	1000	Virginia F.	Gujarat	500
Josephine D.	Mumbai	2500	Kamble L.	Ahmednagar	1000	Roger C.	Vasai	500
Rita J.	Kerala	2200	S. Arulgnana	Tamil Nadu	1000	Catherine	Vasai	500
Dean M.	Vasai	2100	Khorshed D.	Mumbai	1000	Hiren G.	Mumbai	500
Gerold A.	Vasai	2000	Mary Grace	Mumbai	1000	Stanny D.	Vasai	500
Laysamma V.	Kerala	2000	Walter F.	Mumbai	1000	Anita H.	Mumbai	500
Mary V.	Gujarat	2000	Antony K.	Mumbai	1000	N.G. Asher	Mumbai	500
Perin H.	Mumbai	2000	Rajesh G.	Vasai	1000	Achana S.	Vasai	500
Jobby E.	Vasai	2000	Hiren Gala	Mumbai	1000	Hilda F.	Mumbai	500
Stella C.	Kerala	2000	Durgaprasad C.	Mumbai	1000	Malvikaben S.	Gujarat	500
Ashok R.	Mumbai	2000	Paresh M.	Thane	1000	Andrew L.	Mumbai	500
Lizzie V.	Kerala	2000	Ashok B. Lal	Mumbai	1000			

Bob's Banter

by Robert Clements

The Flag, a Fruit of the Root...!

The house with a flag flying atop it, looked with disdain at the neighbouring home, with no flag on it, "No flag?" it asked.

"It's an invisible one I fly!" said the home with no flag, "the people within my house don't need a flag above expressing what they believe in but believe it should be expressed through their lives!"

The flag on top of the house waved slightly unsteadily at the thought, even as the home which flew the flag asked roughly, "And what kind of lives should those that live within you reveal that manifests itself in the invisible flag atop of you?"

The home with no flag, smiled and whispered, "When those within show through their lives, qualities such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and

those fruits in the lives of the people who live within me, and that is the invisible flag that flies above!"

The home with the flag atop, stared hard at the flag flying above and asked, "Are you a fruit of the root you are rooted to?"

"Yes, of course," said the flag. That's what all flags are!"

"And do you have all the lovely qualities that the invisible flag on the adjoining building has?" asked the home, staring even harder at the flag on top.

"That question can only be answered by the lives of the people within you," said the flag, "Do our people show love to one another and to their neighbours? Is joy and happiness reflected on their faces? Is there deep peace within them or restlessness and unruliness? And are they patient and tolerant to those who follow a different path



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self-control, then their lives will be the invisible flag that flies above me! Because that flag is the fruit of the root!"

"Fruit of what root?" asked the building with the flag atop.

"The root on whom the flag's beliefs are based upon. And when the root is a divine one, then the fruits that it produces will also be heavenly for the people around to taste!"

"And those fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?" asked the house with the flag that had now stopped fluttering.

"Yes, indeed!" said the home with the invisible flag flying atop it. Those people walking outside can see

of faith and do they show kindness even if they form a part of a majority? Are they faithful to the law and constitution, and gentle to even their enemies? And do they exercise self-control and restraint in their language and speeches or are their words that of hate and anger?"

It was not the lack of wind that made all the flags put up over all the homes to droop wondering if those who lived below had fruits that reflected a Divine root or not ...!

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

HEART AND SOLE RUN 6

- an overwhelming success

The HEART & SOLE RUN 6 of 15, 10, 5 and 1.5 Km was organized on Sunday, 10th March 2024, from Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra, Mumbai, in association with Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering and Rotary Club Bombay Bandra. Dr. Surendra Singh Rathod, Principal of Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, Professor D. Sudhakar (Student Affairs Officer), Prof. Deepak Bauskar (Fr. CRCE Rotract Council in-charge), respective Heads of Departments, Rotary Club Students President Suraj Bhatia, Secretary Harsh and other members were present. Also, the President of Rotary Club Bombay Bandra, Abbas Sir, and Gloria Madam supported the program. It was well received by men, women and children alike. Many thanks go to **Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, Director, Fr. Agnel Ashram** and **Asst. Director Rev. Fr. Trevor Pereira**, for their great support and encouragement, in making the annual event an overwhelming success.

लोकमत

‘द हार्ट अँड सोल रन’ला प्रतिसाद

लोकमत न्यूज नेटवर्क
मुंबई : गनेल आश्रम येथे फादर कॉन्सेकाओ रॉड्रिग्स कॉलेज ऑफ इंजिनिअरिंग आणि रोटरी क्लब बॉम्बे वांद्रे यांच्या संयुक्त विद्यमाने रविवारी ‘द हार्ट अँड सोल रन’चे आयोजन करण्यात आले होते. ही रन १५, १०, ५,

१.५ किमी वांद्रे बॅण्डस्टॅण्ड येथून सुरू झाली होती. पुरुष, महिला, मुलांचा चांगला प्रतिसाद मिळाला.

यावेळी प्रमुख पाहुणे प्राचार्य डॉ. सुरेंद्रसिंग राठोड, प्रा. डी सुधाकर (विद्यार्थी व्यवहार प्रभारी), प्रा. दीपक बाळुस्कर, संबंधित विभाग प्रमुख,

कर्मचारी आणि रोट्रॅक्ट क्लब ऑफ फादर अग्नेल कॉलेज अध्यक्ष सूरज भाटीया व सेक्रेटरी हर्ष सायनसी, आदी उपस्थित होते. या कार्यक्रमाला रोटरी क्लब बॉम्बे वांद्रे यांचे अध्यक्ष आब्बास, ग्लोरीया यांनी विशेष सहकार्य केले.



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During the Maundy Thursday service held on 28th March 2024, His Holiness Pope Francis washed the feet of 12 women inmates at the Rebibbia prison on the outskirts of Rome, Italy, a ritual meant to emphasize his vocation of service and humility. The foot-washing tradition commemorates Lord Jesus Christ washing the feet of his 12 apostles at their last supper before his crucifixion.



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