

FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

MARCH 2024



"Easter is the beauty of new life"

MARCH 2024

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AN EASTER APPEAL

He is risen! Wishing you a Happy Easter full of blessings

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

We, the Agnel Ashram Community, together with the children of our Balbhavan, wish you all a Happy Easter.

Christ is risen. Hallelujah! May the miracle of Easter bring you renewed hope, faith, love and joy.

We are always grateful and thankful to you, for extending a helping hand and support over the years to shape the future of our children in **Balbhavan** and our various other community activities. **We have over 800 orphan children, in Bandra, Vashi, Ambarnath, Pune, Verna & Assagao in Goa, New Delhi, Noida and Greater Noida.**Besides we take care of many more children in the villages such as **Agnel Jan Kalyan Kendra** facility in Khodda Colony, Ghaziabad (U.P.), providing them education and teaching various skills.

Easter is the time to spread the joy and happiness that Christ has brought about into our lives, to others. We hope to continue the good work with your generosity.

With a grateful heart and best regards.

Yours Sincerely in the Lord,

Fr. Valerian D'Souza, sfx**(Superior)**

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We also accept your Easter Gifts for the Balbhavan boys in kind.

MY EASTER GIFT

To,

Fr. Superior,

Fr. Agnel Ashram, P.B. No. 6656, Bandstand, Bandra (W), Mumbai - 400 050.

Dear Fr. Superior,

I am sending my Cheque/Draft/M.O. for _____ as my EASTER GIFT for the children under your care.

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We are an **EASTER** People, and we shout for joy!

- Fr. M.K. George, SJ

Two decades ago, I used to be active in pastoral work in the South of Kerala, India, especially during the seasons of Christmas and Easter. The memories of those celebrations and the inspiration from the piety of the people remain in me. They are points to which I return in fantasy, gratitude and prayer.

One of such memories is a rather annoying practice one village had. They would mount a van, with public address system and exactly at midnight, they will drive around yelling at their top voices, 'Jesus is risen, alleluia.'

However, the message I remember is that as an Easter People, we are joyful and we want to announce that joy.

Are we an Easter People?

St. John Paul II said, 'we are an Easter People and alleluia is our song.' The crucial question is whether we Christians are really an Easter People.

To me the main characteristic of an Easter person is the ability to rejoice even amidst the worst of suffering. As St. Paul teaches, 'We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame' (Rom. 5:3-5).

In Corinthians 4, 8-12 Paul shares, 'we are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body...so then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.'

And the second most important characteristic is the passion to share the ability to rejoice.

Easter, Palestine, Ukraine, and all war-affected zones

Where do I see the most Easter people today? It is in the Palestine, Gaza zone where even after 29,000 people, many of them children are killed and the rest are at the threat of total annihilation; they still hope they will be saved. It is in Ukraine where after the brutal attack on them by Russia, and the total destruction of infrastructures all around. Still people are hoping to revive and survive. It is in the tribal areas of our country,

where more and more are displaced and denied of their rights to the land to the advantage of rich and corporate avarice. It is in the surviving hungry children, women and men in our country and all around, who still hope for food, clothes and shelter and humanity.

My responsibility

An Easter person has tremendous responsibilities. In and through the suffering and their resistance, an Easter person shows the world, the power of suffering and resurrection as manifested in Jesus.

But it is not a joy or power to be celebrated on the Easter day alone. It is an attitude, and a culture of life lived out on a day-to-day basis.

Here are some concrete suggestions:

1. I take my suffering to be salvific. I do not complain. Accept them, live them and heal them. And I rejoice, like St. Paul.
2. I find time to share the suffering of others, relieve them and handhold them when they weaken and fall.
3. "The undeniable sign of resurrection is joy, bringing a sense of hope to others that is tangible and irresistible" (Megan McKenna). Can I reach out to one person near me who has lost hope and accompany her to believe in the hope that Jesus promises.
4. I join groups who advocate for peace, justice and humanity all around the world.

Friedrich Nietzsche, a 19th century philosopher once said, "For a group of people who claim to believe in resurrection, none of them looks redeemed!"

Let us prove Nietzsche wrong. This Easter season, find hope in these disastrous times and share that hope with one more.



Fr. M.K. George, formerly Principal of Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum, is currently General Counsellor to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus in Rome. He can be contacted at gmutholil@gmail.com

Lent is a good time to ***"STIR INTO A FLAME the Gift we have received through baptism; for God did not give us a LUKEWARM spirit, but rather a spirit of power, and of love, and of self-discipline"*** (2 Tim 1:6, 7).

Tell me, dear Reader, which normal human being likes a lukewarm cup of tea or coffee?!! Or, with reference to human persons, who wants a wishy-washy, tepid or lukewarm friend? Interestingly, the dictionary defines 'tepidity' as *"absence of character."* In our case, therefore, a lukewarm or tepid disciple is one who shows the *"absence of a sterling Christian character!"*

So, we have about a fortnight more of Lent (and then the whole Easter season) to let the Good News of Jesus Christ CHALLENGE and EMPOWER us to become ardent disciples who cooperate wholeheartedly with Jesus' indwelling Spirit. It is his happy and unique task to ***"transform us, degree by degree, into his image and likeness"*** (2 Cor 3:18).

Our main desire in life, therefore, must be to stop being a "mediocre" Christian, one who is satisfied with the minimum, with only a few *external* observances like Sunday Mass (attended out of cultural habit, in poor faith, and with a lot of humdrum distractions), perhaps compensated in one's mind by the fact that one is regularly attending a favourite novena, or mechanically murmuring a litany and innumerable Hail Marys (at fast speed of course), all of which could be external "signs" to perhaps show the general public that one is a member of the "Christian religion."

But, in a way, our inadequate daily witness of Gospel values may not be fully our fault! This is because, unlike the early Christians who had to qualify as disciples *before* being baptised, we have been baptised in infancy when we could not personally and knowingly *"choose to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back...!"* (as the song puts it). Nor has the sacrament of Confirmation, which nowadays is received in later youth, truly catechized us to ***"personally choose to follow Jesus as Lord."*** So, most of us are merely "social" Christians, with our names inscribed in some parish baptismal register. St. Paul described such tepid Christians as ***"lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to the outward form of religion but denying its power"*** (2 Tim 3:5).

Now the last few days of Lent call us to become more committed disciples following a Master who promises us much, but also demands much of us. St. John Paul II put it well:

"Since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity... The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead to holiness" (New Millennium, nos. 30-41).

For this to happen, his successor Pope Benedict XVI emphasised that ***"we must rediscover a taste for feeding ourselves on the word of God, faithfully handed down by the Church, and on the bread of life, offered as sustenance for his disciples"*** (Verbum Dei, n.7).

And our own dear Pope Francis, in this year's Lenten Message writes:

"This is a season of conversion, a time of freedom from the world's slavery and to the joy of discipleship... It is a good opportunity to usher the whole Church into a time of particular reflection and rediscovery of the faith."

To conclude, we need not despair or be daunted by the challenges of the Good News, they are more than balanced by the empowering gift given to every Christian by a loving Father God. This is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' promise made 2025 years ago is still valid: ***"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth"*** (Acts 1:8).

Let us DESIRE, ASK for, and RECEIVE this promise of the Risen Jesus, especially during the Holy Triduum. Let us remember also to make substantial donations to some charitable associations helping the poor and needy, like CARITAS, and the Mission Stations run by many Religious congregations (including my Order, the Jesuits!) Remember how especially to us, the Church in Asia, Pope St John Paul II wrote, quoting St John Chrysostom:

"Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Then do not ignore him when he is naked. Do not pay him silken honors in the temple only then to neglect him when he goes cold and naked outside. He who said; 'This is my body' is the One who also said, 'You saw me hungry and you gave me no food ...' What good is it if the Eucharistic Table groans under the weight of golden chalices, when Christ is dying of hunger? Start by satisfying his hunger, and then with what remains you may adorn the altar as well!" (Ecclesia in Asia, chapter 6).

More than the Popes and Saints, it is JESUS, in whose honor and memory this Season of Lent is being observed annually, who says to each of us, ***"Whatever you did to the least of my sisters and brothers, you did to me!"*** BUT do we really believe this statement?

If we are 'social,' lukewarm, tepid Christians, we probably don't believe it in a way that can transform our attitudes. But if we let the Spirit ***"stir into the flame"*** within us, we may believe, and show our belief, in practical ways, for eternal reward!



Dr. Fiorello Mascarenhas SJ DMin recently celebrated his Diamond Jubilee in the Society of Jesus, and writes and teaches biblical spirituality. His contact: frfiomas@gmail.com

The Truth, Presence and Power of the Risen Lord

-Leon Bent

To believe that the “Lord is Risen” is to believe that He is present to us in a radical and miraculous way. His powerful presence is accessible only by faith — this is because He has ascended into heaven. Such is the substance of our hope. When we cleave to Him by faith, because His presence is real and personal, He raises us up with Him.

When Mary Magdalene calls out to the Risen Lord, He tells her not to cling to Him because He has not yet ascended to the Father. He sends her — the Apostle to the Apostles — to his Apostles to announce to them the resurrection. His words reveal that someday she will possess Him in a more palpable and marvellous way — but He must ascend from the midst of this life first, so that, this new presence can be known. She will have the fullness of faith when the Holy Spirit descends on her. By the faith the Holy Spirit produces, Mary Magdalene will be raised up to new life — and she will be able to cling to the ‘One’ she loves — and who loves her even more!

Nevertheless, even though Mary Magdalene cannot yet cling to Him, the faith of the Apostles is stirred by her message. They run to find the empty tomb and encounter the Lord for themselves. They hear His voice and speak to Him. They see His body. They touch his wounds. They eat with Him. But they cannot yet cling to Him.

Christian faith is not a self-generated psychological exercise. It is part of the new creation, the new humanity which the Risen Lord has established by His victory; his Gift of the Holy Spirit produces faith. This is why He ascended into Heaven. The Giver of Life could only descend on us if Christ ascended to His Father.

The resurrection was not a mere restoration of an earthly paradise — it creates access to heaven. This is a new humanity, with power that exceeds what this world can contain, which is filled with what is eternal.

What about us, here and now? The Risen Jesus longs that, we be where He is; at the right hand of the Father. Now we can only cling to Him by faith.

Christian contemplation and theology converge on the objective and personal presence of the Risen Lord. By objective, we know He is present to us quite apart from whether we feel or imagine Him. By personal, we know that our faith opens up a real heart-to-heart relationship with Him. This is not fairy-tale stuff — it is the substance of our hope.

This objective and personal faith is not limited to knowing things about the Lord; the Christian faith discloses the mysterious depths of God, so that, we can really know Him and His great love. To know

these depths, to plummet them in prayer, to search them in sacred doctrine — such things raise us up with Him, so that, we might dwell with him. In all this, the fullness of joy is ours, even now in a hidden way, here below. The banquet has begun in mystery, and all this as we learn to cling to Him.

Open your heart in faith to Christ and his promises. You are destined, if you do so, to share Christ's own life: You will be resurrected as he is resurrected; you are to live a life of unending love as he does; you are to live forever in eternal communion with God, the Father. What incredible, unbelievable beauty beckons!

Exultet! Rejoice!

The stone was rolled away! (Lk. 2-3; Mk. 16:1-8; Mt. 28:2).

Matthew tells us that an angel from heaven came down in plain view of the soldiers who were guarding the sealed tomb. The soldiers watched in shock as the angel rolled away the stone from the tomb and sat on it.

If we were there we would have expected to see Jesus walk out into the morning light. There was just one problem. The tomb was already empty. Just as he could not be hindered from entering in a locked room, he could not be contained by the sealed tomb.

The stone was not rolled away, so that, Jesus could escape. It was rolled away, so that, you would know that the tomb was empty. With his resurrection Christ no longer lived with the limitations of his human body. Death and the restrictions of our flesh were conquered that Easter morning. As Paul said, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:15).

The angel of God opened an empty tomb for all to see. Jesus now moved about with the grace and power of a body not subject to the barriers and boundaries of earth. Jesus fulfilled the Gospel promise made to Eve so long ago. The curse was broken (Gen. 3:14b).

One day, you and I will have a body like the one that left the sealed tomb. This is part of what Easter means. Death, sickness, and physical limitations will be no more. Just as our spirit has been freed from the ravages of sin, so too will our bodies.

This is what Easter means. It is not a mystical event or an elevation of consciousness. Easter transforms us totally: renewed, rejuvenated, twice-born in spirit and in body. Good Friday has vanished into thin air! Bodily suffering is, now, momentary! The joy of our glorified bodies awaits us for all time to come!



The empty tomb let out glorious hurrahs of the exuberant, resurrected Jesus and the ecstatic delight of Mary Magdalene! The stone that was rolled away offers us great joy and brings hope of eternity with Christ!

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI notes: "I live and you will live also," says Jesus in Saint John's Gospel (14:19) to his disciples, that is, to us. We will live through our existential communion with him, through being taken up into him who is life itself. Eternal life, blessed immortality, we have not by ourselves or in ourselves, but through a relation - through existential communion with him who is Truth and Love and, is, therefore, eternal: God himself. Simple indestructibility of the soul by itself could not give meaning to eternal life it could not make it a true life. Life comes to us from being loved by him who is Life; it comes to us from living-with and loving-with him. Galatians 2:20 says, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." This is the way of the Cross, the way that "crosses over" a life simply closed in on the "I", thereby opening up the road towards true and lasting joy.

Thus, says the ageing former Pontiff, we can sing full of joy, together with the Church, in the words of the Exsultet: "Sing, choirs of angels . . . rejoice, O earth!" The Resurrection is a cosmic event, which includes heaven and earth and links them together. In the words of the Exsultet once again, we can proclaim: "Christ . . . who came back from the dead and shed his peaceful light on all mankind, your Son who lives and reigns forever and ever". Amen!

The Exsultet or Paschal Proclamation which is sung on Holy Saturday Night at the Easter Vigil Mass is one of the greatest prayers of Christian worship that, proclaims and endorses the three models of Redemption through Jesus' Paschal Mystery. It proclaims thus: "the power of this holy night dispels all evil (liberation model), washes guilt away and restores lost innocence (expiation model), which brings mourners joy. The night is truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth and man is reconciled to God (love model)!" [The Roman Missal, 354-355; O'Collins & Kendall, *Focus on Jesus*, 181; VJTR, June 2016)].

Through Liturgy and Worship, Jesus is present to us in divine-human reality: redemption, liberation, atonement and love! In worship, the believing community remembers and celebrates God's wondrous deeds in the past, present, and with eyes eschatologically cast into the future fulfilment of history, where God will be all in all. The post-communion prayer for Wednesday of the third week of Easter embodies the tripartite timeline in these words: "Hear, O Lord, our prayers, that this most holy exchange, by which you have redeemed us, may bring your help in this present life and ensure for us eternal gladness" (The Roman Missal, 407, emphasis - the writer's).

For all their majestic richness the mysteries of faith must trickle down and touch people's concrete circumstances, so that, they are transformed in the

process. Then, the world will be healed. The New Translation of the Roman Missal, in two of its dismissal formulas, is cognizant of the mandate-to-mission that wind up the Mass. These are: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" and "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." The Peace Pulpit urges: "Go where people need to be encouraged and be given hope, and buoy them up with the joy of the Gospel."

And this final flourish! Redemption entails participation! We are called to act out what we receive." Looking at salvation from the standpoint of the Spirit directs our attention to the love of the Trinity (of which it is the bond) and to the task of fostering loving relationships among creatures, in echo of the Trinitarian relationship. It lets us view Christian spirituality as intimacy with the Spirit and a following of the Spirit-led path of Jesus. Some post-modern theologians, with fresh insight, call this phenomenon "Spirit Christology!"

Now, this Gold Nugget: "Through the resurrection, humankind came to believe in God in a new way; man's relationship to God was changed; a whole new vision of God and His intention for humanity was made possible; the whole flow of time and history was redirected. Nevertheless, too much stress on the bodily resurrection keeps us from defining the resurrection solely in terms of what God has done for humankind. The resurrection was and remains, first of all, what God has done for Jesus. It was not an evolution in human consciousness, nor was it the disciples' brilliant insight into the meaning of the crucifixion - it was the sovereign action of God glorifying Jesus of Nazareth. Only because God has done this for His Son have new possibilities opened for His many children, who have come to believe in what He has done" (*The Virginal Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*, Raymond Brown - "for nearly 40 years Father Brown caught the entire church up into the excitement and new possibilities of scriptural scholarship.")

The Punch Line! He is Risen, Alleluia! Amen! That is the best news we can possibly tell a dying world! And, this final flourish! The Bible speaks of creation as virtually the finger-painting of God, while the resurrection of Christ required the strong arm of God! It is His mighty work!

The last word! The most important thing about Easter is the Mystery, the Mysticism, and the Miracle of the Moment!



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!

THE ARMOUR OF GOD

(Ephesians 6: 13-20)

-Fr. Joel Pinto

Do we really need an Armour of God?

- Yes indeed!!!!
- Ephesians 6:13 says that we need the Armour of God to resist and stand our ground.
- To resist whom? To stand our ground against whom?
The Evil One
- There is a lot of evil around us, but don't forget that there is a lot of evil within us too. And to fight this evil, we need God's Armour.
- Scripture says that our battle is not against the human forces (physical), but against the dark forces (spiritual).

Is there a Demon, an Evil Spirit?

1. Yes indeed!!!!

- Otherwise, why would Jesus and Scriptures speak against him. E.g.
 - (A) The Temptation of Jesus: Luke 4: 1-13
Who tempted Jesus? Satan.
 - (B) Jesus speaks about Satan in :
The Parable of the Sower, Mark 4:15, "Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them."
The Parable of the Wheat and Weed, Matthew 13:39, Jesus explains that the enemy who sows weed is the Devil.
 - (C) In John 8:44, Jesus speaks of the Devil and calls him a murderer from the beginning and a father of all lies.
 - (D) John 13:2 says, "The devil had already put into the mind of Judas to betray Jesus." And John 13:27 says, "Satan entered into him."

2. He will tempt us and will never leave us.

- How did Satan dare to tempt Jesus?
Satan knew that Jesus was 100% human.
Satan can tempt only Human beings. So, if he tempted Jesus, he will tempt us too.
Gospel of Luke says that the Devil left to return another time.
Did Satan return? Yes.....
In Matthew 16:23, we see how Peter was tempting Jesus from doing away with God's Will. And, Jesus says, "Get behind me Satan."

This is so similar to what Jesus tells Satan after the third temptation "Be off Satan."

In John 14:30, just before the Passion, Jesus says, "The prince of this world is at hand." Or in Luke 22: 53, Jesus says, "This is the hour of the power of darkness." Here, we see that he (Satan) returns.

- Since we are human, Satan will tempt us and he will follow us till we go to our grave.

3. Why is Satan after us?

- He is against our Father, who has thrown him out of the highest position given to him once among the holy angels.
- Since he is angry with God and he can't harm God, he harms us.

He knows we are made in the likeness and image of God.

So hurting us, he hurts God. That's why we shouldn't allow him to use us.

He hates people who are obedient, humble and forgiving.

- He is envious of us because what he has lost, he doesn't want us to gain.
- His aim is to destroy our soul forever.
- 4. His greatest victory is when we deny his existence, because then he works powerfully.
- 5. He will not come before us as shown in the movies. He will come before us as an angel. At times, he may also use good people to go against us or hurt us.

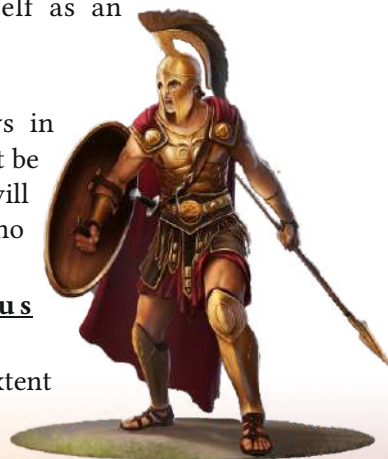
2 Corinthians 11:14 "It is not surprising if Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."

6. But, we need not fear.

That's what Jesus says in Matthew 10:28, "Do not be afraid of those who will kill the body, but have no power to kill the soul."

7. Can devil hurt us physically?

Yes.... Only till the extent God permits him. But, he can never touch our



soul till we surrender ourselves to him. e.g. St. Padre Pio would be hurt and thrown down by Satan with rage.

Now, that we know that Satan is there and waiting to devour us, we need God's Armour.

What is this God's Armour that the Letter to the Ephesians is talking about?

1. Truth as a Belt:

He is the father of all lies and the only way to beat him is to embrace truth in our life.

A lie is a lie. There is nothing called as a good lie and bad lie.

Belt holds everything. So also, truth will hold us secure.

2. Justice as a Breastplate:

Our God is a just God and so, we too have to be just with people.

The moment you fight and work for justice, the evil power will be shaken and will do everything in its power to destroy us.

Breastplate protects. Justice is to protect the rights of the oppressed.

3. Zeal as a shoe to spread the Gospel of Peace:

Jesus is called the Prince of Peace and so, we as his followers also have to be agents of peace.

Do we bring peace wherever we live, work or go?

This is what the evil one doesn't want. He loves division, chaos, etc.

4. Shield of Faith:

We need Faith to shield ourselves from the flaming arrows of the devil.

What do these arrows indicate.... They indicate doubts and despair.

The greatest weapon to attack us are doubt and despair.

Therefore, time and again Jesus reminds us not to fear. Jesus gets annoyed when he sees no faith.

If we do not have faith, then even Jesus can't do

much. e.g., Jesus couldn't perform many miracles in his hometown because people lacked faith (Mark 6: 5-6). Only faith can heal us and lead us to eternal life.

5. Helmet of Salvation:

● It is placed on our head.

● And what does head contain? Our Mind.

● It protects us from the doubt of salvation, that whether we will be saved or not and fills us with assurance and confidence that those who have faith in Jesus will be saved.

● And, this helmet keeps this faith in Salvation protected even in the midst of Spiritual battles and challenges.

6. Sword of the Spirit, that is, the Word of God:

It is like a double-edged sword.

When we pray, not just with human words, but with the Word of God, then the prayer becomes more efficacious.

It cuts –

Through our inner being and reveals to us who we are.

Through our confusion the Word of God gives us clarity.

Through our despair, we are filled with hope and assurance.

Through our weaknesses, the Word of God strengthens us.

Let us put on the Armour of God and let our precious lives be protected from the snare and destruction of our enemy, the Evil One.



Fr. Joel Pinto is a Priest for the Archdiocese of Bombay for 10 years and active in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR).

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.

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EASTER

is a moveable feast

-Jubel D'Cruz

On Sunday, 31st March this year, Christians all over the world will be celebrating Easter, the day on which the resurrection of Jesus Christ is said to have taken place. The date of the celebration changes from year to year. The reason for this variation is that Easter always falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox.

Easter is quite similar to other major festivals like Christmas and Halloween, which have evolved over the last 200 years or so. In all of these festivals, Christian and non-Christian (pagan) elements have continued to blend together.

The New Testament gives no information about what time of the year Jesus Christ was born. Many scholars

believe, however, that the main reason Jesus' birth came to be celebrated on 25th December is because that was the date of the winter solstice according to the Roman calendar.

Since the days following the winter solstice gradually become longer and less dark, it was ideal symbolism for the birth of "the light of the world" as stated in the New Testament's Gospel of St. John.

Similar was the case with Easter, which falls in close proximity to another key point in the solar year: the vernal equinox (around 20th March), when there are equal periods of light and darkness. For those in northern latitudes, the coming of spring is often met with excitement, as it means an end to the cold days of winter.

Spring also means the coming back to life of plants and trees that have been dormant for winter, as well as the birth of a new life in the animal world. Given the symbolism of new life and rebirth, it was only natural to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ at this time of the year.

The naming of the celebration as 'Easter' seems to go back to the name of a pre-Christian goddess in England, 'Eostre', who was celebrated at the beginning of spring. The only reference to this goddess comes from the writings of the Venerable Bede, a British monk who lived in the late seventh and early eighth century. As religious studies scholar, Bruce Forbes, summarises:

"Bede wrote that the month in which English Christians were celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ had been called 'Eosturmonath' in old English, referring to a goddess named 'Eostre'. And even though Christians had begun affirming the Christian meaning of the celebration, they continued to use the name of the goddess to designate the season."

Bede was so influential for later Christians that the name stuck, and hence Easter remains the name by which the English, Germans and Americans refer to the festival of Jesus' resurrection.

It is important to point out that while the name 'Easter' is used in the English-speaking world, many more cultures refer to it by terms best translated as 'Passover'

(for instance, 'Pascha' in Greek) – a reference, indeed, to the Jewish festival of Passover.

In the Hebrew Bible, Passover is a festival that commemorates the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, as narrated in the Book of Exodus. It was and continues to be the most important Jewish seasonal festival, celebrated on the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

At the time when Jesus was born, the Passover had a very special significance, as the Jewish people were again under the dominance of foreign powers (namely, the Romans). Jewish pilgrims streamed into Jerusalem every year in the hope that God's chosen people (as they believed themselves to be) would soon be liberated once more.

On one such Passover, Jesus travelled to Jerusalem with his disciples to celebrate the festival. He entered Jerusalem in a triumphal procession and created a disturbance in the temple of Jerusalem. It seemed that both of these actions attracted the attention of the Romans, and that as a result Jesus was executed around the year A.D. 30.

Some of Jesus' followers, however, believed that they saw Him alive after His death, experiences that gave birth to the Christian religion. As Jesus died during the Passover festival and His followers believed He was resurrected from the dead three days later, it was logical to



commemorate these events in close proximity.

Some early Christians chose to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the same date as the Jewish Passover, which fell around day 14 of the month of Nisan, in March or April. These Christians were known as 'Quartodecimans' (the name means 'Fourteeners').

By choosing this date, they put the focus on when Jesus died and also emphasised continuity with the Judaism religion out of which Christianity emerged. Some others instead preferred to hold the festival on a Sunday, since that was the day when Jesus' tomb was believed to have been found open by some of His close disciples.

In A.D. 325, the Roman emperor Constantine, who favoured Christianity, convened a meeting of Christian leaders to resolve important disputes at the Council of Nicaea. The most fateful of its decisions was about the status of Christ, whom the council recognised as "fully human and fully divine." This council also resolved that Easter should be fixed on a Sunday and not on day 14 of Nisan. As a result, Easter is now celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox.

Easter without Easter eggs and a delicious meal at home is incomplete. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). If you want to give an Easter gift to someone, I recommend the following:

- *To your enemy, forgiveness.
- *To an opponent, tolerance.
- *To a friend, your heart.
- *To a customer, good service.
- *To the poor, charity.
- *To every child, a good example.
- *To yourself, respect.



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



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Maharukh Chesson, Mumbai

Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra, is putting in considerable efforts for the betterment of the community. Please accept my humble donation of Rs. 501 for the Balbhavan boys, as an Easter Gift.

Joseph P.T., Alappuzha, Kerala

I have sent an amount of Rs. 5000 as donation for the boys under your care. Please pray for my family. God bless you.

A.V. Francis, Chennai

I am very happy to see your Society's noble tasks for mankind. I am praying to Almighty God to lead you all on the path of life and love, along with our people of the whole world. I have made a small contribution towards the education of the Balbhavan boys. Please pray for my family.

Ophelia Martins, Melbourne, Australia

I am enclosing a cheque of Rs. 2000, in thanksgiving to Ven. Fr. Agnel.

S. Thomas, Trichy, Tamil Nadu

I have sent a Money Order of Rs. 500 being my thanksgiving offering to Ven. Fr. Agnel for the favours received.

Doreen Rodrigues, Kochi

I have sent a donation of Rs. 500, as our humble Easter gift for the Balbhavan children. We have received innumerable blessings, through our prayers to Ven. Fr. Agnel. I am 100% sure that the Venerable is always praying for us.

Darragh Smail Logistics Pvt. Ltd., Kochi

We have made a payment of Rs.1000 via NEFT towards our contribution for the month of February 2024.

Heather Hyrapiet, Kolkata

We have offered a donation of Rs. 5000, in thanksgiving for the favours received and prayers answered by Ven. Fr. Agnel. We thank the Venerable for his blessings.

ISAAC, Son of Abraham: A Testament of Faith and Promise

(GENESIS 17:19 – 35:29)

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

The stories of the Bible unfold tales of faith, sacrifice, and divine promises, among which the life of Isaac, the son of Abraham, stands as a poignant chapter. Born into a lineage marked by divine covenant, Isaac's journey echoes the resilience of faith and the fulfilment of God's promises.

Isaac's story begins with the miraculous birth promised to Abraham and Sarah in their old age.

The laughter that resonated when God declared Sarah would conceive was symbolically encapsulated in Isaac's name, which means 'he laughs' (Yishaq) in Hebrew (Genesis 17:19). This birth, marked by divine intervention, signified the beginning of a legacy that would shape the destiny of nations. He was circumcised at eight days old, establishing a new Jewish tradition.



Isaac's life is intricately connected to that of his half-brother, Ishmael, who is 13 years older than himself. Born to Hagar, Sarah's maidservant, Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn, creating a complex family dynamic. Despite the tensions arising from the two women in Abraham's life, the significance of both Ishmael and Isaac is profound.

The Bible illustrates the familial complexities and the divine purpose behind these relationships. In Genesis 17:20, God assures Abraham that Ishmael, too, will be blessed and become a great nation. Thus, the lives of Isaac and Ishmael, though divergent, symbolize the multifaceted promises of God.

According to Paul, Ishmael and Isaac serve as an allegory of the Old and New Covenants. While Ishmael represented the Jews, Isaac represented the Christians, the "children of promise" (Galatians 4:28).

One of the most iconic and challenging moments in Isaac's life is the event known as the "Binding of Isaac" (Genesis 22). God tested Abraham's faith by instructing him to offer Isaac as a burnt sacrifice. The obedience of both father and son is a testament to their unwavering trust in God's plan.

In Genesis 22:8, as Abraham and Isaac ascend the mountain, Isaac enquires about the sacrificial lamb. Abraham responds with prophetic faith, saying, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." This episode foreshadows the eventual sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, centuries later.

Isaac's obedience and trust in his father during the sacrifice on Mount Moriah are regarded as a

powerful symbolic representation of the obedience Jesus displayed to his heavenly Father in the garden of Gethsemane and on the Cross.

Isaac's life continues to unfold when he marries Rebekah, a union orchestrated by divine intervention (Genesis 24). Their marriage serves as the conduit for the ongoing fulfilment of God's covenant

with Abraham. Despite grappling with challenges like infertility, Isaac and Rebekah, who are around 60 years old, eventually become parents to twin sons, Esau and Jacob.

A crucial juncture in Isaac's life involves the transfer of the blessing and birthright to his son Jacob, originally intended for Esau. Rebekah and Jacob's strategic plan, although ethically questionable, aligns with God's sovereign plan for Jacob to fulfil the covenant promise (Genesis 27).

Isaac is a crucial figure in the embroidery of divine providence, serving as the second patriarch of ancient Israel. His life serves as a testament to the enduring nature of God's promises and the significance of faith in navigating life's trials. Interwoven with the stories of Ishmael, Abraham, and Jacob, Isaac's narrative illustrates the unfolding drama of God's redemptive plan for humanity - a plan grounded in unwavering faith, divine promises, and the lasting legacy of a chosen family destined to be a blessing to all nations.

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

QUIZ ON THE LIFE OF ISAAC

1. Who are Isaac's parents?

- A) Abraham and Hagar
- B) Isaac and Rebekah
- C) Abraham and Sarah
- D) Isaac and Rachel

2. What does Isaac's name mean in Hebrew?

- A) Faithful
- B) Laughter
- C) Promise
- D) Strong

3. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?

- A) 75 years old
- B) 100 years old
- C) 120 years old
- D) 25 years old

4. Isaac's birth was a result of what?

- A) Natural conception
- B) Divine intervention
- C) Adoption
- D) Surrogacy

5. What significant event does Genesis 22 describe in Isaac's life?

- A) His marriage to Rebekah
- B) The Binding of Isaac
- C) His journey to Egypt
- D) His victory over enemies

6. Who is Isaac's half-brother, born to Hagar?

- A) Jacob
- B) Ishmael
- C) Esau
- D) Joseph

7. According to Paul, what do Ishmael and Isaac symbolize?

- A) Old and New Covenants
- B) Earth and Heaven
- C) Law and Grace
- D) Sin and Redemption

8. Isaac's obedience and trust in the sacrifice on Mount Moriah symbolize what?

- A) Israel's faithfulness
- B) God's sovereignty

C) Jesus' obedience

D) Abraham's wisdom

9. Who does Isaac marry?

- A) Rachel
- B) Leah
- C) Rebekah
- D) Sarah

10. What is the significance of Isaac's circumcision at eight days old?

- A) Fulfilment of a vow
- B) Jewish tradition
- C) Symbol of purity
- D) Ritual purification

11. How old was Rebekah when she became mother to Esau and Jacob?

- A) 30 years old
- B) 45 years old
- C) 60 years old
- D) 75 years old

12. In the New Testament, what is the parallel to Isaac's obedience on Mount Moriah?

- A) In the Sermon on the Mount
- B) In the story of the Prodigal Son
- C) Obedience of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
- D) In the feeding of the five thousand

ANSWERS:

- 1. (C) Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 21:3)
 - 2. (B) Laughter (Genesis 17:19)
 - 3. (B) 100 years old (Genesis 21:5)
 - 4. (B) Divine intervention (Genesis 21:2)
 - 5. (B) The Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22)
 - 6. (B) Ishmael (Genesis 16:15)
 - 7. (A) Old and New Covenants (Galatians 4:28)
 - 8. (C) Jesus' obedience (Genesis 22)
 - 9. (C) Rebekah (Genesis 24)
 - 10. (B) Jewish tradition (Genesis 17:12)
 - 11. (C) Around 60 years old (Genesis 25:26)
 - 12. (C) Obedience of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
-



Fr. Trevor D'Souza, OFM, is a Franciscan Priest, Retreat Preacher and a Writer. He can be contacted at jc4me2000@gmail.com

AITD conducts Industry-Academia Meet: COLLOQUIUM

COLLOQUIUM, the annual industry-academic meet of Agnel Institute of Technology & Design (AITD), Assagao, took place on 16th February, 2024, at the AITD Assagao campus. The event was organised by the **Corporate Institute Relationship Cell (CIRC)**, in association with **Institutes Innovation Council (IIC)**. It aimed to bridge the gap between academia and industry by providing a platform for professionals, experts, and students to interact, share insights, and discuss emerging trends in technology and design.

The inaugural function was held at the multipurpose hall of AITD Assagao. **Mr. Sanjay**

Amonkar, Director General of the Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industries (GCCI), graced the occasion as the **chief guest**. **Mr. Kiran Ballikar**, Director GCCI, was the **guest of honour**. Both dignitaries emphasised the importance of collaboration between academia and industry in fostering innovation, skill development, and economic growth. They encouraged students to actively participate in such events to gain practical knowledge and network with industry professionals. The event coordination of the event was handled by **Mr. Shrinivas Joshi**, Manager of the Corporate Institute Relationship Cell at AITD, and his dedicated team.



Dignitaries with Student and Staff Coordinators.



Panellists with all attendees.

IDEAS 2024 at Padre Conceicao College of Engineering, Verna

IDEAS 2024 (Innovate-Design-Evaluate-Apply-Social) Innovation Challenge was held at Padre Conceicao College of Engineering (PCCE) on 15th February, 2024. Students of PCCE presented 21 innovative technical projects for Social and Environmental causes. Over 600 Higher Secondary and Polytechnic students visited the exhibition along with their teachers.

The first place was bagged by Leander Fernandes, Maithili Naik and Syed Ali Roshan Husain Rizvi

for “We Speak: Sign Language Processing” to facilitate real-time communication catering for speech-impaired individuals. The second place went to Aditya Kandakur, Christian Inacio Costa and Shail Joshi for their project “**Smart Home Automation with ESP Rain Maker.**” The third place was bagged by Ashwin Rodrigues, Harsh Desai, Darren Fernandes and Dilesh Teli for “**Augmented Reality as a Tool for Education.**”



L to R: PCCE Director Fr. Agnelo Gomes, Fr. Norman D'Souza with winners Leander Fernandes, Maithili Naik and Syed Ali Roshan Husain Rizvi.



Projects being presented by the students of PCCE to school students.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Vaishali, Uttar Pradesh

Multi-faceted activities at Niscort Fr. Agnel School



ANNUAL DAY - CLASSES I-II: The Annual Day - 'Star Struck' of Class I and II was held on 19th December 2023 with **Dr. Fr. Jossy George, the Director Dean of Christ University**, NCR Campus as the chief guest. The students participated with enthusiasm. In this musical drama, the students got an experience to learn acting, expressions, creativity and much more. They danced with grace and happiness and the choir sang melodiously. The drama delivered the message of unity and harmony. The vibes of Christmas and the New Year were all around.



FAREWELL: On 20th December 2023, with hearts full of gratitude and excitement, a farewell function was held for **Class XII students at Fr. Agnel School for the academic session 2023-24**. It was an evening filled with joy, camaraderie, and unforgettable performances, marking the end of a chapter and the beginning of new adventures. The celebration started off with mesmerising dance and band performances prepared by Class XI, followed by a ramp walk to hand pick **Mr. and Ms. FASV**. Subsequently, students poured their hearts out while sharing their anecdotes of the good time spent at the school with the teachers and their batch mates. The event concluded with the Director's message.



Prayer Service (X & XII): The prayer service for the students of Class X, XII, session 2023-24, was held on 31st January and 2nd February, 2024, respectively. **The director Rev. Fr. Carvalho, principal Sister Navya, coordinators Ma'am Rachna, Sir Amit** with teachers and students of Class X and XII gathered in fervour and solemnity as one family. They sought the blessings of the Lord Almighty for the well-being of the students preparing for their upcoming board exams and their future ahead. The prayer service provided a moment of solace and spiritual nourishment for students, amidst the pressures of exam preparation, fostering a sense of community and support during a challenging period.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Vaishali, Uttar Pradesh



AGNEL JAYANTI: On 23rd January 2024, **Agnel Jayanti**, the birth anniversary of **Venerable Fr. Agnelo**, was celebrated in Fr. Agnel School, Vaishali. The programme started with the lighting of the lamp by the Principal of the school, **Respected Sr. Navya** and coordinators along with the students of Class IX. It was followed by the prayer song and intercessory prayers by the students. Prayers were offered for **Society of Pilar, Father Agnel Family**, for peace in our nation and the world at large, our leaders, and youth. The western choir dedicated the song '*O Brilliant Star*' which was followed by a dance performance on the song '*Whatever you do...*'. The Principal of the school addressed the gathering and encouraged the students to lead a life like their patron, Fr. Agnelo, in service of mankind.



MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP FOR TEACHERS: A session on mental health curriculum for teachers was organised by **Fortis Healthcare** on 19th January for teachers grade Nursery-V and on 3rd February for teachers of grade VI-XII by **Psychologist Anusha Tyagi**.

The aim of the session was to provide accurate knowledge and information about mental health to enhance understanding and de-mystify myths, misconceptions and attitudes that have been prevalent for long.

SACRIFICES

that successful people make

-Ibonio D'Souza

Sacrifice is a common theme in many success stories, whether in business, sports, art, or science. Sacrifice can be defined as giving up something of value for the sake of something else that is more important or worthy. But what role does sacrifice play in achieving success. And why is it necessary?

COMMITMENT: Sacrifice is a way to showcase how committed and dedicated we are to our goals. It's about prioritising our aspirations over things that provide comfort or immediate pleasure. Take famous entrepreneurs like Bill Gates, late Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg - they sacrificed leisure, stable routines, and even sleep to pour energy into their projects. Their passion and determination led them to invest immense time and effort into their dreams.

CHARACTER AND RESILIENCE: Success isn't a smooth ride; it's filled with bumps, obstacles, and failures. Sacrifice helps us build character and resilience. Athletes like Michael Jordan, Serena Williams, and Lionel Messi sacrificed comfort, endured pain, and overcame injuries to pursue greatness. Their grit and tenacity in pushing limits and honing skills define their success stories.

PRIORITISING AND FOCUSSING: Success isn't solely about having enough time. It is about how we use it. Sacrifice teaches us to prioritise and focus on what truly matters. Successful students like Malala Yousafzai, Mark Zuckerberg, and Emma Watson sacrificed social activities and hobbies to concentrate on education and career goals. Their intelligence and wisdom shone through their dedication to learning.

VALIDATION OF OUR JOURNEY: Sacrifice helps us appreciate and value our journey. It allows us to grasp the worth and significance of what we have and what we aim for. Artists like Leonardo da Vinci, Vincent Van Gogh, and Frida Kajor sacrificed personal well-being and happiness to create and express themselves. Their art illuminated the world, demonstrating the beauty and depth of their emotions.

INSPIRE OTHERS TOO: Sacrifice isn't just personal. It inspires and motivates others too. When we sacrifice for our goals, we set an example for others. Leaders like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi sacrificed personal freedom, safety, and even their lives for causes they believed in. Their sacrifices fuelled movements and left a lasting legacy that inspires people globally.

WHY PEOPLE SACRIFICE?: People are willing to make sacrifices for various reasons deeply rooted in personal aspirations, societal expectations, and pursuing meaningful goals. Understanding the motivations behind these sacrifices can shed light on the driving forces that lead individuals to trade comfort or immediate gratification for long-term gains or ideals.

PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH: When we endure hardships and challenges, it can help us become better individuals. Consider religious beliefs like Christianity and Buddhism - they see sacrifice as a path towards salvation or enlightenment. Similarly, remarkable people like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. faced immense sacrifices to achieve their noble goals, and inspire others.

When we undergo sacrifices, we might find a deeper sense of meaning and purpose in our lives. These experiences, although tough, can help us grow as individuals and spiritually connect with our beliefs and values.

COMPASSIONATE

BEINGS: When we sacrifice for success, it can make us more compassionate and empathic towards others' suffering. Take healthcare professionals like doctors and nurses who sacrifice sleep and safety to treat patients - they become more caring and understanding. Similarly, soldiers and firefighters sacrificing their safety to protect others, demonstrate incredible heroism and altruism. These sacrifices can elevate our empathy, making us more willing to help and support those in need, fostering a more compassionate society.

SOCIAL UNITY: Sacrifice often brings people together. Activists and protestors sacrificing their freedom and security to fight for a cause, create stronger bonds and motivate collective action. Likewise, friends and partners who compromise and accommodate each other's preferences foster harmonious relationships.



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

SAINT JOSEPH:

Just Man, Dreamer and Protector

-Fr. Allam Sagar Manoj Kumar

St. Joseph is a great saint in our Catholic Church. He was Jesus' foster-father and Mary's husband. Joseph was given the great privilege of taking care of God's own Son, Jesus, and his Mother, Mary. Joseph was poor all his life. He had to work very hard in his carpenter shop, but he did not mind. He was happy to work for his little family. He loved Jesus and Mary so much. Whatever the Lord wanted him to do, St. Joseph did at once, no matter how difficult it was. He was humble and pure, gentle and wise. Jesus and Mary loved him and obeyed him because God had placed him as the head of their family. What a joy for St. Joseph to live with the Son of God himself. Jesus obeyed him, helped him, and loved him. Let us now reflect on St. Joseph in the Holy Bible. We have the description of St. Joseph only in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. They present him as Joseph the just man and Joseph the dreamer. Firstly, we see St. Joseph as the just man (Mt. 1:19). In the biblical sense, a just man is one who faithfully does his duties to God and to his fellow human beings. Joseph did his duties to God faithfully by obeying His laws revealed through Moses, through his king and through his foster son Jesus.

Obedience

He obeyed the Mosaic laws by circumcising and naming Jesus on the 8th day, by presenting Mary with her child in the temple for the purification ceremony and by making Jesus "son of the Law" by taking him to the temple of Jerusalem for the feast of Passover at the age of twelve. He obeyed his king's law by taking his pregnant wife to Bethlehem for the census. He obeyed Jesus by respecting his desires and opinion (Lk. 2: 49). Secondly, we see St. Joseph as the dreamer (like Joseph in the Old Testament). 'Dreaming' in the Old Testament means learning the will of God through fervent prayer. Joseph received instruction from God through three dreams: i) "Do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife" (Mt. 1:20), ii) "...So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave." (Mt. 2:13), iii) Get up, take the child and his mother, and go back to the land of Israel (Mt. 5:20).

Protector of the dying

We pray to St. Joseph as the protector of the dying for a special reason. It is believed that Joseph died

peacefully in the arms of Jesus and Mary. St. Teresa of Avila chose St. Joseph as the protector of her order of Carmelite sisters. She had a great trust in his prayers. "Every time I ask St. Joseph for something," she said, "he always obtains it for me."

Pope Pius IX proclaimed St. Joseph the patron of the Universal Church. "What the divine goodness had promised to them the prophets and patriarchs, he held in his arms." -St. Bernadine of Siena. St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin, Virginal Father of Jesus and Patron of the Universal Church († ca. 30) was by birth of the royal family of David, but was living in humble obscurity as a carpenter, until God raised him to the highest office ever accorded a mortal man, by choosing

him to be the spouse of the Virgin Mother, the virginal father and guardian of the Incarnate Word. Joseph, says Holy Scripture, was a just man. He was innocent and pure, as became the husband of Mary; he was gentle and tender, as one worthy to be named the father of Jesus; he was prudent and a lover of silence, as became the master of the holy house; above all, he was faithful and obedient to divine calls.

As no further mention is made of Saint Joseph, he must have died before the marriage feast of Cana and the beginning of our divine Saviour's ministry. We cannot doubt that he had the happiness of the presence of Jesus and Mary at his death, praying beside him, assisting and comforting him in

his last moments; therefore he is invoked for the great grace of a happy death and the spiritual presence of Jesus in that hour.

At last, St. Teresa of Avila said she never had recourse to him in vain. St. Joseph, vicar of the Eternal Father upon earth, protector of Jesus in His home at Nazareth, and affectionate lover of all children for the sake of the Holy Child, should be the chosen guardian and model of every true Christian family.

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



Have you got a **Sunshine Smile?**

-Severina Peres

During the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to St. Bernadette at Lourdes, Mother Mary was smiling at the young girl who was perplexed at the vision of the beautiful and gracious Lady. Jesus' actions during His earthly ministry were often with a smile as when He bent down and took the hand of Peter's mother-in-law and lifted her up (Mk. 1) or He looked up with a smile at Zaccheus perched on a Sycamore tree (Lk. 19). We are reminded that God Almighty is always smiling on us for His word says: "I have loved you with an everlasting love and am constant in my affection for you (Jer. 31:3)."

Smiley emojis or emoticons of a smiling face are popular on social media and are useful to convey emotions of happiness. Does the smiley pictographs always bring a smile to the one receiving it? It all depends on the state of mind or environment of the receiver. The sender cannot be sure about how the receiver feels or reacts. Smileys on the digital media can never really express real feelings and emotions.

Can it be that engrossed in the world of smileys and glued to our gadgets and computers, we have forgotten to smile at one another? A smile is a conscious or subconscious facial muscular movement conveying mirth or pleasure (*Wikipedia*). Flashing a smile enlivens as we look at the ones around us with a welcoming smile, a kind smile, a confident smile, a caring smile. Poets have been inspired to write beautiful lines on the effects of a Smile. A gracious and timely smile can make a huge difference. **LET'S SEE WHERE A SMILE WINS OVER A SMILEY.**

S A smiley is **superficial**, artificial and unreal. A smile is **stunning** and real. Don't we get attracted to a smiling face? A smile has a quality of drawing people together into communication and can be the beginning of lasting friendships and relationships. A radiating smile gladdens all around and lightens the tension. It is life giving.

M A smiley is **mundane** and routine. A smile is **marvellous and motivational**. Some can smile effortlessly whilst others can barely smile due to various reasons. We also come across some whose face is lit up with a smile radiating life and joy. Some can smile through tough moments and so are able to rise up victorious during challenging moments, overcome with a winning smile.

I A repetitive smiley can make us **indifferent** as it can be boring, without any effect. Though smileys are not going to go out of use, they can

never replace one's unique God given Smile. Even a toddler's toothless smile brings joy. A genuine smile can **inspire and ignite**. A cheerful flashing smile can warm the cockles of one's heart.

L A Smiley has **limited** use as it can be **lost** in the myriad of messages and that's where it ends. A smile can **lift up, light up** a life, a smile can radiate warmth and love. A smile is the genuine expression of life and goodness which God and life blesses us with as it stays on us down the years, through smile lines visible on the ageing faces. Walk a mile with a smile and you will make friends and win souls.

E A Smiley can be **erased** and deleted. Its effects are momentary. A smile **enriches** both the Giver and the Receiver. It has a permanent effect.

A smile can add a great deal to one's face value. Don't we have happy memories of those who smiled at us - our parents, a teacher welcoming us in school with a warm smile, our friends, benefactors and well wishers, a loved one's captivating smile. And yes, even smiling bosses and colleagues who made our day.

Conclusion:

Let's make an effort to smile more for a smile is worth a million dollars but it doesn't cost anything. Have you noticed Dental clinics nowadays have names like Smile Makeovers, Smile Works, etc. Toothpaste jingles focus on Smiles. Nothing on earth can smile but man and is a **gift of God**. The more we smile to ourselves, smile back to God for His love, smile at our family, friends and even strangers, we express gratitude for the gift of life and our happiness. A smile is a light in the window of the face by which the heart signifies it is at home and waiting (Henry Beecher).

So what's stopping you from **looking up** and flashing your captivating, radiant, cheerful, touching, warm, glowing, mischievous, memorable, confident, beautiful and mesmerizing million dollar Sunshine Smile? **LET'S ALWAYS MEET EACH OTHER WITH A SMILE, FOR A SMILE IS THE BEGINNING OF LOVE** (St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata).



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.

A TO Z

of how to motivate yourself

-Jacqueline Kelly

A – Accept

Accept others for who they are and for the choices they have made even if you have difficulty in understanding their beliefs, motives or actions.

B – Break Away

Break away from everything that stands in the way of what you hope to accomplish with your life.

C – Create

Create a family of friends whom you can share your hopes, dreams, sorrows and happiness with.

D – Decide

Decide that you will be successful and happy come what may, and good things will find you. The roadblocks are only minor obstacles along the way.

E – Explore

Explore and experiment. The world has much to offer, and you have much to give. And every time you try something new, you will learn more about yourself.

F – Forgive

Forgive and forget. Grudges only weigh you down and inspire unhappiness and grief. Soar above it, and remember that everyone makes mistakes.

G – Grow

Leave the childhood monsters behind. They can no longer hurt you or stand in your way.

H – Hope

Hope for the best and never forget that anything is possible as long as you remain dedicated to the task.

I – Ignore

Ignore the negative voice inside your head. Focus instead on your goals and remember your accomplishments. Your past success is only a small inkling of what the future holds.

J – Journey

Journey to new worlds, new possibilities, by remaining open minded. Try to learn something new every day, and you will grow.

K – Know

Know that no matter how bad things seem, they will always get better. The warmth of spring always follows the harshest winter.

L – Love

Let love fill your heart instead of hate. When hate is in your heart, there is room for nothing else, but when love is in your heart, there is room for endless happiness.

M – Manage

Manage your time and your expenses wisely, and you will suffer less stress and worry. Then you will be able to focus on the important things in life.

N – Notice

Never ignore the poor, infirm, helpless, weak or suffering. Offer your assistance when possible, and always your kindness and understanding.

O – Open

Open your eyes and take in all the beauty around you. Even during the worst of times, there is still much to be thankful for.

P – Play

Never forget to have fun along the way but not at the cost of others. Success means nothing without happiness.

Q – Question

Ask many questions, because you are here to learn.

R – Relax

Refuse to let worry and stress rule your life, and remember that things always have a way of working out in the end.

S – Share

Share your talents, skills, knowledge and time with others. Everything that you invest in others will return to you many times over.

T – Try

Even when your dreams seem impossible to reach, try anyway. You will be amazed by what you can accomplish.

U – Use

Use your gifts to your best ability. Talent that is wasted has no value. Talent that is used will bring unexpected rewards.

V – Value

Value the friends and family members who have supported and encouraged you, and be there for them as well.

W – Work

Work hard every day to be the best person you can be, but never feel guilty if you fall short of your goals. Every sunrise offers a second chance.

X – X-Ray

Look deep inside the hearts of those around you and you will see the goodness and beauty within.

Y – Yield

Yield to commitment. If you stay on track and remain dedicated, you will find success at the end of the road.

Z – Zoom

Zoom to a happy place when bad memories or sorrow lifts its ugly head.



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

The month of March heralds the start of the summer heat in our country. It is an important month particularly where women are concerned. On March 8th, we celebrate Women's Day all over the world. This day is important for women who have been generally treated as the fairer yet weaker sex and often have been victims of prejudices and inequalities in a male dominated world.

Therefore March is an important month to celebrate womanhood and all the progress women have made which has been considerable.

So let's begin...

The most beautiful woman in the world



A farmer working in a field one early summer morning found a small girl crying at the edge of the field.

He was very surprised and realising that she was alone, asked her, "What is the matter? What is your name?"

The little girl could not stop crying but finally murmured, "My name is Zara. I am lost. I want my mother. Please take me to my mother."

The farmer asked her, "What is your mother's name?"

Zara shook her head. Apparently she did not know. By this time some workers helping out in the field saw the scene and they too gathered around her.

Finally one of them asked, "Tell us who your mother is? Describe her."

Zara said without hesitation, "My mother is the most beautiful woman in the world."

Everyone looked at each other in confusion.

How could they now find the most beautiful woman in the world? The farmer decided to keep Zara in his home for a while. The farmer's wife agreed.

Two days later, the village found a lady knocking on all their doors asking if they had seen a little child. She had lost the child while gathering fruit from the neighbouring farm. The little girl had wandered away. Then they took her to Zara in the farmer's home. They could not believe this lady was the most beautiful woman in the world. Surely this could not be Zara's mother? This simple looking lady with a sweet smile. She was far from beautiful. As soon as Zara saw her, she ran into her arms both smiling and crying.

The villagers gathered felt confused. Then the farmer's wife who was very intelligent said softly, "Yes, Zara, this lady your mother is the most beautiful woman in the world."

Zara nodded proudly for in her eyes her mother who loved her and took care over her was the most beautiful woman in the world.

Moral: The people whom we truly love are beautiful in our eyes despite their lack of conventional physical beauty.

Quiz



1. Who was the first woman Prime Minister in the world?
2. Who tops the list as the greatest woman gymnast so far?
3. Name the woman singer who holds the Guinness World Record as the most awarded female vocal artist of all time?

4. Name the sisters who are India's most renowned playback singers?

5. Which woman earned the Nobel Prize twice?

A lady genius India is proud of - Shakuntala Devi



Her name is one that every Indian will have heard of. She makes us proud that an Indian lady reached great heights in the field of mathematics. She was born on 4th November 1929 in Bangalore, Karnataka. She

did not have much formal education.

She had unparalleled talent in calculating complex mathematical problems. Her exceptional talent in arithmetic was proved through her maths shows at a very tender age. Her excellent skills earned her a name of, "Human Computer" and she showcased her wisdom through her books on astrology, puzzles and mathematics. She secured a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for her intellectual mathematical talent.

In 1960, she married and bore a daughter. However, she later divorced because her husband was gay.

She competed against Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to win votes in politics but lost. Devi had a great passion for numbers and her love for astrology made many people impressed for she could give correct astrological predictions that came true about their lives. She outperformed the most sophisticated computers at the time and mesmerised people with her mathematical genius.

In 1980, Devi's successful attempt to multiply two random 13 digit numbers in 28 seconds was recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records.

In a famous interview on the BBC in 1950, her answer to a mathematical question was deemed incorrect before the host later acknowledged that the computer was wrong and Devi was right.

Devi has been a respected astrologer to many politicians, movie stars and business people.

She passed away on 21st April, 2013 due to cardiac arrest and respiratory failure. She stated that the human brain's ability is far greater than a computer and we should never compare both for she did not like the name of 'Human Computer' given to her.

She will always be remembered for her genius and her prowess to the field of Mathematics.

What is the Good Word?

All about Health



1. The two best vitamins to fight colds.
2. Most common mental health problem for women.
3. The two top diseases that cause death in women.
4. The only disease that is exclusive to women.
5. More than two thirds of women suffer from this disease that affects memory.
6. A type of cancer found only in women.

True story

A woman of substance



Sindhutai was married to a man who did not love her. She gave birth to three sons but her husband did not care about her. In the ninth month of her pregnancy, Sindhutai was thrown out of her home by her husband. She gave birth to a girl, a fourth child after three sons in a cow shelter. When even her

mother refused to help her, she started begging on railway platforms.

The sight of the orphaned children on these platforms moved Sindhutai and she decided to look after them.

Today, Sindhutai is affectionately known as the "Mother of Orphans" and she had adopted and nurtured more than 1400 orphans. She is the recipient of close to 500 awards.

What do we learn from this inspiring story?

We learn that despite all odds, we as women are survivors and can draw from our inner strength to face challenges that life gives us. Also to be a mother is a beautiful thing and it makes life for a woman very meaningful. This means a certain lack of selfishness and the

ability to look with kind eyes upon children. We must realise if life gives us blows then we must do a lot to make life easier for those around us and avoid getting bitter. We learn empathy and know everyone is fighting their own private battles, so it is up to us to show kindness and empathy for those around us. It is following Christ's commandment to love your neighbour as yourself.

Riddles



1. How many months of the year have 28 days?
2. What 2 things you cannot eat for breakfast?
3. What comes down but never goes up?
4. I go all around the world but never leave the corner. What am I?
5. What starts with T, ends with T and has T inside?

Smile Please

1. Which is faster, hot or cold?



- Hot because you can catch a cold.
2. How do movie stars stay cool?
 3. Tom: "I want to be home schooled."

Jerry: "So why aren't you?"

Tom: "Well, every time I talk to my mom, she says fine but only if I can find a home that will school me."

4. "If there are any idiots in this room, please stand up," said the sarcastic teacher.

After a long silence one student stood up.

"Now, then mister, I guess you consider yourself an idiot." The teacher sneered.

The student said, "Well, actually ma'am, I don't but I do hate to see you standing up there all by yourself."

5. My boss was honest with me today. He pulled up to work in his new car and I complimented him on it.

He replied, "Well, if you work hard, set goals, stay determined and put in long hours, I can buy an even grander one the next year."

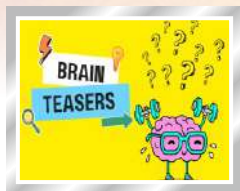
6. A guy asks the lawyer, "Before I consult you, what are your fees?"

The lawyer says, "I ask 50 dollars for three questions."

"That is awfully steep, isn't it," the guy says.

The lawyer replies, "I suppose so, now what is your final question?"

Brain Teasers



1. Before Mount Everest was discovered which was the highest mountain in the world?
2. What is in the middle of America?
3. When does today come before yesterday?
4. A child fell off a 30 foot ladder yet did not get hurt. How come?
5. If $A - B = 14$, and B and A are same digits, $C = \text{half } B$, then what is value of $C + A + B = ?$

St. Therese of Lisieux - One of the greatest inspirational woman saints in history



Therese was a very sensitive child and cried often. She was also frequently ill and once she neared death. But when she saw the face of Our Lady in a statue that was presented to her, immediately she was healed. She then became a

very spiritual person.

Generations of Catholics have admired this young saint and called her the, "Little Flower." She loved flowers and saw herself as the little flower of Jesus. She died very early at the age of 24, after living as a cloistered Carmelite for less than 10 years. She never went on missions or founded a religious order nor performed great works. She wrote only one book, 'Story of a Soul.' Yet she lived a life of sacrifices made regularly.

The public demand for her canonization was so great that she was canonized.

She serves as a gentle reminder to us that even if we may not perform outstanding good deeds yet if our lives are filled with love for all living creatures, kindness, sacrifices and a lack of selfishness then we are pleasing God who bestows his grace and blessings upon us.

An incredible woman explorer



Today woman explorers are not uncommon and rarely make eyebrows get raised but in the 18th century this was not the case. A woman's place was at home and a traditional one.

However, Jeanne Baret born 1740 and expired in 1807, was an exception.

She was a member of the Louis Antoine de Bougainville's expedition on two ships, La Boudeuse and Etoile.

She is recognized as the first lady to have

completed a voyage of circumnavigation of the globe which she did via maritime transport. She was very brave and adventurous and joined the expedition disguised as a man calling herself Jean Baret. She enlisted as a valet and assistant to the expedition's naturalist, Philbert Commercon.

She was an expert botanist. Once her disguise was seen, she was prey to many problems such as assault both sexual and physical. Yet she managed to keep comparatively safe and later had to leave the ship with Commercon who had fallen in love with her.

A plant vine *Solanum baretiae*, a species of nightshade, was named for her and the International Astronomical Union named a chain of mountains on Pluto, The Baret Montes to commemorate Jeanne Baret.

Her courage and adventurous spirit made a pathway for other female explorers.

We must always honour these women through the ages whose courage, ability to go against conservatism has indeed paved the modern pathway to great progress for women today.

That is all for this month. Take care and see you next month...

Answers

Quiz

1. Sirimavo Bandaranaike from Sri Lanka.
2. Simone Biles won 23 gold medals.
3. Whitney Houston.
4. Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle.
5. Marie Curie once for Physics and once for Chemistry.

What is the Good Word?

1. Vitamin C and Vitamin D.
2. Depression.
3. Heart attacks and cancer.
4. Turner syndrome when one of the X chromosomes is missing or partially missing.
5. Alzheimer's disease.
6. Ovarian cancer.

Riddles

1. All of them.
2. Lunch and dinner.
3. Rain.
4. A stamp.
5. A teapot.

Brain Teasers

1. Mount Everest.
2. The letter R.
3. In a dictionary.
4. The child fell off the last step.
5. 17.5



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.



FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

FELT A SENSE OF CALM VISITING THE SHRINE OF VEN. FR. AGNEL

SION: I have been visiting the Shrine of Ven. Fr. Agnel since the last 10 years. My cousin sister, Jane D'Souza, who had a great devotion to the Venerable, used to accompany me every year until she passed away in 2021 due to cancer. She always told me that every time she visited the Shrine, she would feel a sense of calm and God's spirit hovering over her. It was the divine power working through Ven. Fr. Agnel that enabled her to bear the pain.

- Sunita D'Silva

THANKSGIVING FOR OBTAINING A USA VISA

MAHIM: Thank you Ven. Fr. Agnel for helping me obtain a USA visa for 10 years. I can now visit my son after 6 years.

-Nergish Phiroze Dastour

THANKSGIVING FOR GIFT OF BABY BOY

VASAI: I had prayed for 6 years to Ven. Fr. Agnel to be blessed with a baby. Finally, my prayers were answered on 20th February 2024, all thanks to Ven. Fr. Agnel.

-Roger Rodrigues

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

AMBARNAGAR: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my family has been blessed abundantly in many ways.

-Martha Patole

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

KARNATAKA: I am very much thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for helping and interceding for me at all times. I am his staunch devotee and make it a point to visit Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandra, during my visits to Mumbai.

-Deepak Lobo

BLESSINGS ON THE FAMILY

BORIVALI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, our family is thankful for the graces and blessings received.

-Angela Rodrigues

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

VASAI: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed me in many ways. I always look up to him for his kind intercession with Lord Jesus.

-Anthony D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR PEACEFUL DIVORCE

NEW DELHI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I received the favour of a mutual and peaceful divorce.

-Ashish Sood

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL FOR SAFE DELIVERY

UTTAN: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I was blessed with a safe delivery of my child. I have complete faith in Lord Jesus and the Venerable.

-Deepika Ankit Bhandari

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESS IN CAREER

MUMBAI: I would like to thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing me with a successful career.

-Rupal Aloj

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD MARRIAGE

VIKHROLI: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed my marriage with peace, joy and harmony. Praise you Jesus for giving me the right partner in marriage. We were destined to be together from all eternity.

-Jaya Quadros

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD HEALTH

SANTA CRUZ: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, we have received healing in health issues and problems. We have tremendous faith in the constant intercession of the Venerable.

-Mr. & Mrs. Joseph

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESS IN BUSINESS

VIRAR: My business is successful through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. I am indeed grateful for all the favours received.

-Manuel Rodrigues

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS

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

-Albina Rodrigues

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS ON BIRTHDAY

BANDRA: My birthday celebration went off well, filled with blessings through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel.

-Carmeline Fernandes

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

N. Parmar	Gujarat	10000	M.D. Mathai	Kerala	2000	Monica D.	Pune	1000
P. Srivastava	Mumbai	52000	B. Menezes	Mumbai	2000	Vilia Allen	Bengal	1000
M. D'Cruz	Mumbai	24000	Blossom F.	Palghar	2000	Diana	Kerala	1000
P. Ved	Mumbai	21000	C. Bardolwala	Mumbai	2000	Irudayaraj M.	Tamil Nadu	1000
K. Saldanha	Mumbai	15000	D. Fobler	Canada	2000	Elizabeth A.	Kerala	1000
C. Miranda	Mumbai	15000	Rati K. C.	Mumbai	2000	Meena J. P.	Kerala	1000
Gaurang & Poonam	Mumbai	15000	Ramanand D.	USA	2000	Ramila K. H.	Mumbai	1000
F. Solanki	Vasai	12000	Nitisha A.	Palghar	2000	C. D'Souza	Mumbai	1000
Urvashi Patel	UK	11000	D. Alphonso	Mumbai	2000	Davis E.T.	Thane	1000
S. Dadarkar	Mumbai	10001	D. Fernandes	Mumbai	2000	M. R. Valiyaveetil	Mumbai	1000
S. Darukhanwala	Australia	10000	E. Baretto	Mumbai	2000	Victor C.	Thane	1000
M. Cardoz	Mumbai	10000	F. Jivan	Mumbai	2000	M. Gonsalves	Mumbai	1000
Joseph M.	Kerala	10000	G. M. Lemos	Vasai	2000	J. A. Saldanha	Mumbai	1000
G. Naik	Mumbai	10000	Hendricks	Tamil Nadu	2000	Swapnali D.	Palghar	1000
C. Gantzer	Uttarakhand	10000	M. Noronha	Bengaluru	2000	Geo Agnel	Kerala	1000
Nita Nair	Mumbai	8302	Mathew P.	Kerala	2000	Arulnana S.	Tamil Nadu	1000
T. D'Souza	Mumbai	8000	John	Kerala	2000	A. M. Culas	Palghar	1000
L. D'Cunha	Goa	6000	Varghese	Kerala	2000	Dr. Aishwarya	Mumbai	1000
M. Lucien	Tamil Nadu	6000	Ophelia M.	Australia	2000	H. R. Shukla	Mumbai	1000
S. Suryawanshi	Pune	6000	P. D. Almeida	Mumbai	2000	Sabina F.	Mumbai	1000
W. Fernandes	Mumbai	6000	M. A. Lopes	Canada	2000	Shilpa M.	Mumbai	1000
W. Fernandes	UK	5251	Sheela F.	Palghar	2000	A. Honavor	Mumbai	1000
A. Kamble	Pune	5001	S. Sebastian	Kerala	2000	L. Shetty	Mumbai	1000
Anthony S.	Mumbai	5000	Rija Anna	Kerala	2000	Bharat	Gujarat	1000
B. D'Lima	Mumbai	5000	Sangeeta V.	Thane	2000	Keval D.	Mumbai	1000
Charles J.	Tamil Nadu	5000	S. Narvekar	Mumbai	2000	Geeta T.	Mumbai	1000
G. Patel	Mumbai	5000	S. Pimenta	Vasai	2000	Sanjay R.	Mumbai	1000
J. D'Souza	Mumbai	5000	A. J. Pinheiro	Dubai	2000	Hina M.	Mumbai	1000
J. Thakkar	Mumbai	5000	A. D'Souza	Mumbai	2000	Chandra G.	Mumbai	1000
K. Vaz	Mumbai	5000	V. J. Alvarez	Uttan	2000	Agnel D.	Mumbai	1000
M. Patel	Mumbai	5000	Anthony M.	Mumbai	2000	Arthur R.	Mumbai	1000
L. Lobo	Karnataka	5000	Z. R. D'Silva	Vasai	2000	Margaret D.	Vasai	1000
M. D'Souza	Kerala	5000	John L.	Karnataka	2000	Steffi S.	Vasai	1000
Sunil Rane	Vasai	5000	J. Gonsalves	Mumbai	2000	Jasprine S.	Vasai	1000
Shreya Rane	Vasai	5000	Marian D.	Mumbai	2000	Clatus & Catlisun	Vasai	1000
Richard D.	Goa	5000	Agnel Vijay	Mumbai	2000	Dennis S. Correia	Vasai	1000
P.T. Joseph	Kerala	5000	J. M. Augustine	Kerala	2000	Jerome F.	Mumbai	1000
P. Pinto	Karnataka	5000	Arun J.	Kerala	1500	Advait A.	Mumbai	1000
R. Parikh	Mumbai	5000	B. S. Dalvi	Pune	1500	Jefferson	Mumbai	1000
M. R. Valiyaveetil	Mumbai	5000	M. R. Vikram	Kerala	1500	K.J. Pauly	Belapur	1000
Jacob P.	Kerala	5000	M. Vikram	Kerala	1500	Benny Mathew	Kerala	1000
S. Lorena	Karnataka	5000	Mahatab J. L.	Mumbai	1500	Sajan Mathew	Kerala	1000
Anthony C.	Thane	5000	M. J. D'Mello	Thane	1250	Kamble Lukas Nana	Mumbai	1000
Dattaram S.	Mumbai	5000	R. Deshpande	Mumbai	1250	S. Arulgnana	Tamil Nadu	1000
S. Gokhale	Mumbai	5000	Sharon D.	Mumbai	1250	Rasulbee J.	Mumbai	1000
M. Sawant	Mumbai	4400	Suzanne D.	Mumbai	1250	Khorshed	Mumbai	1000
H. Bharucha	Palghar	4000	Alice D.	Mumbai	1250	L. Prajapati	Mumbai	1000
Leo Menezes	Mangalore	4000	Shubhadha S.	Mumbai	1250	Mary Grace	Mumbai	1000
Molly T.	USA	3000	Sheetal S.	Mumbai	1250	Tulika K.	Gujarat	1000
N. A. Desai	Mumbai	3000	Jacob D.	Mumbai	1250	Karina J.	Mumbai	1000
R. Jilla	Mumbai	3000	Umesh D.	Mumbai	1001	Thomas M.	Mumbai	1000
Royster D.	Mumbai	3000	Geeta G.	Mumbai	1100	Rajesh G.	Virar	1000
Saudamini D.	Vasai	3000	Bharat M. Jain	Mumbai	1098	K.G. Rao	Mumbai	1000
Techno Products	Tamil Nadu	3000	T. K. Das	Thane	1001	Abhilasha M.	Mumbai	1000
Rita J.	Kerala	2200	Gajanan C.	Mumbai	1001	Aryam A.	Mumbai	1000
Vinith V.	Mumbai	2200	Esther Bot	Uttan	1000	Durgaprasad C.	Mumbai	1000
S. Engineer	Mumbai	2001	Mary Anthony	Kerala	1000	P. Thakker	Mumbai	1000
Shailesh M.	Mumbai	2001	G. Thomas	Kerala	1000	Ashok B.	Mumbai	1000
Anil Kumar	Mumbai	2000	B. Dutt	Kerala	1000	Charveek P.	Mumbai	1000
						Kelawalla G.	Mumbai	1000

Bob's Banter

by Robert Clements

Leaving the Familiar..!

It was two months ago in America, I opened the top drawer where I'm sure my daughter had said the mugs were kept, but a packet of coffee powder stared back at me, or was it chilly powder? But they don't keep chilly powder on shelves, do they in America? Let it be, I told myself, not ready to solve the coffee and chilly powder problem right now, and opened the drawer below and nearly had forks and spoons and all the rest of the cutlery fall on my toes. I quickly closed the drawer on those murderous weapons and looked into the shelves on top.

I remember my thoughts and what followed: Where's my coffee mug?

Well it's not mine. Nothing is mine here, it's not my home. My home is ten thousand miles away or somewhere near ten thousand, where my green

"I think hubby's using it!" says my daughter, "Take the cup!"

I take the cup, and measure only half of what I normally drink. When did I ever drink coffee in a teacup, I wonder.

"You should have stayed at home!" say all of the kitchen gleefully.

And I think of Columbus, and Magellan and Drake and all the explorers who left the comforts of home and hearth, searching the next morning, not just for coffee mug, but for coffee! They left the familiar, and because they did, the world benefitted, they did too, with untold wealth and name, but first they had to leave their coffee mugs.

I look at the teacup as my son-in-law enters, "Dad! Use this, it keeps the coffee warm for hours!"




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coffee mug hangs neatly in its place, washed and wiped and wedged in its familiar setting with nobody else going to move it from there. Nobody would dare, I tell myself then look again for a coffee mug in my daughter's home in New York, and suddenly the unfamiliar mocks me, "Who asked you to leave home and hearth?" ask the shelves and murderous forks and spoons, "Learn to stay where you belong!"

"Dad, what are you looking for?" asks my daughter, obviously awakened by the purposeful noise of the cutlery, betraying my furtive movements, "Nothing!" I say.

"Are you looking for a mug?"

"A mug?" I ask, "Not, a mug, but my coffee mug, the red one!"

I take the new mug which is also a flask from him, it's better than the green mug at home, and as I taste the coffee, I realize that yes indeed the coffee stays hot. I look at the kitchen cutlery, and with a friendly voice tell them, "You got to leave the familiar before you discover something better," and suddenly they grin and nod.

Somewhere at home, I know my green mug frowns at me for taking this bold step into the unfamiliar, but my hot coffee grins back at me ..!

***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*

CRESCENDO

- Annual Technical Fest at Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra, Mumbai held from 20th to 25th February, 2024



Rev. Fr. Trevor Pereira welcomes the Guest of Honour Mr. Rajesh Manchal, SAP Development Manager @nVent while Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza, Director, Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering (second from right), applauds.



Intense brainstorming fills the room as students huddle around laptops, codes flowing on screens, in the heart of a 24-hour Hackathon, fuelled by creativity and innovation.



The three Hackathon Winners of Problem Solving Statements celebrate victory, their projects emerging triumphant in a marathon of coding and problem-solving.

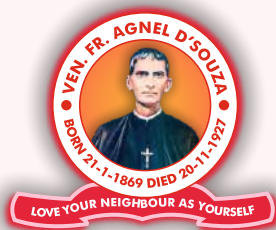
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Easter!*

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wish all our Friends, Benefactors and Well-Wishers
all the peace, joy, love and happiness that only Easter can bring.**



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