

FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

September 2024



Happy
*Teacher's
Day*

*Celebrating teachers for their selfless service,
dedication and guidance!*

THANKFUL EVERY MOMENT!

SEPTEMBER 2024

CONTENTS

Message from the Regional Superior	3
Editorial	4
Teacher's Day	5
Faith Apart from Works is Dead!	7
Joy of Giving	8
Bandra Fair is a Week-Long Celebration!	9
The Holy Cross - Strength for Today and Hope for Tomorrow	10
Agnel Happenings	12
The Scapular - Cloak of Armour	14
Samson: A Nazirite for God	17
Called to be Holy	19
Just for Fun	21
Fr. Agnel's Blessings	24
Out of Their Bounty	25
Bob's Banter	26

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THE NATIVITY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY - BANDRA FEAST - 2024



Dear Friends and Well-Wishers,

Let us celebrate with joyful hearts the birth of Virgin Mary, of whom was born our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is a time of rejoicing and our little Agnelite angels, the Balbhavan children across all centres of the Agnel Region, also look forward to the day.

We appreciate your contribution in assisting us in caring for our children. Your financial assistance will be very special, on this occasion.

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

With a grateful heart,

Fr. Superior

Fr. Agnel Ashram

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MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL SUPERIOR



"The true teachers are those who help us think for ourselves," said Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the second President of India and educationist. In 1954, he was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, for his exceptional contribution to education and philosophy. The first Teacher's Day was celebrated on 5th September, 1962, on his 77th birthday.

This year, as we celebrate Teacher's Day on 5th September, we shower love, respect and blessings on our teachers. They have been our guide and inspiration. They have opened the minds of students by instilling values, morals, and ethics.

Teachers act as mentors, role models, and confidants, helping students navigate academic and personal challenges. They inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instil a love of learning.

In our educational institutions throughout the Agnel Region, in Bandra, Vashi, Ambernath, Pune, Delhi, Noida, Greater Noida, Vaishali, Assagao and Verna in Goa, teachers mould the careers of students. They provide a solid foundation for the children's future.

So this is the day when we thank our teachers for all that they do for us. Our teachers are like our guiding stars. They help us learn new things every day. A teacher is also like a gardener who takes care of young plants. Just like the gardener waters and protects the plants, our teachers nurture our minds and hearts. They encourage us when we are sad and celebrate with us when we do well.

This month, we also celebrate the Nativity of Mother Mary on 8th September. Her son Lord Jesus Christ was obedient to his mother and performed his first miracle at her behest. She is a mother to all of us, in our pain, sufferings, grief and sorrows.

Out of the 90 times Jesus was addressed directly in the gospels, he was called Teacher or rabbi 60 times. This was the word the multitudes used. This was how the disciples referred to him. Jesus himself used the term when he said, "You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am" (John 13:13).

Today, let's all say a big "Thank You" to all our teachers for their love and dedication. Without them we would not be who we are.

Happy Teacher's Day to all our dear teachers!

- Fr. Bento Rodrigues

CHRISTIAN LIFE IN A VUCA WORLD (VOLATILE, UNCERTAIN, COMPLEX, AMBIGUOUS)

-Fr. M.K. George, SJ

We live in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous World. Historically, the VUCA acronym was first used by the United States Army War College following the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Volatile meant that change is rapid and unpredictable in its nature and extent. Uncertainty is both about the present and the future. Complexity is seen in the many different, interconnected factors that come into play with the potential to cause chaos and confusion. Ambiguity is where there is a lack of clarity or awareness about situations (Mind Tools, accessed on 08.08.2024).

The India we live in

The India we live in is certainly an example of a volatile world. Look at the rapid changes in technology, economy, and socio-political organization. To know that India is the fifth-largest economy in the world but 97 per cent of its population does not have taxable income is indicative of big income big growth, but with huge disparity. That in this country a marriage can be celebrated with 600 million dollars and be attended by the 'who-is-who' in the country is a shame that nobody can wipe off.

The uncertainty faced by twenty per cent of Indians about their next meal is something scary.

About 22 per cent of unemployment rate hides the true nature of the uncertainty faced by millions of youth in a country where more than 50 per cent are youth. No wonder that right-wing parties and terrorist groups find easy choices of youth to follow them.

The Complexity of India is most seen in its culture. With such varied cultural and linguistic traditions, no one really understands India well. With 22 official languages, 121 recognized languages, 270 mother tongues and thousands of dialects, India will remain a fascinating mystery. Its various cultural forms, often represented in the cultural parades for national celebrations are something to reckon with.

The ambiguities that India faces are enormous. The most important is the ambiguity in a governance that promises everyone's development, but systematically ignores certain groups. Every administrative policy is tinged with the ambiguity

of the governing elite. Worse still, the ambiguities displayed in the media, mostly the social media, with formal media playing a strong advertisement role for the ruling party. How can India be governed well when 46 per cent of the sitting MPs have criminal cases against them and most leaders have corruption charges raised? *The New York Times* columnist Thomas L. Friedman calls ours 'the Age of Disorder.'

Effects of a VUCA World

The biggest threat of a VUCA World is that it can destabilize people and make them anxious. When one is anxious, one believes the so-called 'saviours' without realizing they are thieves in the garb of shepherds. A VUCA World is so unstabilising that it becomes a breeding ground for all forms of terrorist activities too. Then it becomes a vicious circle. Terrorist activities create such instability that the state can come in and suppress basic freedoms, as we see in India, or our neighbouring countries these days. Even rightful protests are snubbed.

Living in a VUCA World

To survive in a VUCA World, we need a clear vision and collaborative action. It calls for lots of empathy and listening. It calls for new forms of leadership, especially models of 'servant leadership.'

The Christian Way can help in dealing with the VUCA World. In a series of articles, I propose some ways of a Christian response to a VUCA World. It is to realize that a Christian is 'called', called to love, to serve, to preach the Word of God, to practice ecumenism, to practice interreligious dialogue, to work for justice and reconciliation, to be a prayerer, to dialogue with culture, to be political, to be compassionate, called to the fullness of life, to be a critique, called to the 'priesthood of the people' and so on.

Jesus gives us the light to negotiate a VUCA World!



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

TEACHER'S DAY

-Leon Bent

Hannah Kahn once said: "Child, give me your hand that I may walk in the light of your faith in me." Extremely appropriate and beautiful words, indeed!

A man in dire need was told: "Trust in God. He will provide for you." "Yes," replied the man. "But what do I do until then?" Teachers ask similar questions. They, too, are faced with immediate problems that cannot wait for distant solutions. How can I improve life in the classroom, today.

Harold, an experienced Teacher said: "I visited a prison last week, and I came back, bothered and burdened. I can't help thinking about my responsibility as a Teacher. Every adult murderer or rapist was once a child, who spent years in school. Every thief presumably taught him values and morals. Every criminal was educated by teachers. Every prison is a dramatic demonstration of the failure of our system. We need to take a good look at the language of our responsibility."

There is the story of a man in dire trouble who went to his rabbi for help.

The rabbi listened in silence for a while and advised, "Trust in God, He will provide for you." "Yes," answered the man. "But tell me what should I do until then?"

Teachers ask similar questions: "How can I survive until the system changes?" "What can I do today to improve life in the classroom?"

A story is told about a philosopher who was crossing a big river in a small boat. "Do you know philosophy?" He asked the boatman "Do you know how to swim?" "I can't say I do," answered the man. "You lost two thirds of your life," proclaimed the philosopher. Just then the boat hit a rock and started sinking. "How to swim?" "Do you know to swim?" asked the boatman. "No," replied the philosopher. "Then you've lost your entire life," said the boatman.

In like manner, in the midst of a classroom crisis, all the books in all the libraries are of no help. All the lectures and courses are of little value. At the

moment of truth only skill saves.

Teachers are expected to reach unattainable goals with inadequate tools. The teacher is the decisive element in the classroom. It is her personal approach that, creates the climate. It is his daily mood that, makes the weather. As a teacher, she has tremendous power to make a child, miserable or joyous. He can be a tool of torture or an instrument of torture. One can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is the Teacher that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a student humanized or dehumanized.

Good teachers have many qualities, including:

Communication: Teachers need to be able to communicate clearly and concisely. Communication is a critical skill that underpins all aspects of their work.

Patience: Teaching can be challenging and requires a lot of patience, especially when managing multiple students at once. Teachers need to consider that students may have different learning abilities and be patient and kind with them.

Adaptability: Good teachers can adjust to changes in their environment.

Passion: Teachers who are passionate about their work can inspire their students.

Lifelong learning: Good teachers are always learning and value real-world learning.

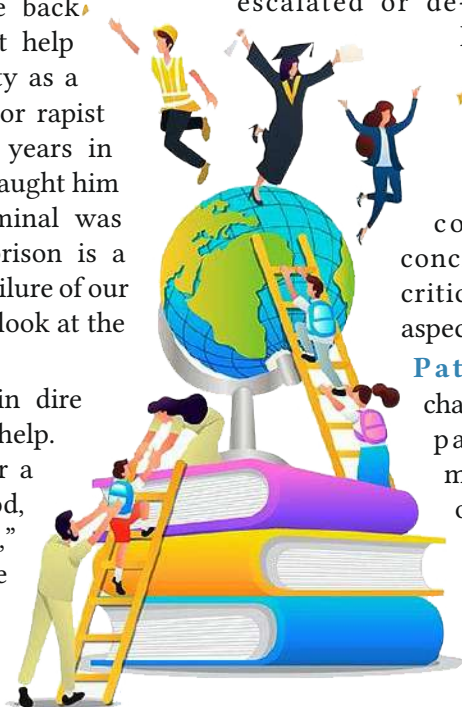
Classroom management: Good teachers have strong classroom management skills.

Organization: Good teachers have great organizational skills.

Energy and enthusiasm: Teaching is a demanding role that requires a lot of energy.

Other qualities of good teachers include:

Empathy, Listening, Collaboration, Critical thinking, Leadership, Time management, and Teamwork.



India celebrates Teacher's Day on 5th September every year to honour the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the country's second president and first vice president. Radhakrishnan was born on 5th September, 1888 and was a scholar, philosopher, and Bharat Ratna awardee. He was also a well-regarded teacher and was considered one of the best professors by his students.

The first Teacher's Day in India was celebrated on 5th September, 1962, which was Radhakrishnan's 77th birthday. The celebration was prompted by a request from some of his students and friends to celebrate his birthday, but he preferred to celebrate it as Teacher's Day instead to recognize the contributions of teachers to society.

On Teacher's Day, schools and colleges celebrate by acknowledging the hard work and role teachers play in students' lives. Some ways to celebrate include:

*** Role reversal**

Senior students dress up as teachers and monitor junior students, while teachers attend cultural activities prepared by the students.

*** Award ceremonies**

The Ministry of Education organizes a function at Vigyan Bhawan to award the country's best teachers, who are selected through a three-stage online process.

On the auspicious occasion of Dr. Radhakrishnan's birthday, his students and friends requested him to allow them to celebrate his birthday but in reply, Dr. Radhakrishnan said "Instead of celebrating my birthday separately, it would be a privilege if 5th September is observed as Teacher's Day."

The opinion of Dr. Radhakrishnan for the teachers was that the right kind of education could solve

many ills of society and the country. It is well-versed that "Teachers lay the foundation of a civilized and progressive society. Their dedicated work and the pain they encounter to ensure that students turn out to be enlightened citizens deserve high recognition."

Teachers are the cornerstones of our future and act as a foundation for creating responsible citizens and good human beings. This day is celebrated to show our acknowledgement and recognition of the hard work put in by our teachers towards our development.

On this day, students look forward with a lot of anticipation, for the sheer spirit of the occasion. Acting as teachers, they get a fair idea of the responsibility, so efficiently burdened by their teachers. They bring gifts for their most admired teachers as well. It is an equally special day for teachers, as they get to know how much they are liked and appreciated by their students.

Many events and activities are carried out in honour of teachers. Teacher's Day celebrations include singing, dancing competitions, dramas, plays, games, picnics, and other fun activities to express gratitude towards the teachers. Some awards shows are also organized for the exceptional work and effect of the teachers. You can also offer gifts to your favourite teachers like cards, and more to show your love and gratitude towards them.



Leon Bent writes because, with the rise of the web and its quick dispatches, people are hungry for profound thought, for depth, for insight, for sustained description and the touch of the Divine.

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

FAITH APART FROM WORKS IS DEAD!

-Fr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ

Especially in this month of September when we rejoice to celebrate our Mother Mary's Nativity, let our faith reflect our devotion, and inspire us to do many heartfelt works of love: **"Mary treasured the word of God and pondered it in her heart"** (Luke 2:19), and showed her faith **by her deeds** (as at the wedding feast in Cana: Jn.2:1-11). Our daily authentic personal prayer must foster a "Christian" mindset – though not if our prayer-life consists only of distractedly reciting formula-prayers, like rosaries wherein we rush through 50 Hail Marys *without application of mind to the mysteries of the Life of Christ which the holy Rosary is meant to commemorate*. Yes, let us remember that **the Rosary is essentially a "Jesus prayer," and not only a Marian prayer!** It is meant to form in us Jesus' thought-patterns, values, and relationships.

In the New Testament, the apostle James teaches lucidly and colorfully that *'faith apart from works is dead.'* He learnt this from Jesus, who started his new religion (called Christianity, as different from Judaism, an Old Testament religion) to emphasize **"interiority"** over mere external rituals and practices:

*"What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? **So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.** But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, **so faith apart from works is dead**"* (James 2:14-26).

In his *challenging* parables (as different from his *consoling* parables), Jesus teaches that no disciple can afford to be lazy or complacent, but that every "Christian" must be industrious and show many initiatives of working for the Kingdom of God. Mathew 25:31-46 declares in no uncertain terms that our eternal happiness is jeopardized by our *sins of omission*, in other words, by a lack of loving efforts to promote God's kingdom!

On the Day of Universal Judgement, when we stand before the heavenly throne, the King will

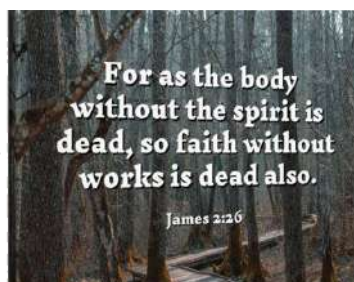
not question us about the various sins we may have committed in life. This is because the moment we repent of a sin, it is immediately dealt with (atoned) by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (see Col.2:12-14). Once we humbly ask for mercy/new life in the sacrament of Reconciliation, God's loving forgiveness, won for us by the merits of his Son Jesus, at once transforms us into 'a new creation in Christ' (2Cor.5:17-19). So we can believe that all sins truly repented of are fully *forgiven*, and do not thereafter disqualify us from the kingdom of God.

But the criterion God will use to judge all human beings is *the quality of their practical love*: *"I was hungry and you remained passive (you did not give me to eat); I was thirsty and you took no initiative of love (you did not give me to drink); I was sick and you showed yourself to be indifferent; I was in prison and you did not care. You did not, did not, did not..."* is the way the rather shocking passage about the Last Judgement reads. In fact, it is we who condemn ourselves because we *'did not do'* good things, we did not show ourselves to be "men/women for others," we took

little or no initiatives of love for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

In the parable about the Talents too (Mt. 25:14-30), Jesus teaches that every human being has been given assets: abilities, skills, gifts, money, property, etc. – to trade with, and develop, and earn a profit from! The more one has received, the more is expected from him/her! The person who buried the one Talent (equivalent to a thousand silver pieces) was judged and condemned for his passivity, for his lack of initiative, for refusing to be industrious on behalf of the Kingdom of God! Jesus does not tell us that this man did something bad (like breaking the Ten Commandments), but that he/she *made no efforts* to establish 'God's civilization of love,' did little or nothing to advance God's kingdom in this world, did not show clearly that he/she was on God's side in life's spiritual battle. Each disciple must show at least that little bit of initiative in life so as to be prepared to stand worthily before the Creator.

Likewise, the parable of the Ten (wise/foolish) Virgins confirms that judgement falls heavily upon five of them because of their lack of initiative, their evident laziness. They proved to be idle



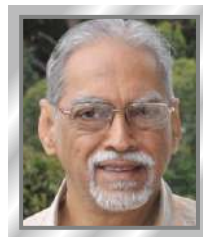
procrastinators, and so did not find places in the banquet of the heavenly Kingdom (Mt.25:1-13).

The very consoling part of the Good News is that our sins, *committed through human weakness but then repented of*, are forgiven and dealt with by the saving merits of Jesus. But the very challenging part of the Good News concerns our duties and personal responsibility. We will be held responsible for our sins of omission in the vast area of love, since these sins are indications that, while the spiritual battle was on, we deserted our place in God's army. These become the criteria by which we will be judged.

So, to think with the '*mind of Christ*,' and thereby be effectively motivated and equipped to take initiatives of love for God's Kingdom, we need to make regular efforts to become familiar **with the word of God**. Through it, the Holy Spirit will transform our thought patterns: ***"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect"*** (Rom.12:2). No amount of scholarly study of the human sciences alone can bring us this new mentality: of looking

at life from God's perspective. The deep action of the Spirit is needed in our lives to set us free from the self-centred thoughts and ways of the world.

Each baptized Christian has a long way to go before we can make *'Jesus' way of thinking* our *personal way of thinking*. Our hearts may be already captured by the Lord, but our **minds** are still to become one with his mind! Reading and searching the Scriptures daily with devotion (like Mother Mary) is a proven Spirit-anointed way of forming our minds to reflect the mind-set of Jesus. Then we will be disciples in whom the principle "faith and works" will have become perfectly integrated, all for God's greater glory, and for our eternal joy.



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



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Praveen Madhur Srivastava, Mumbai

I have made a contribution of Rs.72,000 through cheque for the welfare of the Balbhavan boys at Fr. Agnel Ashram. I am happy to do my little bit, month after month, for decades together, to see a smile on the faces of the poorer section of society.

Royston Flavian Sequeira, Bangalore

I am happy to contribute Rs.15,000 via card payment for taking care of the needs of the Balbhavan boys at Fr. Agnel Ashram. Besides imparting quality education, the Agnel Ashram Fathers are known for their selfless service to the community.

Noeline D'Souza, Mumbai

I am pleased to donate an amount of Rs.10,000 through UPI for the upliftment of the Balbhavan boys and securing a good future for them.

T.K. Thomas, Kerala

As a token of thanksgiving for various favours received through the intercession of Ven.Fr. Agnel, I have donated an amount of Rs.1000 through NEFT for the upkeep of Fr. Agnel Ashram.

Gregory M. Pillay, Pune

We are happy to provide a donation of Rs.15,000 via NEFT to fulfil the daily needs of the Balbhavan boys and for their education.

Rodney A. Monteiro, Mumbai

We are delighted to donate an amount of Rs.15000 via card payment, as a yearly sponsorship for a child.

Sosamma Saji, UAE

As I have received innumerable blessings through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I offer a humble gift of Rs.40000 via cheque for the welfare of the Balbhavan boys.

M. Paulose, Kannur

A cheque of Rs.1000 has been sent as a thanksgiving to Fr. Agnel Ashram for a special grace obtained.

Albert Machado, Mumbai

A cheque of Rs.5000 has been given as a mini-sponsorship for a Balbhavan child at Fr. Agnel Ashram. May the children continue to grow in love, protection and care, while imbibing good values of education and prayer.

BANDRA FAIR IS A WEEK-LONG CELEBRATION

- Jubel D'Cruz

Every year in the month of September, the feast of 'Our Lady of the Mount' is celebrated in a grand manner on the Sunday following September 8, the birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of Jesus Christ. It is a week-long celebration that attracts over eight lakh people from all over Mumbai and its suburbs. The Bandra Fair is estimated to be around 300 years old.

During the 1700s, the church was invaded by a pirate army. They chopped off the right arm of the statue of Virgin Mary and destroyed the church. The broken statue was then replaced with the statue of 'Our Lady of Navigators' from the nearby St. Andrew's Church.

In the year 1761, the broken statue of the Virgin Mary was fixed and the church was rebuilt. The Bandraites then built a small detachable statue of infant Jesus in the place where the hand was chopped off. Currently, the same statue of Mother Mary is venerated at Mount Mary's Basilica.

The Mount Mary's Basilica is said to possess magical healing powers, enabling it to fulfil the deepest of desires of its patrons.

The steps along the fair route leading to the church had a name "Degrados de Bomonjee" or "Bomonjee's Steps", which was built by a Parsi gentleman named Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy in 1879, to link Mount Mary Road and Hill Road. It is believed that Mr. Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy wanted a daughter and prayed to Mother Mary at the Mount Mary's Basilica for one. His wish was fulfilled and he built the steps on his daughter's 8th birthday as thanksgiving.

The fair attracts people of all faiths and communities throughout the year. The term, 'Bandra Fair' refers to the celebrations that are connected with the annual feast of 'Our Lady of the Mount' on September 8, known as the 'Feast of the Nativity (birth) of the Blessed Virgin Mary'.

It becomes an important historical event, because with the birth of Mary, comes 'the dawn of our salvation', since Mary's son, Jesus Christ, would be the Saviour of the world. This had already been predicated by many prophets of the Old Testament. If Mary had not consented to the Heavenly Father to be the Mother of Jesus Christ to bear Him in her womb, then there would have been no redemption and no salvation for mankind. Mary's answer of saying 'yes' to the angel Gabriel at the Annunciation ensured mankind's deliverance from sin.

We do not know the exact date when Mother Mary was born and so September 8th has been fixed by tradition to be her birthday.

During the entire Bandra Fair week, all roads and houses in Bandra (West) are beautifully decorated with colourful buntings. Many residents even put up stalls selling religious items, black roasted grams (*channas*) and various kinds of Goan, East-Indian and Mangalorean sweets. Even *vindaloo*, *sorpotel*, *prawns pickle*, *balchao* and *sannas* are sold.

The various titles given to Mother Mary are 'Our Lady of Vailankanni', 'Our Lady of Guadalupe', 'Our Lady of Mount Carmel', 'Our Lady of Lourdes', 'Our Lady of Fatima', 'Our Lady of Garabandal', 'Our Lady of Sorrows', 'Our Lady of Good Counsel' and 'Mother of Perpetual Succour', to name a few.

Music makes one's mood merrier. Daily programmes are announced which add to the week-long activities.



As a former resident of Bandra (West), now residing in Dombivili, I enjoyed the fair when I was a little boy. Even now every year, I take my wife Shirley and daughter Sweta to the fair. We spend the entire day enjoying ourselves. We also visit the homes of our relatives and friends residing along the fair area.

This year, the fair will be celebrated from Sunday, September 8 till Sunday, September 15.

I would like to mention that Fr. Agnel Ashram also organises a fun-filled programme inside their compound every year supported by the Balbhavan boys during the entire Bandra Fair week. Candles, holy water and oil, besides religious articles are available at the shrine office. There are fun games and rides for children, besides stalls selling snacks, making it the ideal place for family outings.

Not just Catholics but people belonging to various faiths visit the shrine all year round, seeking the intercession of Venerable Fr. Agnelo D'Souza, whose plea for being declared a saint is still under consideration.



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

THE HOLY CROSS – STRENGTH FOR TODAY AND HOPE FOR TOMORROW

-Ninette D'Souza

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is celebrated on 14th September, every year.

At the foot of the Cross where grace and suffering meet, You have shown me your love through the judgement you received.

CH: And you've won my heart (2). Now I can trade these ashes in for beauty, and wear forgiveness like a crown. Coming to kiss the feet of mercy, I lay every burden down. At the foot of the Cross where I am made complete, You have given me life through the death you bore for me **CH (2).** As a disciple of Jesus don't the lyrics of this hymn by Don Moen resonate in your heart?

After a hijacked plane slammed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, many people inside the building were trapped by a cloud of thick, blinding smoke. Police officer Issac Hoopi ran into the blackness, searching for survivors, and heard people calling for help. He began shouting back, over and over: "Head toward my voice! Head toward my voice!" Six people, who had lost all sense of direction in a smoke-filled hallway, heard the officer's shouts and followed. Hoopi's voice led them out of the building to safety. "Head toward my voice" is also I believe the invitation of Jesus from the Cross to each one of us when we are in danger or when we have lost our way. In difficult circumstances, gazing at the Cross helps us walk toward Him rather than be left groping in the dark.

Without even realising it, we begin every prayer by signing ourselves with the Cross. Sometimes we absent-mindedly make the sign of the Cross when we pass a church, or with an almost imperceptible bow of the head acknowledge the presence of Jesus when we pass a crucifix by the roadside. In the Latin rite the Sign of the Cross is made from Left to Right signifying from darkness to light. In the eastern tradition it is made from Right to Left, basically implying that Jesus the light of the world, is being taken into the darkness. There is no right or wrong way of signing ourselves with the Cross. It is these very different interpretations that make it so rich.

Some of us do not like to see the crucified Jesus and want to find joy only in the Resurrection. As

His disciples we find it difficult to envisage a meek, defeated person on the Cross, leave alone speaking of Him as our God. The Crucifixion and Resurrection are one event. There is no meaning in Christ's death, if there is no Resurrection and vice versa. We need to hold onto both. The world may see the Crucifixion as having ravaged Jesus' human body but when we gaze upon the Cross, we can find the daily confidence that allows us to believe that all our transgressions and sins have been nailed to it. The hidden side of the Cross is the defeat of satan through the defeat of sin. We are not called to simply look at the Cross, we are called to GAZE at it. Gazing is not the same as looking. It helps us understand what lies behind

the physical: that the passionate love of the Father and His Son is portrayed here. More importantly gazing allows us to experience LOVE and not just look upon it as something that happened years ago. In the pain and blood on the Cross we can glimpse Jesus' fierce love

for us that made Him do what He did. That is when we will be able to comprehend that the things connected to the world/ruler of the world, have no power over us. The Cross is our victory. It is a trophy we should proudly hold afloat. When you think you can't handle your painful situation anymore, gaze at the Cross. And you will find hope and refuge in the crucified Jesus. Gazing at the Cross helps to understand the little nuances of what the sacrifice of Jesus means.

The Cross of Jesus is our greatest NO to Him and His greatest YES to us!!! It is our rejection of Him and His embracing of us. Wearing a crucifix around our necks or having it tattooed on our bodies does not mean we boast in the Lord. It is simply a fashion statement. St. Paul often referred to as the apostle of the gentiles tells us very clearly that we should not boast about our talents, gifts, achievements and other credentials because we are not saved by them. Neither do the spiritual activities we indulge in, no matter how pious, define our discipleship.

We need to humble ourselves and boast about Jesus crucified because the Cross of Jesus is our greatest strength, Gal 6: 14. God is love and his



greatest attribute is MERCY which He freely gives to us. With us humans the general attitude is, when things go wrong, attribute it to wrath / punishment from God and then begin to try and please Him in various ways. How foolish can we be.

A little girl's daddy was reading to her, just as he did every night before she went to sleep. She had picked up the zoo book and to her active imagination it was as if she and daddy were actually present at the zoo. She looked happily at the pages with the giraffes, zebras and elephants but when it came to the grizzly bears she said, 'Daddy you will have to carry me.' She repeated the sentence when it came to the gorillas. Curious her father asked her why he would have to carry her. Her straightforward, honest answer was, 'Because I would be scared.'

We can be certain that the Lord will do the same for us when life can seem unbearable. Physical pain, financial hardships, death of a loved one, or shattered dreams threaten to engulf us. We become fearful and perplexed. Plagued by doubts, we may even find it difficult to pray. When the scary times come, when we are called upon to do the hard things that life demands, all we need to do is GAZE at the Cross. God will lift us up and carry us along. He gives us strength in His crucified Son.

While on our knees in prayer, for ourselves or others, eyes fixed on the Cross, we need to be a STONE JAR, like the ones at the wedding feast of Cana. They were empty and actually were of no use at the wedding reception. But because they were empty, Jesus used their emptiness, filled them to the brim and the result we all know.

Even if we are last in line, Prayer keeps us in touch with God. Richard Fuller an 18th century minister, told of an old seaman who said, 'In fierce storms, we must put the ship in a certain position and keep her there.' Said Fuller, This is what we Christians should do ... we must put our soul in one position and keep it there.

We must stay on the Lord; and, come what may – winds, waves, cross seas, thunder, lightning, frowning rocks, roaring breakers – no matter what, you must hold fast your confidence in God's faithfulness and His everlasting love in Jesus Christ. Easier said than done? Not at all. Keep gazing at the Cross and trust the crucified Jesus to give you peace in your storm for He has promised

us so in Phil 4: 6-7.

In the book of Numbers 20: 4 -9 we read about the 2nd generation of Israelites who got impatient and began complaining against God and Moses although they were reaching the promised land. That's when they find poisonous serpents among them which bit them, causing many of the Israelites to die. When they go to Moses remorseful and ask him to pray to God, God does relent, but He does not take away the serpents.

Instead, He tells Moses to make a poisonous serpent and set it on a pole. So Moses proceeds to make a serpent of Bronze and put it up on a pole, all those who got bitten needed to only look at it and they lived. This then is an indication of what Jesus would do for us. The Israelites complained

that the manna sent from heaven was not good enough. On the Cross we are offered the bread of eternal life. That is what the Crucifixion and Eucharist are all about. When I gaze at the Cross where Jesus has taken my sinful nature, I am healed physically, emotionally, spiritually.

Gazing at the Cross encourages me to wait in anticipation of my healing. It helps me understand that when I go to God in prayer, He may not take away the serpents in my life but wants me to keep my gaze fixed on Jesus on the Cross. While the Cross with Jesus hanging on it may seem like a symbol of torture in my dire moments, it is actually an instrument of my salvation... the most beautiful solution to the problems in my life. According to me at this moment nothing is needed – no lengthy prayer of supplication, no rosaries, no reading of His Word not even words of Praise and Worship. Just a silent one on one communication between me and my God. "Be still, and know that I am God! Psalm 46: 10.

(The above reflections are based on the teachings of Fr. Warner D'Souza and Fr. Michael Payapilly.)



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CRMD 2024: A Paradigm of Dialectical Prowess in Navigating the Ethical Labyrinth of Conflict and Coalition

Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering celebrated its 26th distinguished year of the Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues Memorial Debate (CRMD) on the 23rd and 24th of August 2024 at the newly renovated Samvad Hall. This intermediate Oxford-style debate competition **attracted 32 formidable teams from across India, including premier institutions like IIT Hyderabad, IIT Nagpur, VJTI, SPIT, SNDT, NMIMS and Rizvi Law College, Mumbai.**

The panel of judges, comprising experts from the realms of Communication, Education, Law, and the Corporate world, played an instrumental role in the success of the CRMD competition.



(From right to left): Rev. Fr. Valerian D'Souza (Director), Dr. Bhushan Patil (Dean, Students' Affairs), Mr. Utkarsh Karmungikar (Winner), Mr. D. Shivanandhan (Chief Guest, Retd. DGP of Maharashtra), Mr. Parth Gupta (Winner), Mr. Shishir Joshi (Guest of Honour, EO - Project Mumbai & Journalist NDTV, CNN, AAJ TAK), Dr. Surendra Singh Rathod (Principal) and Rev. Fr. Trevor Pereira (Asst. Director).

In a fiercely contested and intellectually invigorating showdown, **Team CRMD27 from Vidyalkar Institute of Technology emerged the winners and bagged the first prize of Rs. 40,000.** Their journey through the debates was distinguished by their unwavering commitment to crafting well-structured arguments and delivering compelling rhetoric, embodying the essence of this year's theme, **'Akrasia: The Moral Maze of Conflict and Coalition.'**

Team CRMD25, representing Rizvi Law College, proved to be formidable runners-up and were awarded Rs. 25,000.

The event also recognized individual excellence. **Kabir Kapoor from Rizvi Law College was lauded as the Best Speaker**, captivating the audience with his articulate and persuasive oratory, while **Yash Thorat's exceptional adjudication skills earned him the accolade of Best Adjudicator**, significantly enriching the event with his insightful evaluations and contributions. Both were awarded Rs. 7,500 each.

The true essence of the debate was in the eloquence and intellectual integrity of the debaters, as well as the active engagement of the audience. Over the last 26 years, **Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues Memorial Debate (CRMD)** has offered vibrant debates that challenged and scrutinized a myriad of ideologies, providing a platform for today's youth to engage deeply with pressing societal issues.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Greater Noida

Father Bento Champions Cup: A Resounding Success

Father Agnel Balbhawan celebrated their 25th anniversary in style by organizing a thrilling football tournament, the **Father Bento Champions Cup**. The event saw an overwhelming response with over 60 teams from across the Delhi NCR region participating in three categories - Under 17 Boys, Under 17 Girls and Open Category.

The tournament was declared open by **Rev. Fr. Bento Rorigues**, Director of the institute, along with **Asst. Director Rev. Fr. Jovito Vaz**. The tournament was graced by **Chief Guest Wazid Ali**, Honourable Secretary of Gautam Budh Nagar Football Association, and **Rev. Fr. Jose Alarico Carvalho**.

The **Under 17 Boys category** saw 22 teams vying for the top spot, with **Apex Public School emerging as the winner** and Aster Greater Noida as the runner-up. **Enrique** from Apex Public School was awarded the **Best Player trophy** and an Adidas voucher worth Rs. 5000.



Team Goal Hunterz, the winner in the Open category, make a happy picture with dignitaries.

In the **Under 17 Girls category**, 14 teams participated, with **Team Aster Noida Extension claiming the top spot** and Team Father Agnel Balbhawan as the runner-up. **Jiya** from Aster Noida School was awarded the **Best Player trophy** and a voucher worth Rs. 5000.

The **Open Category** saw 24 teams battling it out, with **Team Goal Hunterz emerging as the winner** and Team Compassionate Missionaries as the runner-up. **Himanshu** from Compassionate Missionaries was awarded the **Best Player trophy** and an Adidas voucher worth Rs. 5000.

The event was a resounding success, showcasing the talent and enthusiasm of young footballers from across the region.

THE SCAPULAR – CLOAK OF ARMOUR

-Jacqueline Kelly

The English word “scapular” is derived from the Latin word *scapulae*, which mean “shoulders.” Our Lord taught us to say the “Our Father.” Mary taught us the value of the Scapular.

There are two types of scapulars, the monastic and the devotional. The “monastic scapulars” are part of the monastic habit and the “devotional scapular” is a much smaller version and evolved from the monastic scapular. The monastic scapular is related to the distinctive garment of a monk or nun worn in the Eastern tradition. Both set of scapulars come with a set of promises and are rooted in tradition and others are formally approved by religious founders.

The scapular started with the Benedictines and later was adapted by other religious communities. At first, the scapular served more as an apron worn during work, especially farm work. The Rule of St. Benedict was identified as the “scapulare propter opera” [the scapular because of works].

After the 9th century, a monk received the scapular after the profession of vows, and it came to be known as “the yoke of Christ” [iugum Christi] and “the shield of Christ” [scutum Christi].

While certain modifications were made by the various communities, the scapular was a distinctive part of the religious habit. Over a period of time, lay people who worked closely with the monastic communities adopted a smaller version of the scapular. These smaller versions of the scapular became even more popular among the laity.

The scapular ought not to be tucked or pinned; it must be worn around the neck, so that one piece of cloth hangs in front, one in the back.

The proper way to get rid of a worn out scapular - or any sacramental - is to either burn it or bury it.

It is said that the scapular of St. Francis de Sales and St. John Bosco remained intact, not turned to dust.

MARIAN SCAPULARS

One of the most noticeable signs being a Marian devotee is the wearing of a Marian scapular. Those who wear a Marian scapular are effectively placing themselves under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The scapular is as the

Blessed Virgin herself has declared, “a safeguard in danger.” The scapular should be worn with faith and it is an indication of telling Mary that she is honoured, loved and venerated.

SCAPULAR OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

The small scapular of Our Lady of Good Counsel [White Scapular] was presented by the Hermits of Saint Augustine to Pope Leo XIII, who in December 1893, approved it and endowed it with indulgences. Pope Leo XIII also added the invocations “*Mater Boni Consilii*” in the Litany of Loreto.

This scapular is made in the usual way of two pieces of white wool joined together by double cords or bands. One part has an image of Blessed Virgin made of silk or similar material, with the lettering “*Mother of Good Counsel*”, as venerated at the Shrine of Genazzano.

The other part has the Papal coat -of-arms namely, tiara with the keys, and the lettering: “*Child, follow Her counsel*” [Pope Leo XIII].

SCAPULAR OF MARY IMMACULATE MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACES

This scapular was revealed by Our Lady on 25th March, 1992, the year of the Fatima 75th Jubilee.

“My little One! To all who wear this scapular faithfully, I promise to grant before they die, the last Sacrament of the Church. This shall be the sign of your consecration to my Immaculate Heart!”

THE BROWN SCAPULAR

Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel [Carmelites] A.D. 1251

The Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was first instituted in the late 14th century. From the dawn of its history the Habit of Carmel has been a sign of Consecration to Mary and a sign of her special love and pledge of her motherly protection.

According to John Haffert in his book, “The sign of Her Heart”, in the pages of an ancient history of the Carmelite Order [written in medieval Latin by a forgotten writer named Ventimiglia] Saint Dominic said, “One day, Brother Angelus to your Order of Carmel the Most Blessed Virgin Mary will give a devotion to be known as the Brown Scapular, and to my Order of Preachers, She will give a devotion to be known as the Rosary.” AND



ONE DAY, THROUGH THE ROSARY AND THE SCAPULAR, SHE WILL SAVE THE WORLD.

In another book “Mary in Her Scapular Promise-Scapular – Marian Treasure” John Haffert states:

“Our Lady brought Salvation with her. She had contained Christ as manna in the ark of her womb, and brought Him forth to be the Food and Salvation of the world”, so, in giving herself to us in the scapular, she wills to give us the Food of Angels.

The Brown Scapular of our Lady of Mount Carmel, associated with the Carmelite Order, is well-known and is the Habit of Carmel in miniature form.

In A.D. 16 July, 1251, Our Lady appeared to Saint Simon Stock in Cambridge, England after he prayed for help for his Order. She appeared to him with the scapular and said, “Take, beloved son this scapular of thy order as a badge of my confraternity and for thee and all Carmelites a special sign of grace; whoever dies in this garment, will not suffer everlasting fire. It is the sign of salvation, a safeguard in dangers, a pledge of peace and of the covenant.” The Scapular used to be a richly indulgent object of devotion in the Church.

Father Crasset relates that Mother Mary appeared to Pope John XXII and commanded him to make it known that all those who should wear this scapular would be delivered from purgatory on the Saturday after their death. This was later confirmed by Pope Alexander V, Pope Clement VII and other Pontiffs.

Pope Benedict XV granted an indulgence of 500 days each time the Scapular is kissed. The Brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a gift to you from Your Heavenly Mother. May this devotion unite us closer to Mother Mary.

THE SCAPULAR - CLOAK OF MANY COLOURS

WHITE SCAPULAR

Order of the Most Holy Trinity [Trinitarians]

A.D. 1198

“The Scapular of the Most Blessed Trinity” is the badge of the members of the Confraternity of the Most Blessed Trinity and the Secular Third Order of the Most Holy Trinity. Its front depicts a red and blue Cross, and it first came about in 1198 when a Spanish Priest, John of Matha, had a vision of an angel wearing a white robe adorned with a Cross whose vertical line was red and whose cross-beam was blue [this Cross design came to be on the habit of the Trinitarian Order]. The General of the Trinitarians may grant the faculty of investment with this scapular to other priests.

BLACK SCAPULAR

Order of Friar Servants of Mary [Servites]

A.D. 1240

“The Black Scapular of the Seven Dolours of Mary” or “Our Lady of Sorrows Scapular”, has on its front a depiction of Our Lady of Sorrows. Our Lady appeared to seven rich and prominent citizens of Florence who decided to give up their worldly possessions and follow Christ, promising to honour His Mother in her sorrows. Thus, began the Servite Order. Mary gave them the Servite habit and said that “these garments shall be to you a perpetual memory of the sufferings of my heart. “This is the more common Black Scapular”. The General of the Servite Order may grant the faculty of investment with this scapular to other priests.

BLACK SCAPULAR

Discalced Clerks of the Most Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ [Passionists]

C.a. A.D. 1720

Saint Paul of the Cross, before founding of the Congregation of the Passionists, received in apparitions the black habit of the Order with the badge on the breast. Later, after the foundation of the congregation, the Passionist Fathers gave the faithful who wished to associate themselves more closely with their Order a black scapular in honour of the Passion of Christ. “The Black Scapular of the Passion” has a replica of the emblem worn on the habits of the Passionists. It includes the words “*Jesu XPI Passio*” and below “*sit semper in cordibus nostris.*” The Superior General of the Passionists may grant to other priests the faculty to bless and invest someone with this scapular.

BLUE SCAPULAR

Clerics Regular [Theatines]

A.D. 1605

“The Blue Scapular of the Immaculate Conception” originated in Spain and is connected with Saint Beatrice da Silva Menesses [1426-1492], a Gstercian Nun. In 1484, she founded the order of Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary [Conceptionists]. The practise of wearing this scapular spread to Italy and the Venerable Ursula Benicasa [1547-1618] founded the Congregation of Oblates of the Immaculate Conception of Divine Virgin Mary in 1583. On the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in 1617, Sister Ursula received a vision of the Blessed Mother clothed in a white garment of Azuke Blue. Since then the scapular has been traditionally made of blue cloth and called the **Blue Scapular**.

To her, Christ promised favour to the Theatine Order and she asked Him to extend those promises to those who associated themselves with the Order through the faithful wearing of the scapular. The Blue Scapular is worn for the conversion of sinners. Enrolment in the Theatine Confraternity is necessary for investment with this scapular.

GREEN SCAPULAR

Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul [Paulists]

A.D. 1840

In 1840, Mary appeared to Sister Justine Bisqueyburu [a Seminary Sister of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul] in Paris, France and commended the Green Scapular to her. It is also called the “Badge of the Immaculate Heart of Mary”, approved by Pope Pius IX in 1870. The Green Scapular is not descended from the scapulars that form part of the habit worn by religious orders. It is described as a “cloth medal”.

It is also known as “the Scapular of Conversion” and its promises are the strengthening of faith, protection against Satan, a happy death and most of all, for conversion for those outside the Church. It should be blessed by a Priest and worn or carried by the faithful, or, given to an unbeliever for their conversion. The following prayer is to be said daily by the wearer: *“Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us now and at the hour of our death.”* Enrolment in a Confraternity is not necessary for this scapular.

RED SCAPULAR

Priests of the Mission [Lazarists]

A.D. 1846

“The Red Scapular of the Passion” came about when a Sister of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul had a vision of Christ in 1846 in which He promised an increase in the theological virtues [Faith, Hope and Charity] of those who wore the scapular faithfully and contemplated His Passion. One side of the scapular shows Christ on the Cross, with the words, “Holy Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ Save us”; the other side shows the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of His mother with the words, “Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, protect us”.

Pope Pius IX granted the Priests of the Mission [“Lazarists”] the faculty of investing the faithful with this scapular, and the Superior General of the Lazarists may allow other priests this faculty.

SCAPULAR OF SAINT JOSEPH [Capuchin]

A.D. 1880

A gold and violet-coloured scapular with a white cord, the front shows St. Joseph holding the child

Jesus in one arm and a staff of lilies on the other. Underneath are the words, “St. Joseph, patron of the Church, pray for us.” On the back of the scapular is the papal crown under a dove as the symbol of the Holy Ghost. Beneath are the Cross, the keys of St. Peter, and the inscription: *“Spiritus Domini ductor eius”* [The Spirit of the Lord is His Guide].

The Scapular is to remind us of St. Joseph's virtues [humility, modesty, purity]; to remind us to pray to St. Joseph, asking him to pray for the Church; and to assist the dying since St. Joseph is the patron of a happy death.

In addition to the above benefits, there is a plenary indulgence for those who confess, receive Holy Communion and pray for the intentions of the Holy Father on the following feast days: 25 December, the day of investment of the scapular, January 1, 6 January, 2 February, 19 March, 25 March, Easter, Feast of the Ascension, 15 August, 8 September, 8 December, 3rd Sunday after Easter and at the time of death. It is recommended also to say 5 Our Fathers, 5 Hail Marys and 5 Glorias before the Blessed Sacrament at these times.

FIVE-FOLD SCAPULAR

The Five-Fold Scapular is made of 5 of the following above mentioned scapulars: First, “The Red Scapular of the Passion”; Second, “The White Scapular of the Most Blessed Trinity”; Third, “The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel”; Fourth, “The Black Scapular of the Seven Dolours of Mary” and “The Blue Scapular of the Immaculate Conception”. Any Priest can invest you with this scapular.

When we wear a scapular, Our Blessed Mother covers us with her pure mantle, just as she covered her Son with swaddling clothes.

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

SAMSON: A NAZIRITE FOR GOD

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

Samson, one of the most enigmatic and powerful characters in the Bible, is found in the Book of Judges 13-16. His life, marked by incredible physical strength and profound personal weaknesses, offers rich insights into the complexity of human nature and the interplay of divine purpose and human agency. Samson's story begins with a miraculous birth and ends in a dramatic death, with his life interspersed with feats of strength and tragic missteps.

Miraculous Birth and Nazirite Vow: Samson's story begins with his birth announcement by an angel to his parents, Manoah and his wife, who were childless. The angel proclaimed that Samson would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines. The angel instructed that Samson should live as a Nazirite from birth, which included abstaining from wine, avoiding contact with dead bodies, and never cutting his hair. "For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5).

Feats of Strength: As Samson grew, his extraordinary strength became evident. His first recorded feat was tearing a lion apart with his bare hands (Judges 14:6). Later, he struck down thirty Philistines to settle a debt (Judges 14:19). One of his most notable exploits was killing a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:15).

Relationships and Downfall: Samson's relationships with women, particularly Philistine women, proved to be his undoing. His marriage to a Philistine woman from Timnah ended disastrously, leading to conflict with the Philistines (Judges 14-15). However, his most infamous liaison was with Delilah, who betrayed him for silver. Delilah coaxed Samson into revealing the secret of his strength - his uncut hair. While he slept, she had his hair cut, rendering him powerless. And she said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the

Lord had departed from him. The Philistines captured, blinded, and imprisoned him (Judges 16:4-21).

Final Act and Death: In his final act, Samson's faith and strength were restored. While imprisoned, his hair began to grow again. Brought to a Philistine temple for entertainment, he prayed to God to restore his strength one last time. "Then Samson called to the Lord, saying, 'O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!'" Pushing against the temple pillars, he caused the building to collapse, killing himself and thousands of Philistines (Judges 16:28-30).

Importance in Salvation History: Samson's role in salvation history is multifaceted. As one of the judges of Israel, he was instrumental in the ongoing struggle against the Philistines, a dominant force threatening Israel's survival and faithfulness to God. His life underscores the theme of divine sovereignty and human fallibility. Despite his flaws, Samson was used

by God to achieve His purposes.

Samson's story also serves as a typology of Christ in some respects. Both had miraculous births announced by angels, were endowed with extraordinary power, and accomplished their greatest victories in death. However, where Samson often succumbed to temptation and sin, Christ lived a sinless life, offering a perfect sacrifice for humanity's redemption.

Conclusion: Samson's life is a compelling narrative of strength, weakness, and redemption. His story reminds us of the potential for both greatness and failure within us all. It highlights the importance of faithfulness to God's call and the possibility of redemption, even in our darkest moments. Samson's legacy in salvation history is a testament to God's ability to use imperfect people to fulfil His divine purposes. "For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

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



BIBLE QUIZ ON THE LIFE OF SAMSON

1. Who were Samson's parents?

- a) Manoah and Hannah
- b) Manoah and his wife (name not mentioned)
- c) Elkanah and Hannah

2. What vow was Samson to follow from birth?

- a) Levitical vow
- b) Nazirite vow
- c) Priestly vow

3. What animal did Samson kill with his bare hands?

- a) Bear
- b) Lion
- c) Wolf

4. With what did Samson kill a thousand Philistines?

- a) Sword
- b) Spear
- c) Jawbone of a donkey

5. What was the source of Samson's strength?

- a) His muscles
- b) His hair
- c) His faith

6. Who betrayed Samson to the Philistines?

- a) His wife from Timnah
- b) His mother
- c) Delilah

7. How much silver was Delilah offered to betray Samson?

- a) 1,100 pieces of silver from each Philistine lord
- b) 30 pieces of silver
- c) 100 pieces of silver

8. What did the Philistines do to Samson after capturing him?

- a) They killed him immediately
- b) They blinded him and imprisoned him
- c) They made him a king

9. Where did Samson die?

- a) In his home
- b) In a Philistine temple
- c) In a prison

10. How did Samson die?

- a) He was executed
- b) He died of old age
- c) He brought down the temple pillars, killing himself and many Philistines

11. What was Samson's first recorded act of strength?

- a) Breaking his chains
- b) Killing a lion with his bare hands
- c) Killing a thousand Philistines

12. What riddle did Samson pose at his wedding feast?

- a) "Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet."
- b) "What has keys but can't open locks?"
- c) "What walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening?"

13. What did Samson use to set the Philistines' fields on fire?

- a) Torches
- b) Foxes with torches tied to their tails
- c) Lightning

14. How many years did Samson judge Israel?

- a) 10 years
- b) 20 years
- c) 30 years

15. What was the last prayer of Samson before his death?

- a) For strength to avenge his eyes
- b) For forgiveness
- c) For peace in Israel

ANSWERS

- 1-b) Manoah and his wife (name not mentioned) (Judges 13:2)
- 2-b) Nazirite vow (Judges 13:5)
- 3-b) Lion (Judges 14:6)
- 4-c) Jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:15)
- 5-b) His hair (Judges 16:17)
- 6-c) Delilah (Judges 16:18-19)
- 7-a) 1,100 pieces of silver from each Philistine lord (Judges 16:5)
- 8-b) They blinded him and imprisoned him (Judges 16:21)
- 9-b) In a Philistine temple (Judges 16:30)
- 10-c) He brought down the temple pillars, killing himself and many Philistines (Judges 16:30)
- 11-b) Killing a lion with his bare hands (Judges 14:6)
- 12-a) "Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet." (Judges 14:14)
- 13-b) Foxes with torches tied to their tails (Judges 15:4-5)
- 14-b) 20 years (Judges 15:20)
- 15-a) For strength to avenge his eyes (Judges 16:28)



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CALLED TO BE HOLY

- Norma Kamath

"Who is this holy woman? You are called to pray for the whole world," said Fr. Mathew Naickomparambil as he walked towards me in the garden of the Divine Retreat Centre, Potta, Kerala. I was taken aback. I had come with a guilty conscience, after leaving the healing ministry due to illness. I felt like Peter after Jesus resurrection going back to fishing (Jn 21:3). However, I was happy that Jesus was not displeased with me and had called me to His Ministry of Intercession through His Holy prophet.

As I pondered over the world Holy, it dawned on me that "Holy is to be called by God and set apart for Him, ready to do his will."

Jesus saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea, for they were fishermen. Then Jesus said to them "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And immediately, they left their nets and followed him (Mk 1:16-17). And he went up into the hills and called to him those whom he desired and they came to him and he appointed twelve to be with him, to be sent out to preach, and have authority to cast out demons (Mk 3:13-15). "Those whom he foreknew, he also predestined as he conformed to the image of his son, in order that he might be the first born among many brethren, and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified, he also glorified (Rom 8:29-30).

Scripture refers to Christians as holy ones or saints. It is written "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). According to St. Paul, one who believes in Christ is made holy through grace. He is not perfect but strives to be perfect. The Lord who sat upon the throne said, "Behold I make all things new" (Rev 21:5). This newness of life comes through the Holy Spirit, the sanctifier. The Holy Spirit sanctifies through the Word of God, through the Sacraments, through prayer and adoration, through suffering and the practice of virtues. Thus, the Spirit also fills us with power to win spiritual battles and thread over all the power of the enemy (Lk 10:19).

The Word of God

Listening and pondering over God's word strengthens our faith in Christ (Rom 10:17). We need to obey God's word to grow in holiness (Lk 11:28). All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be completely equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).

The Sacraments

Christ instituted the seven sacraments of the New Law, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony, which are a rich source of grace when received worthily.

The sacraments of Christian initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist lay the foundation of Christian life, by sharing through grace in the divine nature of Christ. The faithful are born anew by Baptism (Jn 1:11-13), strengthened through the Holy Spirit by the Sacrament of Confirmation to become witnesses

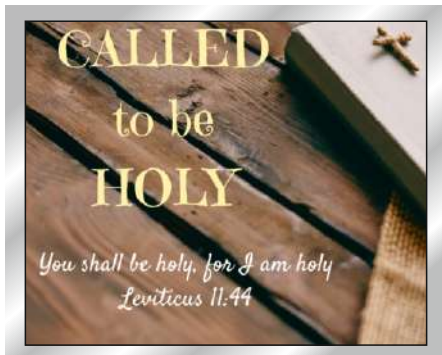
(Acts 1:8) and receive the Eucharist, a sacrament of love which nourishes the disciple through Christ's body and blood, brings a perfection in charity, with a pledge of eternal life. The Eucharistic celebration is an act of worship to Abba Father in Jesus through the Holy Spirit (Rom 12:1-2). It perpetuates the sacrifice of the Cross, is a memorial of Christ's

Death and Resurrection and fosters unity in the people of God.

The Sacrament of Penance is a healing sacrament through which we obtain pardon through God's mercy of the offences committed against him and are reconciled to God, and to the Church, as we confess our sins to a priest in confession. Through his absolution we obtain pardon and peace.

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and the prayer of the priest and the church commends the sick and those who are ill to the suffering and the glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders confers a special



grace of the Holy Spirit on the recipient so that he may serve as Christ's instrument for the church. He acts as a representative of Christ's head of the Church, in the office of priest, prophet and king.

Matrimony has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament through which the couple receives grace to perfect their human love, to be strengthened with indissoluble unity, and sanctified on the way to eternal love.

Holiness through prayer in God's Presence

Personal Prayer - Helps us to grow in intimacy and develop a close relationship with our Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Adoration - Prayer in the presence of the blessed sacrament where Jesus is truly present through his body and blood, is a powerful means to grow in holiness (2 Cor 3:17).

Family prayer and prayer meetings - God is present through his Word "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I present in the midst of them" (Mt 18:19).

Suffering - The acceptance of suffering is one of the most powerful means of growing in holiness. Jesus told his disciples "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24). Through various trials our faith is tested and it produces steadfastness (James 1:2). When I was in great pain after an operation, I did what St. Paul teaches us in (Cor 1:23-24). I held Jesus' hand as he walked up to Calvary, consoled him and united my suffering to his for sinners. I felt greatly relieved, lost the fear of suffering I had, and Jesus drew me close to his heart.

Virtue - To be partaker of God's nature, we need the wisdom from above, which is sincere and open to reason. We have to supplement our faith with

virtue, to obtain God's promises. Virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good.

Theological Virtues - The three theological virtues St. Paul speaks of is faith, hope and love. Of these the greatest is love. They come from God and lead us to the Lord (Jn 18:12). Jesus said "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

Cardinal Virtues are human virtues acquired by education and good action. They are prudence, justice, temperance and gratitude. We need to practice also the virtue of humility, charity, chastity and gratitude.

Paul enlists the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). He exhorts us to walk in the Spirit which give life and peace, and not in the flesh.

We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph 2:8). Holiness is the presence of God in, with and through us, reaching out to all men.

Finally brethren, between whatever is true, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, whatever is gracious, if there is an excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about all these things (Phill 4:8).



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.

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JUST FOR FUN

-Christine D'Sylva

We are now in a very special month, the month of the birthday of Our Lady on September 8. The Bandra Feast held at Mount Mary's Basilica is a feast that is celebrated with great pomp and enthusiasm. So on that happy note, let's begin ...

Mount Mary's Basilica - The true history



In the late 15th century, a Jesuit priest constructed a small chapel dedicated to Our Lady. From a structure of mud on a small hill overlooking the Arabian Sea in Bandra in 1640, this

structure transformed into a chapel because of the increasing devotees. The right arm of the statue was chopped off and the church was rebuilt. The locals built a small detachable statue of baby Jesus in the place where the hand was chopped off. This very same statue is worshipped till today.

The Bandra Fair is estimated to be around 300 years old. According to legend, it began when a statue of Our Lady was discovered floating in the Arabian Sea between 1700 and 1760 and a Koli fisherman had dreamt about this earlier.

Five popular food items at Bandra Fair



When you visit the fair, you must try these food items that seem to be perennially sold at every Bandra Fair each year. They are *Petha* which is a translucent candy made out of ash gourd or

white pumpkin. *Kala channa* which is roasted black gram, *Kadio Bodio* which is chickpea flour sticks mixed with ginger and jaggery. *Halwa* also called Royal *Halwa* in varied colours like yellow, green and red, as well as *dodol*. Lastly, you must sample *Choris Pao* which is sorpotel stuffed in pav bread and served hot.

Quiz

Cuisine from around the world



1. This cuisine is ranked as the world's most popular cuisine.
2. The most popular vegetarian dish originating in the Middle East.

3. The hottest curry in the world.
4. The most popular food in America.
5. The most popular dessert in Italy and worldwide.

Smile Please



1. My boss said dress for the job you want, not the job you have. He was always critical about my dress sense. So I went in as Batman.

2. Wife: "Look at that drunk guy. Ten years ago, he proposed to me."

Husband: "Oh my god! He is still celebrating!"

3. Husband: "Honey, I have been taking tests. I have a bad blow on my head, an arm fracture and they might perform surgery on my foot."

Wife: "Who is Tanya?"

4. What do cows do on a date night?

Answer: They go to the moo-vies.

5. A man went into a bank to make a withdrawal. The cashier asked, "Can you identify yourself?"

The man said, "Sure." He took out his pocket mirror and looked at himself, "Yeah, this is me alright."

What's in a name?



Biblical names are perennial and till today they are a popular choice. These names are still a popular choice for boys.

1. **Aaron** - Hebrew name which means exalted or high mountain.
2. **Abraham** - Hebrew name which means father of multitudes.
3. **Adam** - Hebrew name which means man from the red earth.
4. **Andrew** - Greek name and means manly.
5. **Ethan** - Hebrew name which means strong and firm.
6. **Jadon** - Hebrew name which means he will judge.

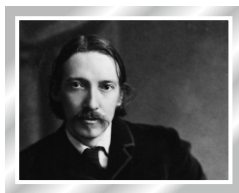


Riddles

1. What do you call a sticky bear with no teeth?
2. I can be told, made and played. What am I?

3. In a bus there is a 26-year-old pregnant lady, a 35-year-old policeman, a 50-year-old lady and the driver who is 58 years old. Who is the youngest?
4. What can go through glass without breaking it?

Inspirational story – Robert Louis Stevenson



The famous Scottish poet, Robert Louis Stevenson, fell ill with tuberculosis. His strength had weakened so much that he was unable to move his right hand to write with.

He did not let this deter him, instead he began to learn to write with his left hand. He was able to do this and write with it. But his left hand too weakened and he was unable to write.

He did not give into despair. He asked a friend to visit him and help to write his literary works. But the disease reached his tongue and he was unable to speak. He learnt sign language and started using some of his fingers to write poetry verses. This great poet lost speech and movement, yet he was able to conquer his weakness and achieve great success with his wonderful literary works.

What do we learn from this story?

We learn that where there is a will, there is a way. Life is hope, if hope is lost, our lives become meaningless. We must not give into feelings of hopelessness but do all we can to find a solution because every problem has some solution.

Inspirational quotes by poets



“When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.” - Maya Angelou

“In three words I can sum up everything I have learnt about life: it goes on.” -

Robert Frost

“No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.” - William Blake

“Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark.” - Rabindranath Tagore

“It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.” - E. E. Cummings

The healing touch of dogs



Animals are the bridge between us, the beauty of nature and a stepping ladder to understanding true unconditional love and acceptance. They show us

what is missing in our lives and teach us many powerful lessons.

They teach us the joy of unconditional love. They love us just the way we are, despite our lack of physical beauty, great talents or brains etc. They just respond to our love and affection and give back not just in the same measure but ten times more. Dogs are man's best friend and this was uttered by King Frederick of Prussia in 1789.

Did you know that Sigmund Freud, the pioneer of psychoanalysis was known to have his pet dog sit on sessions with his patients to calm them and even identify their moods?

If a patient was anxious, then the dog would keep her distance and if calm, the dog would stay near them.

Freud wrote, “Dogs love their friends, bite their enemies, quite unlike people who are incapable of pure love and always have to mix love and hate in their object relations.”

A year before his daughter, Anna Freud's death in 1982, she surmised that her father loved dogs so much because it was a reflection of his disappointment in people and the unrelenting brutality and blind lust for destruction of war. It became easier to look away from one's fellowmen and turn to animals.”

Freud's decades attempting to untangle people finally made him into a dog person who saw far greater redeeming qualities in these furry friends than humanity who disappointed him.

Brain Teasers



1. What can be swallowed but also swallows you?

2. An elevator is on the ground floor with four people. On the first floor, two people get out. On the third floor, five people get in

but nobody gets out. However on reaching the seventh floor the elevator's cable snaps and it crashes to the floor. Everyone dies except me. How did I survive?

3. Brothers and sisters I have none. But this man's father is my father's son? Who is the man?

4. Which five letter word gets shorter when you add two letters to it?

5. Multiply all the numbers on a number pad of a phone. What is the total?

6. If $a=270$, b is half of a , c is one fifth the value of $b+a$, then what is the value of c ?

What's the Good Word?

All about Flowers



1. The smallest flower in the world.
2. The biggest flower in the world.
3. The most popular flower in America.
4. Wishbone flower.
5. The national flower of India.

Curious Facts

All about Mathematicians



Pierre de Fermat of the 16th century was not a professional mathematician. He was a lawyer and an official in the government who only did mathematics as a hobby.

However, the letters he wrote to intellectuals all over Europe paved the way for a number of major discoveries and his theorems and conjectures challenged other mathematicians. His famous Last Theorem holds the record for the most wrong proofs ever published and it was correctly proved in 1994.

Charles Babbage of the 18th century is known as the pioneer of the computer age but in his time, he was more known for throwing great parties. Among the attractions in his home was a Silver Lady, an automaton in the shape of a woman. Babbage dressed in different clothes each week to entertain his female guests.

Aryabhatta a great astronomer of the past in India was the one who invented the digit 0 for which he became immortal.

Ada Lovelace a famous mathematician is recognized as the first ever computer programmer of any gender. Her parents were Lord and Lady Byron. At the age of 12, she illustrated plans to construct a winged flying apparatus before moving on to think about powered flight after studying the anatomy of birds and the suitability of various materials. She was a compulsive gambler on horse races and used her understanding of mathematics to predict winners and placed large bets. Like her father, Lord Byron died at the age of 36.

Wisdom message for the month



The greatest day in your life and mine is when we take total responsibility for our attitudes. That is the day we truly grow up - John C. Maxwell.

Our attitudes makes us attract good when we put out good thoughts to the

Universe and we get favourable results.

If we spend our lives blaming others for our problems we tend to grow stagnant and sink into apathy. We fail to move forward in life. It is said that many people who develop leg problems have failed to adjust their thinking and move forwards.

The frogs in a well mentality is common. To illustrate people have stayed in a particular area for most of their lives and rarely travelled beyond their residences to explore different areas. They tend to think their residence is best and do not realise that many upcoming areas are as nice or perhaps even better than their own. They are victims of thinking that is outdated. Or some people consider only their culture as good and detest other people's cultures as if the cultures of other folk are strange and silly. We ought to view the world with progressive thinking and ready to embrace the new with an open not a closed mind.

So our attitudes shape us more greatly than we realise. Our entrenched attitudes affect our emotional health and often results in physical ailments. The health of our bodies depends greatly on the well-being of our mental state. The two are co-related and dependent on each other.

Answers

Quiz

1. Italian cuisine.
2. Falafel.
3. Phaal made from the hottest chilli, Bhut Jolokia.
4. Pizza.
5. Tiramisu.

Riddles

1. Gummy bear.
2. A joke.
3. The baby of the pregnant lady.
4. Light.

Brain Teasers

1. Pride.
2. I got off on the first floor.
3. The man is my son.
4. The word short.
5. Zero because 0 is included on the pad.
6. $a=270$, $b=135$, $c=81$.

What's the Good Word

1. Water-weed.
2. Rafflesia Arnoldi.
3. Roses.
4. Torenia.
5. Lotus.



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

THANKSGIVING FOR A GOOD JOB

VASAI: 30 years ago, thanks to Ven. Fr. Agnel's intercession, I got a good job as a teacher, after several obstacles were removed due to prayer. I would now like to say a big thank you to the Holy Trinity and Ven. Fr. Agnel, on behalf of my son, who got a good job with Singapore Airlines, three months ago.

-Nirmala Colasso

THANKSGIVING FOR IMPROVING KIDS' SKILLSET

MUMBAI: My two kids were unable to write neatly and their teachers constantly urged them to improve their handwriting. They were also not interested in playing music and we didn't find any good mentors for them. After I placed my intentions with Ven. Fr. Agnel, things changed gradually. We got very good teachers who are fostering in my kids a love for music and have transformed their handwriting. Both my kids are playing different instruments very well. Their handwriting is not only good but has superseded my expectations. Thank you Ven. Fr. Agnel for your intercession.

-Carol

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESSFUL OPEN HEART SURGERY

VILE PARLE (EAST): I prayed to Ven. Fr. Agnel for the open heart surgery of my 11-year-old daughter Urshitavaishnavi to be successful. She is now doing well. As a single mother, I am grateful to each of you for all your prayers in keeping my faith strong and being courageous. Your prayers have worked a miracle.

-Bhoomika M. Thirthani

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD HEALTH

KOLLAM, KERALA: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for answering my prayers and blessing me with good health.

-Justin Fernandez

IN GRATITUDE TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

VIKHROLI: We are indeed grateful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing us always.

-Osborn Monteiro

THANKSGIVING ON 40TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

MUMBAI: We have been praying all through our married life to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his graces to flow. We have been blessed with a happy married life for four decades. Our family members have been blessed with good health too.

-Marcus & Hilda Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR SUCCESSFUL OPERATION

MUMBAI: As a devotee, I prayed to Ven. Fr. Agnel and through his kind intercession, my operation has been successful. The Venerable listens and intercedes for us with the Heavenly Father and Lord Jesus Christ.

-Russel D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

CHEMBUR: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed us immensely. We are indeed grateful for all the favours received.

-Telma Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR ALL BLESSINGS RECEIVED

MAHIM: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for answering my prayers. I have immense faith in the Venerable and Lord Jesus Christ.

-Philomena Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

UTTAN: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, we have received many favours and blessings.

-Onson Kharji

THANKSGIVING FOR GIFT OF A CHILD

VIRAR: I prayed to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession in giving me my heart's desire. I am blessed with a healthy child.

-Monica Lobo

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

KARNATAKA: I always look up to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his intercession. We are indeed grateful for all the blessings received.

-William D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR INTERCESSIONS

SION: I always seek the intercession and blessings of Ven. Fr. Agnel. He supports me in many ways.

-Arun Sam Nadar

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

Jessica Ruth	Mumbai	30000	Jayalekshmi M.	Kerala	2000	N. M. Paulose	Kerala	1000
Thomas George	Mumbai	15000	Isabel H	Tamil Nadu	2000	Mary Antony	Kerala	1000
Gregory M.	Pune	15000	Rija Anna	Kerala	2000	Sharon D'Souza	Mumbai	1000
Joseph Puthur	Mumbai	15000	Philomena F.	Mumbai	2000	T. K. Anthony	Mumbai	1000
Hilda Fernandes	Mumbai	12000	Caesar Fargose	Vasai	2000	Paresh	Thane	1000
Shriram B.	Thane	11000	Leena Martin	Mumbai	2000	Leona Louis	Thane	1000
Noeline D.	Mumbai	10000	Gautam Pung	Delhi	2000	A. Santhappan	Tamil Nadu	1000
Melini J.	Mumbai	10000	Ashriya S.	Mumbai	2000	Abhilasha H.	Mumbai	1000
Melroy Fernandes	Mumbai	10000	Ashrit S.	Mumbai	2000	Agnel S.	Kerala	1000
Soly Freejo	Kerala	10000	John Victor	Vasai	2000	Angela Merin	Kerala	1000
Melini Joseph	Mumbai	10000	Attely A.	Mumbai	1700	M. D. Mathai	Kerala	1000
Blaise Fernandes	Mumbai	10000	Arun Jadhav	Kerala	1500	Gavin P.	Mumbai	1000
Soly Freejo	Kerala	10000	Savio P.	Mumbai	1500	Priti P.	Mumbai	1000
Thrity Z. Patel	Mumbai	10000	Arun Jadhav	Kerala	1500	Ishwarlal S.	Mumbai	1000
Cleonice C.	Mumbai	8000	Jacob D.	Mumbai	1200	Dhnaben M.	Mumbai	1000
Falguni Solanki	Mumbai	7000	Dorothy A.	Karnataka	1200	Jainish F.	Mumbai	1000
Warren F.	Mumbai	6000	Leena K.	Mumbai	1100	Flemy T.	Kerala	1000
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5100	Madhavi Kolar	Thane	1100	Vilia Allen	Bengal	1000
Alice R.	Mumbai	5000	Patrick P.	Mumbai	1000	Charles B.	Mumbai	1000
Agnel Dias	Mumbai	5000	Lino Jose	Mumbai	1000	Samson S.	Mumbai	1000
Yogita P.	Mumbai	5000	Agnel B.	Mumbai	1000	Rita Johnson	Kerala	1000
Rajendra K.	Mumbai	5000	Rishit D.	Thane	1000	Saji James	Kerala	1000
Shirin N.	Mumbai	5000	Rivaah D.	Thane	1000	Sheela Francis	Kerala	1000
Neriosang	Mumbai	5000	Jinal Patel	Mumbai	1000	Baby Jenisha	Mumbai	1000
Geeta Naik	Mumbai	5000	Sangita P.	Mumbai	1000	Kurian George	Kerala	1000
Christopher J.	Karnataka	5000	Ghanshyan P.	Mumbai	1000	Agnelo Varghese	Delhi	1000
Belina D.	Mumbai	5000	Ankit P.	Mumbai	1000	Joyce Sagar	Mumbai	1000
Madhuri Vijay	Mumbai	5000	Fitech I.	Mumbai	1000	Ankita Luke	Mumbai	500
Jacintha D'Souza	Mumbai	5000	Felcy P.	Mumbai	1000	Ally Jose	Kerala	500
Albert Machado	Mumbai	5000	Renita P.	Mumbai	1000	Lalji Jethalal	Gujarat	500
Techno P.	Chennai	3000	Sanskriti M.	Mumbai	1000	Alapatt Brothers	Kerala	500
Marlene Dias	Mumbai	3000	A. P. Joseph	Kerala	1000	Dhayalu Mata	Mumbai	500
Gaurang B.	Mumbai	2500	Lincoln Ja	Mumbai	1000	P. C. Baby	Kerala	500
Nirali M.	Mumbai	2000	Santha T.	Mumbai	1000	B. Martin	Odisha	500
Unmisha B.	Mumbai	2000	Jefferson A.	Mumbai	1000	P. B. Abine	Kerala	500
Rodney V.	Mumbai	2000	M. D. Chauhan	Mumbai	1000	Boniface Louis	Thane	500
Rohit N.	Mumbai	2000	Jimmy S.	Mumbai	1000	Nageshwar Shukla	Mumbai	500
Mary Varghese	Gujarat	2000	T. Anthony	Mumbai	1000	Priime Maark	Mumbai	500
Jaison C.	Kerala	2000						

BOB'S BANTER

by Robert Clements

Stoking 'Remembrance' Fires...!

What about having a 'Forgiveness Day'?

What's that, you ask, what d'you mean by such?

Well, since this government seems to be blessing us with days to remember atrocities and injuries, what about a day to forgive and forget each other for the same? Not just you and me, but religious communities and nations forgiving each other for previous fights, wars and acts of bloodshed.

You think it's impossible? Just look at our politicians; how quickly they forget past hurts and join ranks for the sake of power! You have a political leader dragged to jail, maybe spending time inside, and in the next elections, he's joined forces with his jailor, sharing the same platform!

If politicians can forgive so fast, why can't they implement this on a national level?

And yes, for the same reason: Power!

did they do with their scars? They healed their wounds by coming together in fifty years and forming the mighty and formidable European Union!

That Union bears testimony to the logical act of forgetting and forgiving. Their economies have risen, their military might has become a force to reckon with, and their human rights thinking has moved from revenge to humanitarianism and compassion.

Here, in our country we allow wily politicians to rub salt on our partition wounds, scrape off bandages and make gaping bloodied craters out of injuries that should have healed by now.

Are we fools not to see what is being done to us?

Only a coming together can bring more power for us. Yes, a coming together of religious




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Imagine how powerful we would be if we could forgive each other for previous communal transgressions? Imagine how powerful we would be if we could forgive our neighbouring countries for past wars, beginning with stopping the stomping and staring tamasha that happens every day at the Amritsar border, and instead a shaking of hands or simple namaste?

Europe had a thousand years and more of war. Do read about it, when each little country fought against each other, and millions died, and in case you haven't got a history book ask your grandparents about World War II!

Germany conquered more than twenty countries! Millions died and millions more came home maimed, mutilated and scarred for life. But what

communities in India, and a coming together of nations around us. We can keep fooling ourselves with false statistics of economic growth but poverty is rampant and the last elections have shown that the poor are voicing their dissent.

Let us put an end to this stoking of 'remembrance' fires, and move towards a period of progress. The politicians are doing it and succeeding, the EU has done it, and we as a people, need to do likewise: Forgive, Forget and Forward march...!

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



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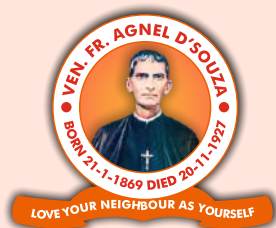
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Feast of the Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary
Happy Birthday, Mother Mary!



Pray for us!



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