



FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

JULY 2025



ONE WORLD, ONE PLANET!

JULY 2025

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Printed & Published by

Fr. Valerian D'Souza, sfx on behalf of Agnel Publications

Editor

Fr. Jose Alarico Carvalho, sfx

Printed at :

S.B.M. Printers
C-130, Ansa Industrial Estate,
Andheri (East),
Mumbai - 400 072.

Place of Publication :

Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandstand,
Bandra, Mumbai - 400 050.

Single Copy Price : Rs. 15

Annual Subscription : Rs. 150

agnelashramnews@gmail.com

website : www.agnelashram.org



FR. AGNEL ASHRAM

P.B. No. 6656, Bandstand, Bandra (West), Mumbai - 400 050, Maharashtra, India.

Email : fragnelashrambandra@gmail.com | Website : www.agnelashram.org

Tel.: 022 - 67114000 | Mobile : 091 - 7738009137

THE NATIVITY OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY - BANDRA FEAST - 2025



Dear Friends and Well-Wishers,

It is with great joy that we celebrate the birth of Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, on 8th September, of whom was born our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Our Mother intercedes for us and fills our lives with hope.



It is a time of rejoicing, more so for our little Agnelite angels, the Balbhavan children who organise a Fun Fair at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra. Your financial contribution in assisting us in caring for our children 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 and best regards,

Yours Sincerely in the Lord,

Fr. Valerian D'Souza, sfx
(Superior)

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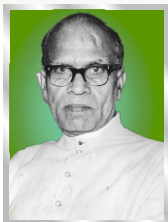
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MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL SUPERIOR



On 2nd July, we celebrate the Re-Organization Day of the Society of Pilar. On this day, it was revitalized in 1939 by **Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues**, the founder of Fr. Agnel Ashram, among other Fathers and Brothers.



Unlike the old Society, which had limited its activities to the then Archdiocese of Goa, the Re-Organized Society, slowly spread its missions and socio-educational activities throughout India and abroad. Today, the Society is spread in four Provinces and one Region, in different parts of India and has opened a few units abroad.

This Guru Purnima, on July 10, 2025, we remember our teachers and mentors who have sown the seeds of education and knowledge. It is the day to celebrate their contribution in our lives.

July 20 is International Chess Day. India is doing well on the international stage and boasts a strong lineage of chess Grandmasters. Viswanathan Anand, a five-time World Champion, was the first Indian Grandmaster and a pioneer in popularizing chess in India. Other prominent names include Koneru Humpy, the first female Grandmaster from India, Pentala Harikrishna, and young chess stars like D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, Vidit Gujrathi, and Arjun Erigaisi. I urge children to take up the game of chess.

World Nature Conservation Day is observed on July 28, 2025. This day is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of protecting our natural resources and ecosystems. It's a time to reflect on our relationship with nature and create a more sustainable future.

July 30 is the International Day of Friendship. Probably, we can give our best friends a call or message them on this day and ensure the lifelong relationship grows stronger. Of course, we also have our dear friend, Lord Jesus Christ, with whom we can share all our griefs, sorrows and joys.

-Fr. Bento Rodrigues

BE BUILDERS OF HOPE - PART III NEGOTIATING THE TORTUOUS PATH TO PEACE

- Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menampampil

Disaster Overtakes Those Who Fail to Criticize Themselves, to Evaluate Themselves Objectively

Let us have concord with our own people, and concord with people who are strangers to us....May we unite in our minds, unite in our purposes, and not fight against the divine spirit within us (Atharva Veda 7.52.1-2).

In 1989, there was exuberance among globalizers after the Fall of the Berlin Wall. But in 1997, some of the weaknesses of free-marketing became evident when SE Asian and S. Korean financial markets went into a crisis. The cause of crisis was “the inherent instability of liberalized capital markets” (Pillai 235). There was no self-criticism on the part of exaggerated 'liberal' thinkers.

But when in 2008 American banks went into a crisis with a global financial meltdown due to excessive risk-taking, the West was awakened. Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. However, government bailed out the banks. There were other results like European debt crisis and crash in commodity prices affecting the entire world. This led to the erosion of US political power and the rise of Chinese political power and influence, and new “heterogeneity of thinking” in the field of economy. BRIC leaders met in 2009, South Africa in 2010. It was not an anti-western initiative (Menon 232). As Europe destroyed itself with the World Wars, the West destroyed itself with the Financial Crisis. The destruction was not inflicted from outside.

The 2008 crisis hit China more than India, having global markets. Exports fell by one-third, 20 million people lost their jobs. However, India must remember that jobless growth will make of demographic dividend into a demographic disaster. As for the US, they had seen a resurgence in the 1980s and 1990s, with the Soviet Union collapse and Japan stalled. But recklessness had its own consequence in 2008 (Menon 233-34). China emerged wiser, and rebuilt their energies; her neighbours today look at her as a source of capital and cheap goods.

America's world role has shrunk after 2008 as was evident during the Arab Spring, events in Libya, Syria, South China Sea. Asia-Pacific has emerged as the political centre of gravity and main driver of global economy (Menon 235).

For 30 years, China grew at 9%, India 6%. Billions have been pulled into the middle class in India, poverty fell to 11% (Menon 239). Yet, over 750 million live in extreme poverty in south Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Cultures have been eroded, including those of powerful nations. More people and states feel insecure. “We live in an age of anxiety,” in what Pankaj Mishra calls an “age of anger.” Information and technology feed aspiration and resentment, drive demand and anger. Where there is less hope, there is more anger like in the Middle East, where people turn to radical and extreme solutions. They overthrew strong men during the Arab Spring of 2010-11, producing a chaotic aftermath (Menon 240).

“The crisis deflated Western liberal triumphalism.” They have lost faith in their own liberalism, and have slowly moved to protectionism due to long stagnation. Gradually, the West may be moving like Japan to stagflation and economic stasis (Menon 241). As an aging society with a comfort-seeking culture, it has lost the spirit of venture, daring, risk-taking, creativity, and freshness. A self-evaluation will be helpful for the withdrawing West, and advancing China and India.

Balanced Thinking, Moderation, the Middle Path

There is none high or low amongst you. You are all brethren and therefore strive altogether to attain prosperity (Rig Veda 5,60,5).

Balanced thinkers in India did not think that 'neo-liberalism' gave all the answers, that it is the panacea for all ills. Gandhi thought of deprived communities. Nehru believed in a 'socialistic pattern of society'. Even after reform, Manmohan and Rao chose the “Middle Path” of material progress combined with attention to the less fortunate (Menon 194).

After the West had learnt from the Great Depression and World War II came Bretton Woods meetings, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and general agreement on tariffs (Menon 213). Rao, Vajpayee, Manmohan were aware of such dangers. Rao spoke at length at Davos about the Middle Way of equity and justice. Between 1995-2013 China's per capita GDP grew by 9%, India's 7%.

For two millennia, India was the world's largest

economy. The Mughal emperor presided over one quarter of the world's GDP. But the **British** reduced it to 4%. But again by 2016 India's was 7.32%. However, half the trade shares on the stock market belonged to foreigners (Menon 214). We can see the globalized **world economy is fragmenting** and shrinking, demagoguery and authoritarianism leading nowhere (Menon 195). After Vietnam blunders, there emerged an economically **integrated East Asia** (Menon 196). After the failure of BJP's one-sided policies, a **balanced outlook** has become **necessary**.

Deng's advice of "Biding one's time and **hiding one's light**" remains a good counsel (Menon 361-62). Attaining one's **goal without war** is a strategy on which Kautilya, Sun Tzu and Machiavelli agree. Flexibility in thinking is required. "**Multipolarity** calls for constant adjustment. Traditional Indian style is to accommodate liberal and illiberal alike and encourage **diversity in thought and loyalties** (Menon 364-68).

India should make it possible for "every **Indian to live a safe, prosperous and dignified life** to realize his or her potential. That is the only goal worthy of a great country such as India." We should **avoid ridiculous claims, manufactured enemies, exaggerated boasts.** We need **objectivity, logical thinking, reasonableness, and clarity of vision** to deal with the real world (Menon 372-73), not prejudices masquerading as ideas. When "**dread and hate replace reasoned thought,**" it necessarily leads to destructive social conflict in India and the neighbourhood. Fear and polarization do not help. It is legitimate to be "proudly **patriotic, tolerant, modern, progressive,**" and project "a secular vision of a confident nation that respects all its citizens" (Menon 374).

Primary Goal of Arms Production Should be the Defence of the Nation, not Big Profits for Arms Corporates

All people are a single nation (Koran II).

Hans Kung argues that with the decline of Communism, **America "needed another enemy"** to justify their rearmament, and they found that in **Islam** (Kung xxiv). **Millions marched in the streets against the Iraq invasion** (Feinstein 401); but arms producers won the day. George Bush had thirty of their representatives in his advisory team. Such close relationships make the **government less transparent** in the name of corporate privacy (Feinstein 304) and **national security**.

The very **arms that America had supplied** to the Islamic forces against Soviets **came against invading American soldiers** (Feinstein 248). The

War on Terror in the Iraq-Afghanistan venture would ultimately **cost \$4 trillion** (Feinstein 428), \$6 trillion according to Trump. At least \$125 billion of this is not accounted for (Feinstein 342). And now that America has withdrawn from Afghanistan, greatly humbled, arms manufacturers will have to fan the flame of **anger against China or Russia** to keep their industry going. The Ukraine war can have many explanations! **India is entering into arms production in a big way** (Brahmos). Soon enough India is likely to be a country that provokes hostilities in different parts of the world for the sale of their arms products!!

Outdated weapons are sold to others. **Weapons** from the Middle East got **resold** to all types of controversial groups and **exploitative regimes** through middlemen and sales agents, e.g. to Rwanda before the genocide which killed 800,000 people; to Congo, Sudan, and Israel (Feinstein 344), to Angola, Somalia, Egypt, Libya, Zimbabwe and Ivory Coast, just before serious conflicts in these countries (Feinstein 435-36), to Latin America and South Asia, to political rebels. Thus, profits grow by leaps and bounds. European nations like **Germany, France, Russia,** and others are **major exporters of arms** to the Middle East. India is eager to be in their company.

Arms Trade lobbies will continue to decide issues unless **conscientious citizens learn to moderate their influence.** The Holy Father often lamented this **over-dependence of national economies on arms sales.** It is high time that weapons are turned into ploughshares and medical instruments. **Intellectuals must make their voice heard.**

Show Us the Way

O Lord, grant me such qualities of head and heart as would endear me to the enlightened and learned among us, to the ruling class and to all that have eyes to see (Atharva Veda 19,62).

We are proud of our land, our civilization, and our ancient history. We collaborate with all fellow-Indians of goodwill. We avoid exaggerations and fanaticisms. While we need **intellectuals and religious leaders** to point the way to the leaders and fellow intellectuals, we also need **actual activists** who seek to be close to the masses and take risk in moving into the field on behalf of peace. Sugata Srinivasaraju considers that the over-competence of Indian leaders, as those in the Congress, in the *language of the Anglophone intellectuals with international connections* and concern for Human Rights and economic equality alone as inadequate. They seem uncomfortable when they come to the *'language of the masses'*

(Srinivasaraju xviii). Christian intellectuals may suffer from the same weakness. But all leaders who made a wider impact (Gandhi, young Mao) were close to the masses. So were Christian Missionaries. There is where we belong.

Maybe at this stage, it is good to turn our attention to the inspiring examples of certain prophetic personalities who contributed a great deal to the cause of peace. In the 1980's **Mikhail Gorbachev** withdrew his forces from Eastern Europe and told the West that he had deprived them of an enemy. **Vajpayee's bus trip** to Lahore thrilled millions of Indians and Pakistanis and brought the nations closer. Everyone remembers **Mahatma Gandhi's** message of non-violence, and the skill he manifested in struggling for justice for his people in the most peaceful manner. Following his example **Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Lech Walesa, and Aung San Suu Kyi** adopted a peaceful style of dealing with complex social and political problems. Names like **Vinoba Bhave** and **Baba Amte** are remembered for their contribution to peace and service to deprived people. The **Dalai Lama's** unfailing smile and stubborn refusal to hate his 'enemy' continue to inspire us. **Albert Schweitzer** used to say that all human beings "should sacrifice a portion of their own lives for others." In that consists the chief secret of peace.

In recent times, **Daniel Berrigan**, a Jesuit priest, emerged as a prophet of peace in the US. He kept challenging the conscience of the nation when his country was fighting a full-fledged war in Vietnam in the 1960s. **Fr. Elias Chacour**, who had lived through decades of violence in the state of Israel insistently tried to persuade his fellow Arabs of the futility of war, "We have tried violence. We have tried wars. We are sure that **wars will bring wars...**I am sure."

When we are tempted to give up let us remember **Desmond Tutu**, the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, who often wanted to give up his peaceful crusade against apartheid. But he did not. Catholic **Archbishop Romero** of San Salvador who was an ardent champion of justice for the poor, was never tired of repeating, "**Violence resolves nothing**, violence is not Christian, not human." As the Catholic Archbishop **Dom Helder Camara** of Recife and Olinda (Brazil) used to say, "Today, as always, humanity is led by minorities who **hope against all hope**, as Abraham did." Maybe that is what the **Joint Peace Team** of Church leaders in **Northeast India** has been seeking to do during the last three decades. As things are today, fighters are many and peacemakers are few. But we continue to **hold on to hope**.

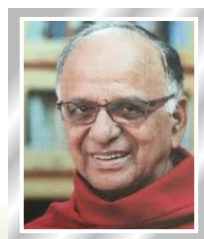
We Need Peacemakers Today, Builders of Hope

Oh men, direct your energies to promote the good of all mankind. Let your relations with all be characterized by love, peace and harmony. Let your hearts beat in unison with human hearts (Rig Veda 8,49,4).

In directly dealing with collective anger, I have learned a number of lessons. An important lesson is that even **the most violent groups long for peace** in the depths of their heart. What they need is understanding, not condemnation. What they appreciate is sympathy for their pain. What they are asking is not that you appropriate their anger, but **experience their agony** and the humiliation their community has suffered. What they seek from peace-workers is not criticism of their opponents, but commitment to humanity that comes through in words, deeds and relationships; a **universal outlook, sensitivity to human pain**, eagerness to come to the help of the suffering. Even from the angriest person, when there is a human approach, there is a human response.

We need peacemakers today...those who esteem others, even their enemies; those who win sympathy and support by the **uprightness of their conduct** and truthfulness of their argument; those who transform hearts and make a valuable contribution to the common human heritage; those who, by the **human touch** with which they handle even the most vitiated situations, build confidence; those who have the ability to identify and separate real issues from ego-claims, from rigid ideologies, and from pre-determined positions.

On December 4, late **Pope Francis** pleaded for peace "in Ukraine, Palestine, Israel, Myanmar." I add, Manipur. **He was emotionally moved**. "Too many innocent lives lost to war." War is human defeat; it does not solve problems; war is evil, war destroys. He **prayed for "martyred Ukraine"**. Writing to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, he called for the **witness of "fraternity"**. He invites us to **hold on to HOPE**, "Stand erect, hold your head high, because your **salvation is near**" (Lk 21:28). **Let us be builders of HOPE** in the hearts of people as we tirelessly labour for peace.



Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menamparampil was Bishop of Dibrugarh and Archbishop of Guwahati. He has brought a large number of schools and hospitals into existence in Assam. He has been involved in several initiatives for peace in Northeast India.

FRIENDLINESS

We don't find friends, we make them.

-Severina Peres

Some years ago, I was at the Divine Retreat Centre, Kerala, where I met a senior woman from another region and my heart reached out to her. Our friendship grew as we shared our lives, our pursuits and stayed connected. **A friend is a present you give yourself (R.L. Stevenson).** During childhood, we made pen pals, exchanging knowledge and skills through letters. As adolescents, we discovered in our friends, an ally whose influence on us was easily noticed at home. We choose our friends with care for we do become what they are! Some people come into our lives and quietly go. Others stay awhile and leave footprints in our lives and we are never the same! **An old friend is better than two new ones (Russian proverb).**

The friendship between David and Jonathan in the Bible is striking in loyalty and sacrificial love despite the political danger lurking around them. King Saul's son "Jonathan became one in Spirit with David," loving him as himself (1Sam 18:1). Jonathan grieves at the shameful treatment of his friend David (vs 34) by his father King Saul who attempts to kill David due to jealousy. Jonathan always defends David from Saul. After Jonathan's death, David mourns for him, "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was wonderful!" **There are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother** (Proverbs 18:24).

Three friends of Job come from their own home making an appointment together to condole and comfort Job during his loss of herds, house, family and a painful illness (Job 2:11-13). **They sit with him on the ground seven days and seven nights without saying a word.** His friends then offer logical answers which are not consoling to Job in despair. Their words lack compassion. The Lord finally restores Job with twice as much as he had before. Job prays for his friends (42: 7-10). **Faith and friends keep you going.**

"Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go;" (Ruth 1:16). These words of commitment by the widowed daughter-in-law Ruth to her mother-in-law Naomi who has lost her husband, followed by death of her two young sons. Ruth chooses to accompany the elderly Naomi, gaining wisdom from her. Naomi in turn becomes instrumental in bringing Ruth into the

reward of the fullest blessing. Attempting to rise above their catastrophe, both remain inseparable and supportive proving that friendship ties can overcome family stresses. **As friends, we need virtues to accompany one another.**

Jesus stays committed and faithful to the friendship with His twelve apostles and others like Mary/Martha. His loyalty and care transcended betrayal, denial, desertion, misunderstanding. He reiterates his loving trust, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends..." John 15:15.

It's hard to imagine a more life changing offer of Friendship.

Understanding, patience, forgiveness are required to cultivate and nurture meaningful friendships.

St. Paul treasured and valued the friendships he made on his missionary journeys. In every letter Paul sends his personal greetings to the people he had taught the deep truths about the Gospel. His example encourages us to cherish friends who enrich our lives, encourage us in our faith, make our

house a home. We need people far more than we need possessions. **"Wealth brings many new friendships but a poor man is deserted by his friend."** It was these poor ones that St. Mother Teresa extended friendship to and gave them a taste of God's unconditional love.

Friendships between nations through deliberations of wisdom, concern for the afflicted and endeavours to end conflicts will alone bring peace to our world. **"Friendship is the only cement that will ever hold the world together"**- Woodrow T Wilson. International Friendship Day on August 3rd, 2025, in India and on July 30th internationally gives us an opportunity to celebrate our friends with joy and gratitude, to continue to keep our friendships alive and connected either in person or through digital platforms.



Severina Peres enjoys writing articles focussed on Catholic faith and doctrine. She also reaches out to senior citizens.

ROOTS, RIVERS AND RESPONSIBILITY: RECLAIMING OUR NATURAL BALANCE

-Tancia Pires

Nature doesn't cry out in protests - it withdraws in silence. The forest thins, the rivers darken, the bees vanish, and the soil forgets how to breathe. **This Nature Conservation Day, we tune in to the subtle alarms around us and listen to those who have dedicated their lives to restoring balance.** From bees and bonsais to mushrooms and mangroves, these guardians of green remind us that conserving nature isn't a grand gesture - it's a series of small, conscious choices rooted in love, knowledge and action.

Wildlife, Greenery and the depleting scenery

The total forest and tree cover in India is 25.17% of the country's geographical area, according to the India State of Forest Report 2023. Wonderful! But the greater question is, is it enough? Or will it remain the same, or are we losing the battle while raging a war against nature?

Daniel D'Souza, a botanist, landscape designer, and ardent environmentalist, says that rampant infrastructural development could pose a threat to the current green cover. Microplastics are yet another silent menace slowly making its way into the food cycle and even human bodies. Problems might be grave, but solutions are available too. He personally follows the typical environment-friendly mantra of **reduce, reuse and recycle**.

He advocates urban gardening with negligible or least use of chemicals, be it pesticides, weedicides, or insecticides, etc.; Reusing water, by raising the level of soil to allow used water to percolate and recharge before being discharged, which is a form of "groundwater recharge" or "soil biofiltration"; and recycling almost around 85% of the polybags or non-biodegradable materials used while gardening or landscaping projects is his way of doing his bit for Mother Earth. Also known as the Bonsai whisperer, debunking myths around bonsai cruelty, he insists, "As long as a plant fruits and flowers, it thrives."

He further adds, "Infrastructural development is essential and in certain cases inevitable, but it has to

be done in a very scientific, planned and organised manner without causing ecological damage, or without disturbing the life of flora and fauna." He urges every citizen to build responsibly and grow more flowering plants to protect pollinators like butterflies and bees - without them, our food cycle collapses.

India's biodiversity is a treasure - our pride, and our responsibility to preserve. While he pinpointed the need to protect bees, birds, and butterflies, Joel Rodrigues, a teacher by profession, yet a nature lover at heart, whose keen interest in plantation led him to take up apiculture, tells us more about beekeeping. He said, "Bees are the silent guardians of nature - pollinating over 70% of our food crops and sustaining ecosystems. If they vanished, it would trigger a chain reaction of ecological collapse."

Providing a simple solution to the declining population of bees, he says we can help by planting indigenous, bee-friendly flowers, avoiding chemicals in home gardens, and supporting fellow local

beekeepers. Even a small patch of blossoms on a balcony can offer bees refuge. He exclaimed, ***"Conservation begins with awareness, and when we protect bees, we're protecting the delicate balance of life itself."***

Talking about the vast biodiversity, further, we peek into the overlooked marvel of nature, Fungi. "These are nature's silent architects - vital to nutrient cycling, soil health, and plant productivity," says the young biodiversity enthusiast Devesh Naik. "From decomposing organic matter to aiding nitrogen fixation, fungi shape resilient ecosystems. Yet, they're often overlooked in conservation."

Deforestation and soil degradation are rapidly threatening fungal diversity. With a keen interest in identifying and photographing various floral species, Devesh emphasizes citizen science: "When people document and monitor fungi, we fill knowledge gaps and raise awareness." He advocates for protecting sacred forests rich in fungal life, regulating wild mushroom harvesting, and



recognizing fungi as key biodiversity pillars. ***“Our survival depends not just on trees and animals, but on the life beneath our feet,”*** he spoke.

Where Every Drop Counts: Healing Water, Healing Life

Water, the most elemental gift of nature, is under siege. ***“The water speaks, if only we listen,”*** says Samuel Afonso, a youth environmentalist deeply involved in grassroots water conservation efforts. The signs, he warns, are right in front of us. “When you see water hyacinth spreading over rivers, when clear waters turn cloudy or milky, when a foul stench - like sewage, chemicals, or rotten eggs fills the air near ponds and lakes, it's nature's distress call. These are visible indicators that the water body is choking,” Samuel explains.

Rajendra Kerkar, veteran environmentalist, author, and researcher, shifts the focus below the surface. He says, “Over-extraction of groundwater, largely due to an increase in wells and boreholes for domestic and agricultural use, and the unregulated tapping of this hidden resource is pushing us towards a water-stressed future.” He cautions, “Groundwater isn't infinite. Once the aquifers run dry or get contaminated, the recovery process takes decades, sometimes centuries.”

Both Afonso and Kerkar identify untreated sewage, eutrophication, haphazard mining and industrial discharge as primary pollutants threatening both surface and groundwater quality. While the situation sounds grim, both conservationists emphasize that solutions are within reach. Afonso believes that the most effective and affordable solution is to identify all raw sewage discharge points and eliminate them.

Reintroducing native aquatic plants and conserving aquatic species by avoiding unsustainable activities like gel fishing, dredging and/or illegal sand mining are other ways that can kick-start the natural purification processes of water. Kerkar further adds to this saying, “Scientifically and systematically designed sewerage Treatment Plants, providing protection for the catchment areas of water resources and afforestation of indigenous species of trees, will certainly resolve these menaces.” Voicing out these issues is a reminder that our survival flows from the health of our rivers, ponds, wetlands, and aquifers. When we say water is life, then its conservation becomes our duty. We need to heal, restore, and protect the blue veins of our land.

Designing Spaces that Breathe with the Earth

Development is inevitable and essential for the

growth of a country and to meet the growing demands of the population. Infrastructural development sits at the summit of the overall development of a nation. Speaking to an architect, Tallulah D'Silva, deeply rooted in love for Mother Nature, also an environmentalist, we received great insights about buildings that could be part of a solution, instead of posing a problem itself, ***“Architecture and ecology are not separate - they're deeply connected,”*** she said.

She stresses designing buildings that adapt to climate realities like heavy rainfall and soil erosion. Instead of relying on harmful concrete, her approach uses locally available, nature-friendly materials like soil, sand, and gravel - carefully modified to improve strength without degrading ecosystems. Preserving natural terrain, protecting existing vegetation (especially medicinal plants), and implementing rainwater harvesting are central to her designs. She further adds, ***“We limit construction to under 25% of any plot, ensuring space for nature to thrive.”***

Concluding Note to all the Earthlings

Biodiversity loss isn't just an environmental issue - it's a human survival crisis,” warns Dr. Pradip Sarmokadam, a renowned PhD holder in Coastal Pollution and Solid Waste Management. Habitat fragmentation, chemical overuse, and reckless development have disturbed nature's equilibrium, disrupted essential food chains, and triggered invasive species spread. His message to all, especially the youth, is clear: ***“Say no to Extravagance, embrace minimalism, reduce waste, and rethink your consumption. Safeguarding biodiversity begins with everyday choices - before it's too late.”***

As climate change accelerates and ecosystems edge toward collapse, all these voices offer not just warnings, but ways forward. Whether it's planting a tree, harvesting rain, protecting wetlands, or simply respecting the creatures we share this planet with, there is something each of us can do. **This July 28th let's not just celebrate Nature Conservation Day. Let's honour it by becoming part of the solution.**



Tancia Pires, who hails from the scenic state of Goa, is currently pursuing her Ph.D. degree at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education. She is passionate about literature, performing arts, music and singing.

THY KINGDOM COME!

-Fr. Fio Mascarenhas, SJ

The situation of the world today can be very frightening to many. Nuclear bombs and long range missiles are being freely proliferated and some are actually being used in today's wars. Diseases like COVID, etc., are re-appearing. Millions are facing death because of starvation. The climate change is wreaking havoc on especially the poor, but also on the rich through droughts, heat or cold waves, floods, and other ecological disasters. And so many politicians and leaders of innumerable countries are just self-centeredly making merry, regardless of the cost to their peoples' welfare. So, is the end of the world near, youth are asking.

Here is an important teaching of Vatican Council II about it:

"We do not know the moment at which the earth and mankind will have run their course. Nor do we know the way in which the universe will be transformed. The shape of this world, deformed as it is by sin, will pass away. But we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling and a new earth where justice will abide:

the happiness of that place will fulfil and surpass all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart. Then, when death has been conquered, the sons/daughters of God will be raised up in Christ. What was sown in weakness and corruption will be clothed with incorruptibility. While charity and its fruits endure, all of creation which God made on man's account will be set free from its slavery to empty show."

"While we remember the warning that it profits a man nothing if he gains the whole world and loses himself, the expectation of a new earth must not weaken our determination to develop this one; on the contrary, it should

strengthen it. For here the nucleus of a new human family is growing, a body which is even now able to give at least a glimpse of what is to come. Earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom. Nevertheless, such progress, insofar as it can contribute to the better ordering of human society, is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God."

"In obedience to the Lord and in his Spirit, it is our duty to develop on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good things that can come from our nature and our activity. We will find them again, but this time freed of any stain, lit up and transfigured. This will be so when Christ presents to his Father 'a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.' Here on earth that kingdom is already

present in mystery; when the Lord returns, it will be brought to completion" (Gaudium et Spes, Document on The Church in the Modern World, n.49).

What does our faith tell us about all this? What is the Christian recommendation? Feasts like Pentecost, All Saints, Christ the King, Christmas, Easter, etc., remind us that time, and human history, are moving on, steadily, inexorably! Not Christians only, but humanity itself celebrates the irreversible passing of time with many grand "end of the old year" festivities. In fact, our cosmos is moving on to its "Omega Point" (as the great Jesuit scientist and theologian Teilhard de Chardin put it), to the "gathering up of all things in Christ, in the fullness of time" (Eph 1:10), to the Second Coming in glory of Christ who is "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev.1:8).



An important biblical text throws light on our active participation in this process: *“What sort of persons ought you to be, in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for **and hastening** the coming of the Day of God?”* (2Pt.3:11b,12a). We must not just wait passively for the important climax, but we can actually “hasten” it. The New Testament tells us that the life every disciple lives, impacts the timing of God’s final and definitive victory over all Evil. The quality of one’s discipleship (*lives of holiness and godliness*) actually *advances* the final transformation of our world! Therefore Vatican II insisted, our lives are *“of vital concern to the Kingdom of God.”*

In this context, Pope Francis explained a few months before his happy and holy death: “When we read the Book of Genesis, there is the danger of thinking that God was a magician who created with a magic wand. But **God is not a magician, he is the Creator!** God made things and *allowed them to proceed with internal, interior laws that He gave to each one*, so that they could *develop and arrive at fullness*. The Lord gave autonomy, but not independence, to the things of the universe. But **when on the sixth day of that story, God comes to create man, he gives him another autonomy, somewhat different, but not independent – an autonomy that is, freedom!** He tells the man/woman *to go forward in history*, he makes us human beings responsible for the creation, so that we would bring creation to *arrive at the fullness of time*” (8 Sept, 2024).

It is for this reason that Jesus is so severe with some people in the parables of the **Ten Talents** (Mt.25:14-30), the **Ten Virgins** (Mt.25:1-13), the **Man with no Wedding Garment** (Mt.22:1-14) etc. The man who received only one talent (equivalent to Rs 60,000) buried it, claiming to be *afraid* of the Master; but he received a severe condemnation from Jesus who bluntly told him that he was, in fact, not afraid but *wickedly lazy*.

God is not playing a game, but out of love, has got involved in a mysterious “spiritual warfare.” So to the extent that we do not live holy lives, we are delaying the final victory of good over evil.

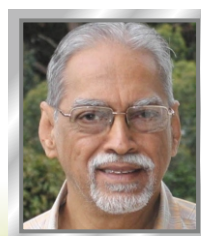
Something similar is taught by St. Paul in Rom 8:19 when he writes about *“the whole of creation groaning in travail,”* waiting for *“the revelation of the sons and daughters of God.”* Holiness includes a daily putting into practice of Jesus’ new

commandment of love (Jn 13:34). Compassion and self-giving service are very important characteristics of “holiness and godliness.” Matthew 25:31-46 reminds us bluntly that our eternal happiness is jeopardized by our *sins of omission*, which expose our lack of loving efforts to “hasten” the Second Coming.

“Being a Christian is not just about following commandments: it is about letting Christ take possession of our lives and transforming them. A Christian isn’t a person who simply follows some commandments, but a person who tries to think, act, and love like Christ” (Pope Francis, 12 April, 2013).

In order to be effectively empowered for this transformation, we must make a daily effort to prayerfully reflect for a few minutes on **the word of God**. *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by **the renewal of your mind...**”* (Rom.12:2). Secular education (PhDs, MBAs, etc.), cannot bring us “the mind of Christ.” The deep action of the Spirit is needed to set us free from the thoughts and ways of the world, and to make *Jesus’ way of thinking* our own way of thinking. Reflecting on some Scripture texts daily with devotion is a proven, Spirit-anointed way of forming our minds to mirror the mind-set of Jesus. .

Finally, the *Book of Revelation* teaches, using apocalyptic imagery, that it is not the beautiful creation that once came from God’s hand that will be destroyed in the end times but the chaotic world, constructed by human sinfulness and oppressive human structures. All that has turned creation away from its original purpose is to be destroyed, for the sake of the new creation which will fulfil the Lord’s prayer: ‘Thy Kingdom Come.’ While God intervenes in history, he despises nothing of what he has made. *“There is no question of the Christian message inhibiting men and women from building up the world or making them disinterested in the good of their fellows; on the contrary, it is an incentive to do these very things”* (Vatican II, GS, 34).



Fr. Fio Mascarenhas is a former Chairman of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Council based in Rome (1981-88) and of the Indian National Service Team (4 terms). His most recent book co-authored with Dr Renu Rita Silvano OCV, STD is **GOD’S SELF-GIFT-ANOTHER PARACLETE**.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Ambernath

Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College, Ambernath, achieves a remarkable 100% passing percentage in HSC and SSC exams

Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School & Jr. College, Ambernath, proudly celebrating 25 years of dedicated service in education under its inspiring motto, "Always Excellence," has once again demonstrated its commitment to academic distinction through the outstanding performance of its S.S.C. and H.S.C. students in the academic year 2024-2025. It continues to achieve a remarkable 100% passing percentage in both the examinations.

H.S.C. Results 2024-2025

A total of 95 students had appeared for the HSC examination. Of this, 17 students achieved distinction, 37 students passed with a first class, 37 students secured second class while four students got pass grade.

Science stream topper A.D. Pranav Dilip Kumar scored 83.83% while the second position was secured by Selva Srinithi Vel Murugan with a percentage of 81%. Eldrin Edwin D'Souza claimed the third place with 79%.



Pranav Dilip Kumar



Selva Srinithi Vel Murugan



Eldrin Edwin D'Souza

Nighot Shreya Sandip from Commerce topped with a commendable score of 92.83%. The second place was bagged by Niranjana Umesh Shetty with a score of 89.33% and Deanna Herman Arakel stood third with 89%.



Nighot Shreya Sandip



Niranjana Umesh Shetty



Deanna Herman Arakel

S.S.C. Results 2024-2025

Out of a total of 274 students, 93 meritorious students scored above 90%, 143 students achieved distinction, 36 students passed with a first class and two students secured second class.

Menon Malavika Vinod stood first with an impressive score of 97.60%. Ladhellu Zoya Rishit bagged the second place with 97.20% and Purswani Rahul Navin came third with a score of 97%.

AGNEL HAPPENINGS

Pune

Installation of Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School Parliament

“A Leader is one who knows the way, shows the way and leads the way.”

The academic year 2025-26 of Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune, started with the installation of the **Senior Parliament** on 16th June and the **Junior Parliament** on 17th June 2025. This is the **11th year** of the **School Parliament system**. The Parliament system is introduced in the school to bring about the responsibility and accountability, among students.



Director Rev. Fr. Alex Luis (centre) of Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune, seen with the Senior Parliament.



The Junior School Parliament.

The program began with a prayer service. The theme '*Grateful hearts and joyful souls*' was declared open by the Director, Rev. Fr. Alex Luis, and the theme song was played.

The newly elected **Presidents Master Kushal Gadhvi** and **Miss Trisha Rakshe** along with the speakers **Miss Janavi Gaikwad** and **Master Mayank Kothari** of the Senior and Junior Parliament, respectively, along with their Ministers and Prefects took charge of the office. They promised to serve the school with loyalty and uphold the dignity and integrity of this institution at all times.

CO-WORKERS WITH GOD

- Ninette D'Souza

On July 26, we celebrate the Feast of Sts. Joaquim and Anne with a few thoughts on what being a parent is all about.

What is being a parent all about? For me it is a vocation, a call from God to join Him, to be His co-worker in nurturing children who are God's unique creations, just like you and me. **"Parenting is the easiest thing in the world to have an opinion about, but the hardest thing in the world to do."** – Matt Walsh. A rather serious statement coming from a comedian. Parenting is not a practice. It is a daily learning experience. Trust me. My husband and myself have been at it for 36 years now.

If all parents asked themselves in the depths of their hearts, what was the one thing that kept them from giving up, when life's challenges were overwhelming, the unanimous answer would be, 'Our Children.' In tough moments, their smiles become our strength, their laughter reminds us to breathe, their love helps us pull through the greatest difficulties. Although we lost our first born, aged a mere 33 years, on March 27, 2023, we still have our younger son and his lovely wife, who bring us much joy and comfort. They are the reason we are able to keep going, the light and the hope we hold onto when situations weigh us down. We can truly say: they saved us without even knowing it. So yes! We're truly blessed.

Do self-help books or those crafted by celebrities help in parenthood? To my mind, not really. In parenting there are no real answers. We do the best we can, 24/7, **even when it's not needed anymore!!!** Just to substantiate this phrase. My sons once on their feet didn't need me the way they used to, but my love for them ran deep. I loved them (and continue to do so with the two, God has graciously placed in my life) in the time between texts and in the quick check-ins, the 'just thinking of you' moments so to say. They continue to be in my thoughts and prayers at the start of the day and the close. Both my sons and my daughter-in-law carry my heart with them, always.



I have discovered as I'm sure others have too, that being a parent teaches you about strengths you didn't know you possessed. It also does not shirk away from exposing you to fears you never knew existed and were forced to deal with. In her book, *The Path*, author Laurie Beth Jones offers quick and useful ways to creating an overall plan to guide an individual through life, interspersed within inspirational and spiritual contexts. My take away was that 'Parenting is a healing ministry!' Our worth as parents, therefore, is determined by the impact of the healing role we play, in the lives of our children, who are God's gift to us. So, when they cry; we need to kiss their pain away, when they are afraid; we need to hold them tight, when they speak; we need to listen; not simply hear, and when they question us; we need to give them proper answers, depending on how old they are.

The first and perhaps the most important thought that parents must get into the minds of their children is, that they are lovable and valuable. In the difficult times we live in, our children are boxed into cocoons which we ourselves create in a bid to keep them safe. In a virtual world far removed from reality, our children vacillate from one strong emotion to another. So many of them end up becoming good 4 a.m. friends and agony aunts to their peers, without letting on what they themselves are going through. From birth, it is the family that is the child's constant school, I would go so far as to say it is literally the child's world. It is in family life that attitudes, personalities and value systems, lasting a lifetime, are built and moulded. And that makes PARENTS the child's best TEACHERS.

"Children learn more from what you are than what you teach" opined the sociologist, W. E. B. Du Bois. When we say please, thank you, sorry, excuse me, to them and to others, they will say it back to us and to others. Always do the right thing even when no one is looking, your children will learn the value of honesty. Reiterate that 'Faith in the Almighty' opens

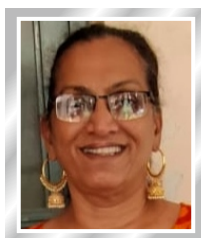
many doors, they will begin to believe in God and turn to Him when they're in need. The onus rests on us to allow our children to discover themselves, by providing opportunities for them. Many of us parents could find ourselves guilty of trying to achieve our unfulfilled dreams, through our children. They are not lumps of clay and we are not potters. Our role in their lives is simply to accompany them by nourishing their hearts, minds and bodies.

We need to empower them to become brave, confident individuals; willing to right a wrong, take a stand when called to do so, in a society that boasts of a culture of death. They need to grow into assured persons, who will take risks and try things they never thought they had the courage for. Our children need to become self-sufficient, to be able to tap into their own resources, without depending on others. And for this to happen, we parents have to learn to say NO.

It may be the most difficult word in the vocabulary of many parents but believe me, there is no love without discipline. We must stop living with the misguided idea that, by giving our children all that we lacked as kids, we

are showing them love. We often speak of the problems of the underprivileged, especially in the Indian context but for me, far greater are the problems of the over privileged children...who get too much of everything...too soon. Ask philosophers, activists, motivational speakers, educators, what kind of society they envision going forward. The answers would most likely be the same. 'A society where persons of depth and substance can make a change.'

Let me end with the words of the wise Khalil Gibran, "Your children are not your children, they are God's gift to mankind. They may have been born to you, but please don't make them like you." In the realm of God, I believe the small initiatives taken by parents against all odds to bring succour to their children, turn out to be the best gifts we can give.



Ninette D'Souza is a prolific writer and retired teacher of Math and Science at Canossa High School, Mahim. She is also the author of Lamplighter and Lamplighter 2.0.



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Marian Fabian, Bandra

I am pleased to donate an amount of Rs.2620 in cash, for the upkeep of Fr. Agnel Ashram and the Balbhavan boys.

Flemy Thekketh, Thrissur

It gives me great satisfaction to have made my monthly contribution of Rs 1000 by NEFT, towards the welfare of the Balbhavan boys. They are doing well in studies and honing their skills in music, sports, painting and elocution, thanks to the Ashram Fathers and the teachers.

Zacharias Joseph, UAE

I have contributed an amount of Rs.25,000 via NEFT, as a thanksgiving to Ven. Fr. Agnel for favours received. The contribution is for the maintenance and daily needs of the Balbhavan boys.

Mercy Joy, Panvel

I have donated an amount of Rs. 1250 via NEFT, as my monthly sponsorship towards the education of a Balbhavan boy.

Jishore Malola Abic, Kottayam

This contribution of Rs. 15,000 towards the full sponsorship of a child, is made with heartfelt blessings and prayers from our family.

Judie Regina, Jagdalpur

We are pleased to sponsor an amount of Rs.45,000 towards the welfare and well-being of three Balbhavan boys.

Lloyd V. D'Almeida, Andheri

I am happy to have visited Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandra Bandstand and contributed Rs.2000 in cash, to fulfil the needs of the Agnelite angels, the Balbhavan boys.

Ravindra Brahmane, Shrirampur

I am providing an amount of Rs. 201 through UPI, in support of the charity works at Fr. Agnel Balbhavan.

MIRACLES OF SAINT ANTHONY - PART II

-Jacqueline Kelly

In the year 1263, the tomb of Saint Anthony was opened in order that his Blessed remains might be transferred to the new Basilica built in his honour. The marvel was then discovered that, though his flesh had fallen to dust, his tongue remained fresh. Hosts of miracles have been attributed to Saint Anthony's intercession. It is also said that Saint Anthony can perform 13 miracles in one day.

Why is Saint Anthony invoked for lost and mislaid things?

In addition to preaching, Saint Anthony also taught theology to his fellow monks. During his time at the Franciscan Monastery in Montpellier, Saint Anthony had a Book of Psalms that he loved. He used it for teaching and it contained his personal notes and comments. The loss of this book was a great blow to Saint Anthony as books back then were very valuable.

The Saint was deeply troubled by the loss of his invaluable work. A novice, who decided to leave their religious community, stole Saint Anthony's book. Saint Anthony turned to prayer, seeking Divine mercy for the troubled novice and the return of his book. His prayer was answered. The novice was not only moved to return Saint Anthony's book to him, but he returned to the community as well. Saint Anthony forgave the novice and urged him to stay true to his calling. The stolen book remains in the Franciscan Monastery in Bologna to this day.

The Vision of the Child Jesus

One day, as Saint Anthony was deep in prayer alone at Camposampiero, he was seen in ecstasy, holding the Child Jesus in his arms. It is believed that this singular privilege was bestowed on Saint Anthony because he kept his soul free even from the smallest stain of sin. This is the reason Saint Anthony is often depicted holding the Child Jesus. Throughout his life, Saint Anthony had a deep devotion to the Child Jesus. Just before dying, he exclaimed once again, "I see my Lord!"

The Miracle of Tongues

Saint Anthony possessed remarkable natural talents, a powerful voice and great eloquence. He had an excellent gift of speech and a deep understanding of the Scriptures and Theology. He was a great preacher. As a missionary, he preached in many cities of Northern Italy and Southern France. Despite not knowing Portuguese in his youth, he miraculously

gained the ability to speak the language, just like the Apostles did after Pentecost. This gift of tongues allowed him to preach with eloquence in French and Italian, and to be understood by people from all over the world.

When instructed by the Holy See to deliver the Lenten Sermons in Rome, he spoke with authority, and in a way that was easily understood by the vast crowd, from different countries who had gathered due to his reputation for holiness. He had to keep a bodyguard to prevent individuals from cutting up his robe to possess as relics.

Dumb Animals Obey the Saint

Near the monastery of the Friars Minor in Montpellier, there was a large pool filled with frogs.

The constant noise of their croaking greatly disturbed the Saint and his community. Tired of the never-ending noise, he decided to put an end to it. He went to the pond, blessed it, and commanded the frogs to stop croaking. Immediately, the croaking ceased, and the pond was thereafter known as Saint Anthony's Pond.

The Miser's Heart

Once, Saint Anthony was present at the funeral of a money lender and was troubled. Suddenly he exclaimed, "This dead man must not be buried in consecrated ground for his body is without a heart and his soul was already suffering the torments of hell." He said that the man's heart was no longer in his body, but that the Gospel had been fulfilled, "For where your treasure is there will be your heart" [Mt 6:21; Lk 12:34]. All were astonished and a doctor was summoned to verify the claim. They opened the man's side and found that his heart was missing but they found it when they opened up a safe where the rich man had stored his fortune.

Bilocation of the Saint

In the Church of St. Pierre-du-Queyraix in Limoges, an incident took place which more than ever showed the extraordinary favours granted by Heaven to Saint Anthony. It was Easter and Anthony was preaching the sermon of the day. Suddenly, he remembered that he had been appointed to chant the Alleluia at the Convent Mass in the local friary. And he had neglected to arrange for a substitute.

Anthony stopped short in his sermon and remained silent for some time. To the congregation, it appeared that the preacher was merely gathering his thoughts.



What they did not know was that Anthony, during that period of silence, had appeared in the convent choir to fulfil his assignment. A few moments later, Anthony took up the thread of his interrupted sermon as if nothing had occurred. A miracle of bilocation had been worked in his favour.

Saint Anthony Rescues his Father

While Saint Anthony was at Padua, a man was killed in Lisbon and the corpse buried in the garden of Saint Anthony's father. Try as he might to prove his innocence, the grisly evidence found in the family garden was enough to convict the poor man of the murder. Just when things were at their worst, God revealed to Anthony the plight of his father.

Immediately, Saint Anthony obtained permission to go to Lisbon. Padua was days away from Lisbon but Anthony was there in a matter of hours. In the court room, he asked that the body of the murdered man be produced. Anthony approached the corpse and, in a firm voice, bade the man speak and tell who had killed him. To the amazement of all, the corpse sat up and clearly stated the name of the murderer. The revived man then turned to Anthony and requested for absolution from his sins, then he died again. Anthony's father was freed and the next day the Saint was back in Padua.

Saint Anthony Again Rescues his Father

Saint Anthony's father, Don Martin de Buglione had an important role in the Court of Lisbon. He was involved in managing the Royal finances. One day, he forgot to ask for a receipt from some officials of the Royal household to whom he had paid large sums of money. These officials were jealous of his position and they saw this as an opportunity to ruin him. They claimed that they hadn't received the money and initiated a lawsuit against him. Saint Anthony suddenly appeared before the dishonest officials and provided a detailed testimony. The enemies were frightened and admitted to receiving the money. The Saint's father was never again troubled by his enemies.

Wind and Rain Obey Saint Anthony

There was the time for instance, when Saint Anthony was about to preach in a Church far too small to accommodate the overflowing crowd. Therefore, he decided it would be better for him to preach in the open. Selecting a place called the Valley of Sand, he bade the multitude to make themselves comfortable. He had scarcely begun his sermon when thick, black clouds covered the sky. Streaks of lightning flashed in the west. Loud clattering of thunder followed. Many people started to leave. Anthony raised his hand and spoke to them. "Stay where you are," he assured them, "everything will be alright."

The storm broke in a rage flooding the city and the surrounding countryside. Yet not one drop of rain fell on the valley where Saint Anthony and the

multitude were gathered. Whereupon, Saint Anthony chose for the topic of his sermon the goodness of God, who had seen fit to grant them such a wonderful miracle.

Rain Respects the Friend of the Saint

While on the subject of rain, there is another incident which occurred at Brive. One day, the cook of the Monastery where Saint Anthony was staying had no food. The cook informed Saint Anthony who sought help from a devout woman. The good lady called her servant and instructed her to take some vegetables from the garden for the monks. Her kindness to the saint had been rewarded by a miracle. The servant, returned completely dry without a single drop of rain on her clothes or shoes. The lady deeply impressed urged her brother, a Canon at Noblet to take care of the monks and assist them to the best of his ability.

Reattached Foot

On another occasion, just before Easter, Saint Anthony was hearing the confession of a young man named Leonard at a Church in Padua. The young man admitted to having violently kicked his mother while in a fit of violent rage.

"Oh, my son," Anthony said to him, "this is, indeed, a grave sin. Grave enough that a fitting punishment for you would be the loss of that leg with which you kicked your mother. Woe to the child who brings such sorrow to his mother or father."

The enormity of his sin made a deep impression on the man. He left the confessional and returned home. All the way home, he could not get it out of his mind. In his room, he found an axe. Overcome with remorse, he picked it up and chopped off the foot with which he had kicked his mother. Learning of this, Saint Anthony hurried to him and, while praying deeply and making the Sign of the Cross, the severed foot and leg were reattached. The young man stood up, perfectly healed and praised God while dancing with joy.

The New Born who Spoke

In Ferrara, Saint Anthony performed a remarkable miracle. A family was in turmoil when a woman gave birth to a child, as the father, a nobleman was jealous of his wife and refused to accept the new born as his own child. Saint Anthony was called to calm the man who was in a fit of rage. The Saint addressed the infant directly asking in the name of Jesus Christ to speak and tell who your father is. The infant pointed to the nobleman and said, "There is my father!"

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

PEACE LOST IN TRANSLATION

- Fr. Peter Fernandes, SFX

The deepest desire of the human soul is to dwell in peace. Therefore, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.” Nonetheless, the million-dollar question is, why has peace eluded humankind ever since the dawn of reason? The first recorded strife between the brothers is found in the Bible, a holy book of peace. Cain dislikes his brother Abel for his success, and out of jealousy and filled with rage, he kills his own brother. Pride can lead to jealousy when a person feels threatened by the achievements or possessions of others, as they perceive it as a challenge to their own pride. Jealousy is the other side of pride, and both culminate in violence, injustice, and destruction.

The great Hindu mythological war, “The Kurukshetra,” also called the Mahabharata, arose from a dynastic struggle between two groups of cousins, the Kauravas and the Pandavas, for the throne of Hastinapura. This epic battle between Pandavas and Kauravas is for that same reason: pride and jealousy. The war is used as the context for the dialogues of the Bhagavad Gita, for humans to learn a valuable lesson. The unlearned supposing valuable lesson by humans is the living proof of this reality, which history writes and continues to write as it repeats and rhymes in every age.

Two thousand some years ago, the Jewish leaders, combined with Roman authorities, violently ended the life of a man from Galilee - a prince of peace. History tells us that peace is lost in translation. And the reason is, the fear of the other is the cause of human woes. And as long as we fear the other, there can never be peace. The definition the dictionary provides, “Peace is a state of harmony in the absence of hostility and violence,” is no answer to remedy the broken humanity and establish a lasting peaceful society. And so, peace continues to elude humankind as it is lost in translation.

The whole world is gripped in fear and terror as mighty wars are raging on. Those in power hold this

axiom, “Peace through strength.” Does it really work? Holding on to this theory, India purchased expensive and explosive Rafale jets to instil awe and fear in their enemy. Sadly, and ironically, India lost twenty-six innocent lives to terrorists, and in retaliation, India also lost some Rafale jets to our enemy, only to end up with a ceasefire mediated by a third party. The nation wants to know what the terms and conditions are under which this ceasefire was called into effect. In retrospect, did India lose peace in translation?

Those in power are now hiding under the shadow of false propaganda with the help of fake news through bought-out news channels. The gullible masses are unaware of the danger lurking from the consequence of pride and jealousy that pushes peace to a distant reality. Remember, no one wants to be subjugated, and when one is, retaliation is a natural response from that dark side of human nature, which history bespeaks loud and clear in all ages.

If it is true that Pakistan brought down the mighty and fearful Rafale jets, then the theory “Peace through Strength” will continue to elude humankind from establishing a peaceful society. Remember, the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires have not taught a valuable lesson to humankind, or perhaps humans are not willing to learn a valuable lesson. What is better, “An eye for an eye,” or “Dharma Yuddha,” or to “forgive your enemy and pray for those who persecute you”?

The ongoing Ukraine war is based on the theory of “peace through strength.” Both NATO and the United States want to subdue Russia to advance their agenda, “the American Imperialism,” only to put the whole of the human race in a precarious situation. Post-Cold War, America enjoyed the status of lone superpower for a short period of time. The trouble started when they felt that they were losing their hegemony, which does not augur well for the pride of the United States.



To hold on to their hegemony, the United States is willing to go to any extent to humiliate their rivals, not realizing the lesson of history. The mess in the Middle East post-September 11, 2001 and fuelling the so-called Arab Spring was for that very reason, to advance the influence of the United States in the name of peace and betterment of the suffering people, is one big fat lie.

Now look at the tariff war; it is another form of that same principle to assert their hegemony around the world, unmindful of the plight of the poor nations. Sadly, most of the world is unaware that the people of Ukraine are used as a pawn to satisfy the wanton greed for power and wealth by their so-called friends in NATO and the big brother, the United States, at the cost of suffering and death to the millions of people for no gain and no purpose in sight for the country of Ukraine.

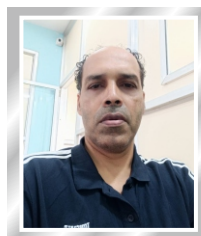
Israel's pre-emptive attack on Iran is part of that same theory. The above suspects, with the assumption of "weapons of mass destruction," invaded Iraq and decimated the country, if that rings a bell. Hence, the hope for a peaceful world is shattered, for the prognosis of this pre-emptive attack is neither well-intended nor for peaceful resolve. The people of Europe are realizing the canniness of their leaders as they are increasing the defence budget to 5 percent of the GDP, that it has nothing to do with peace, and are voicing out in protest to stop the craziness that is leading towards World War III.

The nations of the world and the major religions entertain the thought of "peace through strength" or "an eye for an eye," or "Dharma-Yuddha," raising questions about the justification for violence and suffering caused by conflict. If we check out the peace treaties from the earliest time, they were all based on the above principles, which is why peace has eluded humankind. What was imperative for humankind all the while was to decipher the true nature of peace and how we lost the tack of it in

order to regain it. Peace is a divine bequest because it emanates from God and is perfect in God. St. Augustine defines peace as "the tranquility of order," meaning a state where all things are arranged in their proper place, and each can function according to its nature and purpose.

Instead of understanding the tranquility of order, the spiteful humanity, filled with pride and jealousy, continues to defy the order established by the Creator. Nations, ever striving to build stronger armies and deadly weapons to subjugate the other in the name of peace. Jesus, on the other hand, taught humankind the true path to peace and happiness by humbling himself and offering mercy and forgiveness while upholding truth and justice. And while suffering and dying on the cross, Jesus offered forgiveness to those who were on the wrong side of history, who were promoting injustice and falsehood: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing", these divine words should resonate for all people for all times for peace to reign.

With such unconditional love, Jesus was able to put all things in their proper order for the whole of creation to rejoice and dwell in peace. Therefore, the first greetings of the triumphant Lord were, "Peace be with you." Jesus was able to correct the false notion of the world as he said, "The peace I give you is not the kind of peace the world gives." In other words, in Jesus we have true and lasting peace: "Know Jesus, Know Peace; No Jesus, No Peace." **But with the world, peace gets lost in translation.**



Fr. Peter Fernandes is Incharge of the Bursar's Desk at Pilar, Goa. He is a regular contributor of articles to various publications. His contact: petfern85@gmail.com

READER'S FEEDBACK

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

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HOW TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN LIFE IN A VUCA (VOLATILE, UNCERTAIN, COMPLEX, AMBIGUOUS) WORLD-7

'We are one in the Spirit, We are one in the Lord':

Practice Ecumenism

- Fr. M.K. George, SJ

Many are scandalized by the diverse groups of Christians, fighting over Jesus and his message. The distinctions are many, Roman Catholic, Protestants, Orthodox, Pentecostals, Charismatics, Evangelicals etc. The scandal is when the groups fight among themselves in the name of the good news and the Lord Jesus. 'Sheep stealing' is a jargon among clerics. However, Ecumenism has always remained a major element of Christian proclamation. 'Ecumenism is the concept and principle that Christians of various denominations should come together to develop closer relationships among their churches and promote Christian unity.' However, it is to be noted that 'in the earlier centuries of Christianity, the word *ecumenical* was used to denote church councils (e.g., Nicaea and Chalcedon) whose decisions represented the universal church, in contrast to other councils that enjoyed only regional or limited reception' (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Most authorities date the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement to the Edinburgh (Scotland) World Missionary Conference of 1910. The Conference was a gathering of Protestants and Anglicans. The Conference was concerned with collaboration in Christian Missions. Then, as now, divisions among Christians were hindering the acceptance of the gospel (J.W. Crossin 2012). Though no Catholic participated in that, a letter was sent by Bishop Bonomelli of Cremona, Italy, wishing the participants well. Times have changed. With the Vatican Council II and later, an active ecumenical movement had emerged.

Is there a lag in the ecumenical movement?

Looking around our own parishes, dioceses and even the universal church, we must fear there is a slackening in the movement. While some dioceses still practice, the ecumenical week of prayers together, ecumenism does not feel like a major concern in the life of most people. The reasons are many. Definitely in the West, the decline of Christianity, the widespread sexual abuse crisis and the growth of secularisation have been primary reasons for the decline in ecumenical interest. Besides, such factors as theological disagreements, focus on internal issues, lack of a clear vision and failure of leadership played a role. In India, the growth of religious fundamentalism in the major

religions and attack on minorities would have created an insecurity which stops people from meeting the other leading the individual churches to become more introvert and self-referential.

We need to get back to Vat II call

It was a simple and direct message: 'The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature' (*Unitatis Redintegratio*).

Moving Ahead

If there is to be a substantial change in attitudes towards Ecumenism, the initiative has to come at the Parish level. The parish priests, council members and religious can take initiative to build ecumenical groups who pray together, study together, especially the Bible, and engage in charitable work. A lot of humility will be called for such a movement. The bigger churches, like the Catholic Church will have to shed its superiority feelings and be willing to listen, pray together and work together with even the smallest of churches.

Pope Francis reminds us 'that ecumenism is a journey towards unity-in-diversity, not uniformity, and it's a journey of learning and appreciating the richness of others.' He highlights the "ecumenism of blood," where shared martyrdom unites Christians, encouraging prayer, dialogue, and brotherhood. He views ecumenism as a process of "reconciled diversity" that should seek to unite all Christians in the unity desired by Jesus...**The Journey of Synodality is and must be ecumenical, just as the ecumenical journey is synodal.**



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 gmatholil@gmail.com

JUST FOR FUN

-Christine D'Sylva

The month of July is reputed to be the warmest month in the Northern hemisphere and the coldest month in the Southern hemisphere. In our country, July is the second month of the monsoons and a big relief from the hot summer.

On that positive note, let's begin ...

Hot Dogs



Hot dog day is celebrated in July. A hot dog was a food created in Frankfurt, Germany.

The word hot dog refers to the belief that many people thought that hot dogs had

actual dog meat. Today, hot dogs are both non-vegetarian and vegetarian.

Though hot dogs are popular in the United States, yet they are eaten in many countries too including our own. In England, the world's largest hot dog was made here. Hot dogs are a long bun that has generally sausages or meat and a variety of sauces and at times veggies too.

Hot dogs were first sold at baseball games in 1893. Hot dogs is one of the foods sent to space as a food option. Americans consume an estimated 20 billion hot dogs annually. The world's most expensive hot dog so far was sold for 169 dollars in Seattle.

A hot dog is not classified as a sandwich. The name comes from the German term for sausage, dachshund sausage, resembling a Dachshund dog in its elongated shape and this led it to being called a hot dog.

Inspirational Story



Hachiko was an Akita dog that was adopted by Professor Ueno in Japan in 1900. This professor took Hachiko to the train station every day and the dog would wait for him to return from work.

Sadly, the professor suffered a stroke and died at work, never returning to the station where Hachiko waited patiently for his arrival. Trains came and went, yet Hachiko still waited patiently. Hachiko loved his master so much that for the next ten years faithfully he would continue to wait at the station. His loyalty resulted in erecting a bronze statue at

the Shibuya station and his story inspired a movie - *Hachi - A Dog's Tale*.

This story is a powerful testament to the deep bond between humans and animals. It shows us the unwavering love and affection a dog can have towards its owner.

Quiz



1. Who is known as the founder of nursing? 2. Who is the father of medicine? 3. Which god in ancient Greek and Roman mythology is known as the god of medicine? 4. Who invented homeopathy? 5. Who is the father of biochemistry and the person who coined the term?

Riddle Me



1. Which fruit never wants to be alone? 2. Which fruit can you never cheer up? 3. I can cry without eyes and fly without wings. What am I? 4. What goes up and down but never moves? 5. A boy fell from a fifty foot ladder but was not hurt? How is this possible?

Smile Please



1. Mark felt his body was out of shape and got his doctor's permission to join a gym. He decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. He bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down and perspired for an hour. But by the time he got his leotard on, the class was over.

2. A man asks his wife what she would do if he won the lottery. The wife replies that she would take half, divorce him and move to Hawaii. The man says, "I won twelve bucks. Here is six. Stay in touch."

3. A hitchhiker gets into man's car - Hey, thank for the lift. I hope you do not think that I am a serial killer or anything like that.

Man at the wheel - I don't. Besides what possibly could the chances be of two serial killers sitting in the same car at the same time?

4. What did the gangster's son tell his dad when he

failed his exam? He said. "Dad, they questioned me for three hours but I never told them anything."

Naturopathy - The Science of Nature for Healing



1. If you find your eyes red or you suspect you got a mild eye infection, try this - Take a tablespoon of salt in a small bowl of water, dip a piece of cotton into it and gently pat your eyes for a few minutes.
2. Green tea is a great source of antioxidants that can help protect your cells from damage and help fight disease.
3. Grandma was right. Chicken soup is good for colds.
4. An easy homemade natural scrub to slough away dead skin cells on your body is salt. So do not spend on expensive body scrubs, use salt and you get good results. Salt can be mixed with oil too to exfoliate your skin.

The Value of Vegetables



Veggies are a very essential part of any balanced diet. However, many people steer clear of veggies. Perhaps, this could be because of childhood aversion or sometimes veggies were never prepared

in an appetising manner.

Veggies can be quite delicious if prepared in an appetising manner. Also fresh veggies in the form of salads must be part of a balanced diet at least once or twice a week.

Veggies offer numerous benefits like vitamins and minerals. They contain fibre that contributes to a healthy weight. Vegetables contain antioxidants that help protect the cells from damage caused by free radicals. Consuming a diet rich in veggies has been linked with lower cancer incidence. Veggies can help regulate blood sugar levels and be helpful in managing diabetes. Heart health is also linked to a diet rich in veggies. Many meat eaters who avoid veggies tend to be more prone to heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Veggies should form an integral part of our diet to maintain good health and in weight management.

Sometimes to make kids like veggies, visit vegetarian restaurants which prepare veggies very deliciously. South Indian food is also often vegetarian. If kids get to experience tasty vegetarian food, often enough their liking for veggies can increase.

Brain Teasers



1. A female taxi driver is going down a one-way street the wrong way and passes at least ten cops. Why was she not caught?
2. What can be stolen but never leaves you?
3. Reena goes to the market and buys a dozen tomatoes. Unfortunately on the way back all but nine were squashed. How many tomatoes were left in a good condition?
4. Tom opened a book and discovered that the sum of these two page numbers was 21. But what do you get if you multiply the two page numbers?

What's the Good Word?

Spanish Cuisine



1. Most famous saffron infused dish of Spain.
2. A cold vegetable soup.
3. Deep-fried dough sticks often served with hot chocolate or delicious on its own.
4. Spanish omelette.
5. A dessert with fried milk.

Wisdom Message of the Month

Attitude of Gratitude



An old man who had eight hairs on his balding head went to the barber. The barber was angry and acted sarcastic: "Should I count it or cut it?"

The old man quite unfazed replied: "Colour it!"

This reminds us that life is to be lived with a grateful spirit. The old man could have moaned and groaned because of his scanty hair. But instead of moaning, he chose to celebrate it. Of course one should attempt to remedy a problem but in this case the old man knew his hair once lost might never come back despite remedies. So he chose to be grateful for the little he had. This attitude of gratitude is an important one. Too often we moan and groan about what we do not have and lose sight of what we do have.

It reminds me of old story of a little girl who cried because she had no new shoes. She stared out of her bedroom window and she saw a little girl hobbling along, with crutches. She said, "I cried because I have no new shoes till I saw a little girl with no feet." As we mature we realise we cannot take anything in our life for granted. What might be here today might well be gone tomorrow. So each day embrace the new day with a spirit of gratitude.

A happy lady said, "Each morning when I awaken I

stand in my balcony, and I thank God for everything, for the new day, for the graces, blessings and things I have. It bolsters my mood and helps me to realise while I may lack a few things, there is still plenty I have to keep me happy.”

What do we learn?

An attitude of gratitude is a mind-set characterised by a regular habit of expressing appreciation for the positive aspects of life. It is one of the most powerful tools we can have to help us face life with optimism, cheer and this improves our mental and physical health.

Inspirational True Story



Fit and Healthy

Today being fit and healthy is stressed upon. Fight flab seems to be on most people's minds. People are very aware that being overweight leads to many health problems.

Anita embarked on a personal weight loss journey. She had delivered two babies and gained considerable weight and her body mass index was over 30 at the obesity range.

After her last child was born she begun gaining more and more weight. This is what worked for her. She resigned herself to understanding that since it took time to gain weight it would take time to lose it. There were no short cuts to this. She begun a well-planned diet of nutritious meals focussing on fruits and vegetables instead of excess meat especially red meat.

She chose healthy fats and reduced the amount of carbohydrates in her diet. She avoided food from outside and if she ate from outside it was not more than once or twice a week. Exercise programs of walking, situps and pull-ups helped greatly. She had an occasional treat but never more than once or twice a week like a piece of cake or a chunk of chocolate. It took her two years but she lost 50 pounds.

The truth is all things are achievable if we are persistent in our goal.

Inspirational Quotes



Bruce Lee, the famous star of the classic movie, *Enter the Dragon* has pearls of wisdom to give.

1. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations and you are not in this world

to live up to mine.

2. Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength

to endure a difficult one.

3. Don't fear failure. Not failure but low aim is the crime. In great attempts it is glorious even to fail.

4. Love is like a friendship caught on fire. In the beginning a flame, very pretty, often hot and fierce, but still only light and flickering. As love grows older, our hearts mature and our love becomes coals, deep burning and unquenchable.

5. If there is a God, he is within. You don't ask God to give you things, you depend on God for your inner theme.

6. Mistakes are always forgivable if one has the courage to admit them.

World News

In a recent game at the 2025 Norway Chess tournament, Gukesh Dommaraju, a chess player, defeated Norwegian chess champion, Magnus Carlsen a former world number one. This is Gukesh's first ever classical win over the former world number one chess champion.

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

Answers

Quiz

1. Florence Nightingale. 2. Hippocrates. 3. Asclepius.
4. Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician. 5. Carl Neuberg.

Riddle Me

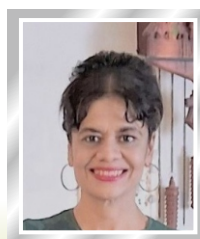
1. Pear. 2. Blueberry. 3. Cloud. 4. Staircase.
5. He was standing at the bottom rung.

Brain Teasers

1. She was walking. 2. Your identity. 3. Nine. 4. 10 multiplied by 11 = 110.

What's the Good Word?

1. Paella. 2. Gazpacho. 3. Churros. 4. Tortilla. 5. Leche Frita.



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 TO VEN. FR. AGNEL FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

BANDRA: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, we have been blessed immensely in many ways. We will continue to pray to the Venerable for his blessings.

- Blossom Vaz

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

MUMBAI: Ven. Fr. Agnel has answered my prayers. We have immense faith in the Venerable and visit Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandra, Mumbai, whenever possible.

-Gwen Jayesh Dabre & Family

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

VASAI: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for answering my prayers and blessing me and my family.

- Mildred D'Mello

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNELO

MUMBAI: I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for his intercession and all the blessings bestowed on me and my family.

- Fatima

THANKSGIVING ON 43RD

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

GUJARAT: We have been blessed immensely for 43 years of our married life. We will continue to pray to the Venerable for his blessings.

- Vina & Sabina

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

VASAI: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, our prayers have been answered. We have been blessed in many ways.

- Sybel Nunes

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

MUMBAI: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have been blessed immensely. Thank you Venerable for answering my prayers.

- Lourdes D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR CLEAR MEDICAL REPORT

MUMBAI: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for my all-clear report. My anxieties have gone and I am happy once again.

- Joglam

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

BHAYANDAR: We often pray to Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession. Our family has been blessed with good health.

- Valancia Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

VASAI: We have been blessed immensely by Ven. Fr. Agnel. I am indeed grateful for all the blessings received.

- Sandeep Gonsalves

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

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

- Amie Rodrigues

THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED

VASAI: We are indeed grateful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing us always. I like to visit Fr. Agnel Ashram, in Bandra Bandstand, whenever possible.

- Nilima D'Cruz

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

BANDRA (EAST): Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have been blessed in several ways. I am indeed thankful to the Venerable.

- Amit Solanki

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

VASAI: I find joy and peace whenever I visit Fr. Agnel Ashram in Bandra. I thank Ven. Fr. Agnel for his kind intercession in answering my prayers.

-Mabel D'Silva

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

UTTAN: Through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my family has been blessed in many ways. We always look up to the Venerable.

-Celia Kasughar

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

The Konkan Cul. Asso.	Mumbai	50000	Bhaves P. Pandya	Mumbai	3105	John Felix D'Souza	Mumbai	2000
Praveen Srivastava	Kandivali	47000	Techno Products	Chennai	3000	Hiren Gala	Dombivali	1600
Judie Regina	Jagdapur	45000	Mathew P. Mathew	Kottayam	3000	Arun Jadhav	Lakshadweep	1500
Paul D'Silva	Bangalore	25000	Michelle D'Souza	Mira Road	3000	Bosco Sequeira	Ambernath	1500
Nilesh Parmar	Ahmedabad	25000	Esha Devadiga	Bengaluru	3000	Antony M.O.	Thrissur	1500
Monalisa Braganza	Mumbai	24000	Molly K. M.	Thrissur	3000	Gavin Peter Fonseca	Mumbai	1500
Minal Y. Nadar	Mumbai	15000	Sandeep Rodrigues	Nalasopara	3000	Peter Dabhi	Jamnagar	1500
Muriel Mitra	Mumbai	15000	Martina Vaz	Mumbai	3000	Godfrey D'Souza	Mumbai	1500
Edmund Fernandes	Mumbai	15000	Sandra D'Souza	Mumbai	3000	Linto Joy	Panvel	1250
Zenobia Nair	Mumbai	12000	Jimmy Dubash	Mumbai	3000	Fransquinha Fernandes	Mumbai	1250
Pravin Pancha	Navi Mumbai	11111	Aditee Fernandes	Vasai	3000	Melvyn D'Mello	Thane	1250
Nirmala Chettiar	Mumbai	10000	Anjali Krishnan	Thane	2500	Suzanne D'Souza	Mumbai	1250
Hugh & Colleen Gantzer	Uttarakhand	10000	Michelle Fernandes	Mumbai	2200	Alice D'Souza	Mumbai	1250
Jacob Puthur	Thrissur	10000	Sunny Jacob	Kalloorkad	2100	Sharon D'Souza	Mumbai	1250
Joseph Y.J.	Kochi	10000	Ankita Parmar	Anand	2001	Nikhil Atram	Mumbai	1250
Deepak / Sheila Gore	Mumbai	10000	Macwan Richard	Ahmedabad	2000	Jacob D'Souza	Mumbai	1200
Melroy Fernandes	Mumbai	10000	A.R. Elavia	Mumbai	2000	Rita Johnson	Trichur	1200
Allwyn Singh	Thane	10000	Isabel Hendricks	Tamil Nadu	2000	Anju Mahesh Chedda	Vashi	1111
Jose T.K.	Trichur	10000	Rija Anna Francis	Kayamkulam	2000	Pravin Salunkhe	Mira Road	1012
Melini D'Souza	Mumbai	10000	Burk D'Couto	Cochin	2000	Atul K. Dedhia	Mumbai	1002
M. Jesu Elango	Nalasopara	10000	Jessie Fernandes	Mumbai	2000	Rupal Pitale	Thane	1001
Augusthya Mody	Mumbai	10000	Adler Fernandes	Naigaon	2000	Supriya	Mumbai	1001
Jacintha Menezes	Mumbai	7000	Attely Anto Kuttikadan	Dombivali	2000	Hitesh Hirjidama	Mumbai	1001
Antoniammal Alangaram	Tamil Nadu	7000	Shweta Wilban Pereira	Vasai	2000	Mehernosh K. Khajotia	Mumbai	1001
Marie Shanti Lucien	Chennai	6000	Usha Banger	Navi Mumbai	2000	Kashmira M. Khajotia	Mumbai	1001
Fredric Lall	Mumbai	6000	Sanjaophilip Dabre	Vasai	2000	Shazad M. Khajotia	Mumbai	1001
Warren Fernandes	Mumbai	6000	Supriya & Jopson Pereira	Vasai	2000	Kimaya Subramaniam	Mumbai	1001
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5100	Prathvi D'Almeida	Bangalore	2000	Amisha Carvalho	Thane	1001
Felix Menezes	Mumbai	5000	Heather Hyrapiet	Kolkata	2000	Paresh M. Thakkar	Thane	1000
Candida Rebello	Mumbai	5000	Aldrin Pashana	Thane	2000	Preet Paresh Thakkar	Thane	1000
Amelia Dias	Virar	5000	Umesh Shah	Mumbai	2000	Yaksh Shrikant Thakkar	Thane	1000
Ansilla Dabre	Palghar	5000	Jaison Chackochen	Ernakulam	2000	Elizabeth Pinto	Mumbai	1000
Mark Fernandes	Mumbai	5000	Thinesh S.	Mumbai	2000	Geet Pujara	Thane	1000
Dr. Niket Shastri	Anand	5000	Manisha Kamdar	Mumbai	2000	Ziva Mistry	Mumbai	1000
Yash Mehta	Mumbai	5000	Bernard/Daisy Vaz	Mumbai	2000	Gremsy Brian Sequeira	Mangalore	1000
Swati Amonkar	Mumbai	5000	Jophiel Jojo Joy	Mumbai	2000	Lilly Abraham	Kottayam	1000
Falguni Solanki	Naigaon	5000	Piona Boat	Thane	2000	Durai Engineering Works	Mumbai	1000
Sagaya Sara Ethel	Pondicherry	5000	Bhavin M. Dedhia	Mumbai	2000	Walter Dabre	Vasai	1000
Souvik Majumdar	Thane	5000	Leo Fernandes & Fly	Mumbai	2000	Rosemary D'Sa	Vasai	1000
Danny Fernandes	Vasai	5000	Dicky Alphonso	Mumbai	2000	Alfred D'Costa	Mumbai	1000
Lawrence Marcus	Mumbai	5000	S. Selvappan	Tamil Nadu	2000	A.Santhappan	Kanyakumari	1000
Sania S. D'Mello	Vasai	4000	Joana Louis Alphanso	Vasai West	2000	Amala Nadar	Mumbai	1000

BOB'S BANTER

by Robert Clements

Burying a Bible...!

So, there I was, casually scrolling through my social media feed - dodging the usual political fireworks, a dozen "inspirational" reels from people who clearly need inspiration themselves - when I stumbled upon a gem: a video of a man burying an open Bible at the entrance of his home.

Yes, burying. Like treasure.

And not just any page - he'd carefully selected a Psalm of protection. He wanted divine security, it seemed, right at his doorstep. Perhaps he hoped burglars would trip over the holy book, or maybe demons would see the corner of Psalm 91 sticking out of the mud and say, "Oops, wrong house!"

Now, I'm not one to mock another man's faith. But I do chuckle - lovingly - at our desperate attempts to turn the sacred into superstition. You see, burying a Bible like a landmine doesn't trigger heavenly

chants to every delivery boy and stray dog that crossed his compound. "Yea, though you bring Amazon parcels through the valley of the shadow of death, fear no evil..."

Let's get real, dear reader. The Bible is not some spiritual scarecrow for warding off bad vibes. It's not a burglar alarm, nor a raincoat against curses. It's a living word. Living. And for anything living to work, it needs to be inside you. Not under the floor tiles.

Protection doesn't come from pages but from the Person behind those pages. It comes when those words leap off the paper and plant themselves deep inside you - right there, in that cluttered, chaotic place we call the heart.

That's when the Psalm sings to you in the storm. That's when faith becomes armour - not the book in



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protection. If anything, God might be peeking down, nudging an angel and saying, "That's not what I meant when I said hide my Word in your heart!"

We Indians, of course, are professionals at turning faith into ritual. We apply sacred ash and then yell at our spouses. We light incense and then curse at the traffic. We wear rings with holy symbols and raise our fists in road rage. So burying a Bible at the gate? It's just another creative chapter in our ongoing saga of 'religious jugaad'- a spiritual shortcut.

But here's the real irony: The man had his Bible open! As if the open pages would allow the Psalm to breathe through the soil and whisper heavenly

your hand, but the belief that burns like fire in your soul.

So no, burying a Bible or any religious book or religious statue or writing won't protect your home. But reading it, understanding it, and letting it challenge the way you live - that will change your life.

Till then, if you're burying anything at the gate, make it bad habits - not holy books. And yes, maybe read that Psalm, meditate on it, pray about it, before you reach for the shovel...!

***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*



Archbishop Varghese Chakkalakkal

Archbishop John Rodrigues

Archbishop Udumala Bala Showreddy



Three Indian archbishops receive Pallium from Pope Leo



On the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, June 29, 2025, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV conferred the pallium on three Indian Archbishops during a solemn Eucharistic Celebration at the Altar of Confession in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican.

During the celebration, the Holy Father blessed and conferred the pallium upon 54 newly appointed metropolitan archbishops from around the world, including three from India.

The Indian prelates receiving the pallium this year are **Archbishop John Rodrigues of Mumbai, Archbishop Varghese Chakkalakkal of Calicut and Archbishop Udumala Bala Showreddy of Visakhapatnam.**

The pallium is a sacred liturgical vestment made from white lamb's wool, worn by metropolitan archbishops as a sign of their communion with the Pope and their pastoral authority within their respective provinces. Symbolizing unity with the See of Peter, the pallium signifies the archbishop's mission of service *cum Petro et sub Petro* - with Peter and under Peter.

Worn over the chasuble, the pallium is about 5 cm wide and features two hanging bands, front and back, each 30 cm long, with weighted silk-covered lead pieces at the ends. It is adorned with six black crosses, and three of these crosses are affixed with a pin known as a spinula - a small thorn-like pin that evokes the burden and sacrifice of episcopal ministry.

This deeply symbolic tradition, held annually on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, reinforces the hierarchical communion of the Catholic Church and the shared apostolic mission entrusted to its leaders across the globe.

Regn. No. of Publication RNI-9473/64
Date of Publication 10th of every month
Date of posting 14th & 15th of every month
Single copy Price Rs. 15/-
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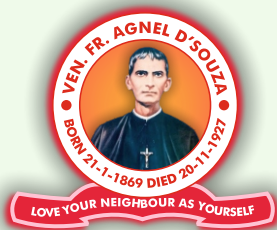


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