

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

(Total pages 24)

A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

Vol.25 No.38 ■ Mumbai, September 19, 2016 ■ Rs. 5

Missing The Saint For The Miracles

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I did not see the camera pan on our Foreign Minister, Shushma Swaraj, ... nor on Mamta Banerjee ... Arvind Kejriwal, ... The total lack of creativity was evidenced by the choice of the liturgy...

After watching the canonisation the only message ... monolithic Catholic Church seems stuck somewhere in the European Middle Ages. What a wasted opportunity to highlight the work, the mission and the motivation of Mother Teresa.

(Read on page 4)

Indian bishops mourn prominent lay leader's death

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) has mourned the death of George Menezes, a former member of the Pontifical Council for Laity who was best known for his writings and humor.

Menezes, former president of the All India Catholic Union (AICU), died on September 9 in Mumbai at Bandra, after prolonged illness. He was 88.

CBCI secretary general Bishop Theodore Mascarenhas described Menezes as "one of the Catholic Church's beloved, courageous and illustrious sons."

"A prominent Journalist, award winning writer, inspirational speaker and a divergent thinker, Menezes served God and humanity with full dedication and love," the Church official said in a press release issued on September 11.



George Menezes

Menezes served India as an Indian Air Force officer and as a diplomat with the Indian Embassy in Paris. He had joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and became a member of its national executive. However, he left the party after a short while when he found it incompatible with his principles. In a "hard-hitting letter" to the then BJP president Lal Krishna Advani, Menezes lamented the way things were being dealt with in the party, Bishop Mas-

carenhas recalled.

"He loved the Church with all his heart. He rendered services as a member of the Pontifical Council for Laity, a Member of the "think tank" of Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences and President of the All India Catholic Union," the prelate says.

Bishop Mascarenhas says the Indian Church had not always agreed with what Menezes said, but "we were absolutely sure that he loved the Church and wanted the Church to love and be loved."

Menezes died at his home in Bandra, a suburb of Mumbai. The funeral service was held on September 11 at St Andrew's Church in Bandra.

Menezes was best known for his writings and his humor. His popular books are 'Pardon, Your Middle is Showing,' 'The Naked Liberal,' 'One Sip at a Time.'

Menezes, who hailed from the island of Diwar, but lived in Mumbai. He is survived by a son and a daughter.

Mourning Menezes' death the Catholic Association of Goa hailed him as "an outspoken lay conscience of the Catholic Church in India."

Association president Edwin Fonseca highlighted his work on compassion and concern for human rights especially against acts on Christians in Orissa, Karnataka and elsewhere in 2008. "George always fought for peace in India, stressing on the need to uphold the Constitution's multi-religiosity and multi-culture," Fonseca added.

"Pardon, Your Middle is Showing," a collection of Menezes' literary efforts had appeared in The Times of India, Indian Express, The Illustrated Weekly of India, Debonair and Home Life. It carried illustrations by Menezes' fellow-Goan, Mario Miranda.

His admirers compare Menezes to English writer and humorist P.G. Wodehouse.

In his writings Menezes poked fun at himself. The harassed father, the bald-headed Lothario, the drunken delinquent and the peril-prone writer are familiar facets of Menezes characterization. Menezes admitted in the book that he had "a highly fertile imagination."

Courtesy: mattersindia

Celebrating the Guinness World Records recognition



Dr. A. F. Pinto, Chairman, Madam Grace Pinto, MD and Mr. Ryan Pinto, CEO Celebrating the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS recognition with young Ryanites

The Ryan International Group of Institutions was recently recognized for its efforts for charity by none other than the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS. The Group's school in Sharjah received this accolade for participating in the world's largest charity donation for the poor. The students collected over 205,122 items of cloth-

ing for donation. This was verified by the authorities of Guinness World Records and was declared as a record. Speaking on this achievement, Madam Grace Pinto said, "We are grateful for the vision that Lord Jesus Christ has given us to nurture responsible and compassionate future citizens of the world." Ryan Schools are well-known for providing holistic education to students and undertaking large scale initiatives to reach out to the underprivileged to build social responsibility amongst them.

—RONIDA

Vol.25 No.38 September 19, 2016 Rs.5/-

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'Thought for the week'

Virtues create love both within the self and within others. When virtues reduce, the quality of love also reduces. When all virtues are present, there is complete and pure love.

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One year (anywhere in India) Rs. 250

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Cover : Missing the Saint for the Miracles:

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Climate Change

by Don Aguiar

I remember the first time I heard about the climate change problem, and it gave me a very uneasy feeling. It was way back in 1987.

Some people then asked if all this talk of climate change was just a device: while others said that they didn't care about it. The world is not something that is only outside us: the world is within us too. **WE ARE THE WORLD.** There is an old proverb; tomorrow never comes. But the old proverb has only been a proverb, tomorrow has kept coming. It may not come as tomorrow: it will always come as today – in that sense the proverb is right. But today the situation is totally different: tomorrow really may not come

The daily news reminds us again and again of the importance of this message. I'm filled with morbid fascination as I read each news report of shrinking ice, or species migrating towards the poles or prediction of much of the world's landmass turning to desert. And I'm intensely curious about what's going to happen in the next few years.

All of our countries will be affected by a changing climate. But the world's poorest people will bear the heaviest burden—from rising seas and more intense droughts, shortages of water and food. **We will be seeing climate change refugees.**

Climate change which is related to Global warming is the term used to describe a gradual increase in the average temperature of the Earth's atmosphere and its oceans, a change that is believed to be permanently changing the Earth's climate.

There is great debate among many people, and sometimes in the news, on whether global warming is real (some call it a hoax). But climate scientists looking at the data and facts agree the planet is warming. While many view the effects of global warming to be more substantial and more rapidly occurring than others do, the scientific consensus on climatic changes related to global warming is that the average temperature of the Earth has risen between 0.4 and 0.8 °C over the past 100 years.

The increased volumes of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released by the burning of fossil fuels, land clearing, agriculture, and other human activities, are believed to be the primary sources of the global warming that has occurred over the past 50 years.

Scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate carrying out global warming research have recently predicted that average global temperatures could increase between 1.4 and 5.8 °C by the year 2100. Changes resulting from global warming may include rising sea levels due to the melting of the polar ice caps, as well as an increase in occurrence and severity of storms and other severe weather events.

(Contd.. on p. 22)

Missing The Saint For The Miracles

After watching the canonisation ceremony of Mother Teresa on TV on 4th September, I don't know whether to yawn with ennui, or bang my fists with angst. I was not particularly enthused about Mother Teresa being declared a Saint, as I believed that, her human shortcomings notwithstanding, she was always a living saint, and did not require any "miracles" to prove it. Her life of total commitment, compassion and service was a miracle in itself.

I first met Mother Teresa in 1967, when my mother had invited her to our hometown, Kanpur. I then spent several hours driving her around town to select a place for her sisters to stay. She has had meals at our home; and when my mother complained to her about me in 1971 she called me over for an hour long tête-à-tête. In 1967 itself I had noticed an intensity in her eyes, while she silently thumbed her rosary beads. She seemed to be in direct communication with the Lord above.

But this piece is not about Mother Teresa per se. It is specific to the canonisation ceremony presided over by Pope Francis at St Peter's Square at the Vatican. My thoughts flew to two earlier "mega events" connected with her. The first was her State funeral in Kolkata in 1997; and the second was her beatification ceremony by Pope John Paul II, a few years later, at the Vatican. I had seen both on TV, and found a sickeningly familiar pattern.

Her funeral took place just a few days after that of Princess Diana. The latter was a tall young woman who looked even better in short dresses. Her life was cut shorter in a tragic road accident that ended her failed marriage. The British royalty, known for its pageantry, perhaps with a tinge of guilt for having failed its glamorous princess,

pulled out all the stops for the funeral, beamed live to millions across the world.

There was a picture of her posing with Mother Teresa. The tall, beautiful young woman on the one hand, and the frail, stooped one covered from head to toe on the other. She was even more beautiful, as in Malcolm Muggeridge's words "something beautiful for God". Mother Teresa was more than just beautiful, she was beatific. Yet the State sought to match the pageantry of the British. Unfortunately, the worldly beautiful and the divinely beatific can be contrasted, not compared, nor competed with.



by chhotebhai *

One of the two enduring (not endearing) images from Mother Teresa's funeral was the gun salute by an army contingent. I felt it totally incongruous to fire a fusillade in honour of a Nobel Peace laureate.

The other image was when communion was being distributed. A foreign diplomat pointedly made way for Sonia Gandhi to go ahead of him, but she remained transfixed to her chair. She goes to temples and dargahs, but was loath to receive communion in public. I wondered.

Fast forward now to the beatification by Pope John Paul II. The Pope was not just frail, he was almost immobile, slumped in St Peter's Chair. He was also inaudible, with slurred speech. It was pathetic. Here was an event that was being attended by over 3 lakh pilgrims, and being watched by millions across the globe. It turned out to be a no-go, no-show missed opportunity.

With a more pragmatic and liberal Pope Francis now in the hot seat, I expected a much more innovative canonisation. It was not to be. It was an encore of a sonorous, sombre ritual in Latin, a dead language. Even

the camera work was pathetic. I was watching BBC and an Indian channel in English. Where they were getting the live feed from was anybody's guess. Other than the occasional panoramic shot of the majestic colonnades of St Peter's Square, the camera kept panning on the faces of non-entities in the crowd, most of whom were fanning themselves with the booklets to beat the heat.

I had hoped to see something truly catholic (universal) with a spicy Indian flavour. All we got was bland continental fare, minus any flair. I expected to see an Indian dance troupe, like Charles Vaz had once presented before Pope John Paul II. I expected to see some Indian liturgical customs like aarti, and some hymns in Hindi/Bengali. All we got was one short prayer in Bengali. One of the readings was in Spanish, and a prayer for persecuted Christians was in Chinese (rather indiscreet).

I did not see the camera pan on our Foreign Minister, Shushma Swaraj, who later met the Pope; nor on Mamta Banerjee who reportedly walked in a two-kilometre long procession; nor on Arvind Kejriwal, with or without his cough and muffler! India was muffled and muzzled at the canonisation. As an Indian and as a catholic (universalist) I was sorely disappointed.

Even the commentary was pathetic. Because I know a little Latin and the order of the Mass, I knew what was going on. For the majority of the universe it was a meaningless ritual, like Mother Teresa's sombre funeral. There was no joi-de-vivre, no spontaneity, nothing. The only digression from the prepared text was Pope Francis saying that he still felt more comfortable with saying Mother Teresa, rather than Saint Teresa. I am on the same page as him on that.

The total lack of creativity was evi-

(Contd.. on p. 15)



'Mother' becomes a Saint

Millions of people across the globe will be watching the canonisation ceremony of Mother Teresa 'live' on Sep 4, from the Vatican. While Mother was deeply religious like all nuns, what sets her apart are her 'works of charity'. Mother had great faith and her works are testimony of her faith. "For what good is faith without works?" says the Bible.

While Catholics and people of other faiths rejoice and celebrate the canonization of Mother Teresa in various ways, a small church in Malad East (St Jude's church, with just 800 parishioners) seemed to have captured the real essence of Mother's mission in life, by undertaking to do 'works of charity'. The entire parish will be involved all through the day cooking and distributing food to the poor—a truly fitting tribute to the Mother.

—Prof Robert Castellino
Mumbai

It is the Law

Got to know about a very strange but true symbiosis of the law of retaliation and the impact of revengeful application vis a vis human interaction in everyday life and living.

We are all beings that are in continuous vibration. Each human vertebrae vibrates differently than the other neighborly human species. It is an experience that is entirely yours to contain and dispense with. It is continuous according to your feelings and the progression of your mind activity. Another person cannot vibrate the same as you are under normal circumstances. They cannot experience the same drift. Nor can they imitate

and experience the same experience. They can estimate and judge the outcome of your vibrations and may try to interfere with your vibrations and dishonor the reality of non interference by offering their opinion to affect you. But their opinion matters not under all circumstances that prevail. A thousand people may push their strength on you by their vibrations and yet it would not interfere with your aura and mind. But if you push them back by retaliating then you are allowing the negation of all that is in propulsion towards you from their power of indulgence. You begin to get affected and this stance weakens your placement in vibration. Often one succumbs to the impact. But if you do not push against their force meant to flow towards you then you are allowing those people pushing against you to affect their own vibrations. In that progression they are affecting what happens to their own vibration. They are, because of the law of inverse reciprocity affecting their own point of attraction. This does not affect you. You are on safe grounds unless YOU retaliate and push against them. Then all hell breaks loose and all what happens will depend on the strength and vigor inside you that may help your formidable self to stay on a safe plateau depending on the strength of their vibration settling on you and to what extent is the focus.

—Rtn. Calwyn D'Abreo

Rare Personal Glimpses of Mother Teresa!

On 2nd Sept. 2016, prior to her canonization, Sr. Mary PremaPierick, the current superior general of the

Missionaries of Charity, in an interview to ZENIT, has given us unique titbits of her private life.

She was responding to how the figure of Mother Teresa helps understand that Christianity is a religion of peace, in spite of religious intolerance towards them. The German nun noted how at her funeral faithful of all religions were drawn to Mother's selfless example and sanctity. She called her an 'icon' of unity, tolerance and love.

She revealed how in 1980, she was touched when Mother gave her a crucifix. She never did anything to lead others to herself, but only to Jesus and Mary. Even in her old age, she tried to be the first one in the chapel. Mass always empowered Mother to serve the poorest.

She was our Mother and teacher! She guided us how to live life in a practical way, through the high demands of total surrender and trust in God's divine mercy! She lived her religious life with so much joy and enthusiasm. She always had this contagious smile, which I believe was her gift to Jesus and the world.

She highlighted Mother's obedience – if a doctor prescribed medicine, she took it like an obedient child. This humility portrayed her true poverty, sharing her pain and sufferings with those around her.

Rather than one saying, she loved the people of Kolkata, it would be more correct to say, she loved the individual sufferer, even the least (cf. Mt. 25:40).

—Dr. Trevor Colaso
(Now temporarily at Memphis, Tennessee, USA).

Cardinal urges austerity during ceremonies

Cardinal George Alencherry, head of the Syro-Malabar Church has asked bishops, priests, religious and lay people to adopt a life of simplicity, saying that luxury in the church should be seen as a violation of the

(Contd.. on p. 6)

(Contd.. from p. 5)

rights of the poor. Ceremonies such as ordinations of priests and bishops, weddings and funerals should not become extravagant celebrations. Every such event should consider the "poorest of the poor" in society, he said.

The Syro-Malabar church, has a following of about 4.5 million believers and is in full communion with the Roman Catholic church. They account for nearly one-fourth of Catholics in the India and are the second largest denomination after the Latin Catholics (total Catholic population in India is about 20 million). Worldwide, the Syro-Malabar church, headquartered at Ernakulum is the second largest Eastern rite Catholic church after the Ukrainian Eastern Catholic church. Incidentally, in the Syro-Malabar rite the sacraments of Baptism Confirmation (confirmation) and Holy Eucharist are administered on the same day to infants or pre-school children. However, only a piece of the consecrated Host is given to the child. Thereafter, Holy Communion is given only after the child reaches the age of reason.

Though this practice may seem extreme from our point of view, the Syro-Malabar church's exhortation to abjure ostentation during religious ceremonies is commendable and is the need of the hour. Today virtually all sacraments are accompanied by lavish celebrations. While Baptisms, First Holy Communion and weddings are now *de rigueur*, 'Death Anniversaries' are also gaining ground with 6-course meals. And now, even, 'month's mind masses' are becoming celebratory with food packets being discretely handed out after prayers at the cemetery.

Cardinal Alencherry has come down heavily on use of firecrackers and loudspeakers during religious festivals as the faithful are unable to pray in peace and tranquility. The cardinal has also expressed himself against trade on church premises during festivals (the Bandra fair, which has become very commercial, is a case in point). Bandra locals are against the fair as it causes immense inconvenience to the public for 8 days. All Bandraites they want is one day to

celebrate their feast. In Goa the Feast of Our Lady of the Mount (Old Goa) is celebrated on Sunday 11th September, which is appropriate being the first Sunday after the birthday of Mother Mary. In Bandra however the fair starts from Sunday 11th September and will go on till Sunday 18th September which is the feast day. While one feast (in Goa) may be seen as spiritual, the other appears to be purely commercial..

—Prof Robert Castellino
Mumbai

Mercy and compassion as service to God

In this jubilee year of mercy observed in the Catholic church, we are all called upon to treat our fellow beings with compassion and mercy since God our loving Father is merciful and we are all God's creation and consequently his children. This idea is however different in Hinduism as told to us by Swami Shantatmananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna mission in Delhi. According to him, Sri Ramakrishna, the great Hindu mystic, taught that man being an insignificant creature as tiny as a worm, can never show compassion to fellow beings, because what we call compassion is only service of God in man. Every human is a manifestation of God. Hence all activities of compassion are done with the idea of serving God in the human being. When this done, all ideas of who is superior or inferior, or

more powerful/less powerful, etc, are negated since such service to God does not allow the building up of an ego or pride in the server, but instead causes a spiritual uplift, as the benefit to the receiver is seen as only as a by-product of the endeavour. This forms the basis of the Ramakrishna mission which runs several hospitals, dispensaries and educational institutions with the noble intention of serving God in human beings. Saint Mother Teresa's selfless service to the poorest of the poor, the homeless, and the lepers was also similar, because she saw Christ in every suffering human.

—A. F. Nazareth
Prudential Palms

Prison Ministry Sunday

On 14th August, the Catholic Church celebrated Prison Ministry Sunday. This should be an occasion for parishes to help the prisoners in the prisons located within their parishes to live a respectful, meaningful, decent and fruitful life. Regular visits should be made by the parishioners and console the innocent prisoners who are false convicted. Eucharistic ministers can also administer Holy Eucharist to Catholic prisoners and pray for them. Similarly prisoners could be taught self employment schemes which will help them to lead a decent and meaningful life once they are released from the prisons.

—Cajetan Peter D'Souza

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India is no country for daughters' they say! The harsh truth is, with Patriarchy exercising a rigid rule on the country's milieu, India's daughters have been reduced to being either 'Paraya Dhan', beasts of burden or sex objects. They are always someone's daughters but not mine.

But these daughters of India are celebrated as a gift to mankind by some communities, on occasions designated for this purpose. It is but most appropriate to celebrate the gift of girls on the Nativity of Mother Mary, Mother of God and all humankind. She, who bore Jesus, nurtured him, taught and cared for him to silently follow him to Calvary with a sword piercing her heart at the sight of her beloved Son is the true woman of substance. Hers is a life, lived as an exemplary daughter and mother, to be venerated and emulated by us!

"Day of the Girl-Child" is celebrated in the Archdiocese of Bombay during the week around the birth of Mother Mary, with special prayers and programmes focusing on the role of a woman in society. Oral tributes without any action to reinforce a change in India's attitudes and superstitious beliefs have so far not yielded any noticeable improvements in the fate of the girl children in the country.

A look at the reality that is India today will shake us out of our complacency. It is accepted widely that girls are a burden to the family. Therefore they receive hardly any education, nutrition, care or attention, living on the fringes waiting to be married off to rich old men or trafficked, used and abused! It is not confined to the rural, illiterate folk but practiced in educated, sophisticated urban areas behind closed doors.

The following two eye-witness accounts are two of the many incidents that may prompt us to take a new look at how we treat our girl children.

Those were the days when the demand for housemaids from 'back home', who lived and worked in homes was at its peak. Since religious centres engaged in education and social work build numerous contacts

with the poor and needy, it is easy for them

to persuade a girl or two to come to work in the city. And if the employers are related to them, the maid is handpicked and promised the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow! With total trust in the garb of the religious,

parents hand over their kids to the 'sister', as it happened in this case!

So it was that a little girl from a backward hamlet in the State of Karnataka was 'transported' to the city to work as a 'maid' in the small flat, the residence of a family of three, parents and son, a college student apparently running wild. This somebody's daughter was a lively, happy and enthusiastic child who learnt the housework and adopted the family as her own in no time at all. Working parents did not spare much time for their son or the poor girl. For this ignorant child, growing up turned out to be a novel experience at the hands of the only teacher available to her- the depraved college student. She was abused. Not knowing any better she was convinced that 'this' was the way it happens to all and there was nothing wrong in it. The mother, a teacher herself was blissfully unaware of the happening and maybe chose to turn a blind eye at her son's misdemeanour. The innocent child, far away from the safety of her own home had grown into a woman and also, a mother-to-be!

When the parents came to know of her condition, they swiftly dropped her like a hot potato, despatched her in a jiffy to her village and her parents. This Catholic couple did not waste a



single moment berating their only wonton son or feeling responsible for the sad plight of someone's daughter. What happened to the child-woman after that is so sad that we would hang our heads in shame! Till today, I shudder to think how we exploit our fragile little girls if they are someone else's chil-

dren.

The second incident is as heart-breaking as the first one. A woman from the North-East of India was found loitering in tears at the roadside in this city by a house worker. Starving and filthy, the woman was neither articulate nor convincing enough to explain her story. Gradually what emerged was a pathetic story of ruthless cruelty-- she had been thrown out of a celebrity household without a penny after being accused of thieving and she had nowhere to go.

The irony of it was that the mistress of the manor was a well-known Catholic, moving in the higher circles of society. The house-worker who found her took her to her own mistress who readily accepted her into her own household, and the destitute found food, a corner to curl up and nothing more. Over a period of time, her frantic appeals to all and sundry to look for her two teen daughters who had been brought to the city by a distant relative, reached the right ears and efforts were made to look for the two girls. Though one of them was located, the girl had made her own life in the company of men and refused to take responsibility for the mother. And the senior is toiling somewhere, lost in the statistics of exploited women that India refuses to acknowledge!

Numerable instances of girls working endlessly to support the family or sacrificing their desires and ambitions to care for the aged parents tell a story of the tenderness within a daughter's heart. How then is this 'someone's daughter' not mine to love and protect?



BY VERA ALVARES

Closing The Floodgates On Surrogates

by *chhotebhai*

Surrogacy has been in the news, because a bill to close the floodgates on the surrogates is being introduced in Parliament. More than the issue of surrogacy itself, what really opened another floodgate was the statement of Shushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs, that gay couples would not be allowed to go for surrogacy, as it was against our Indian ethos.

I chanced upon an interesting debate on surrogacy on a leading English TV channel. One of the suggestions made by a doctor panellist was that surrogacy be brought under the purview of the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), as it was a Govt body with all the necessary infrastructure and expertise, so there was no need to establish another body for surrogacy. CARA would suffice.

I did not sleep that night because I had studied the CARA document on adoption promulgated on 17/7/2015, by the Ministry of Child Development; but could not recall its various provisions. Though surrogacy and adoption are not quite the same thing, they address the needs of the same section of society – the childless couple. I wanted to check out if gay couples were also banned from adoption, for whatever reason.

Readers may recall that when the CARA guidelines were issued last year, the Missionaries of Charity (MCs), on the advice of some bishops, took the moral high ground and decided to surrender their licences as adoption centres, because some of the provisions of the new guidelines militated against their religious beliefs. One of the major objections of the MCs was that gay couples had been given the right to adopt. This would be against the Indian “ethos” propounded by Swaraj, for surrogacy, just as it was against the religious “ethos” on which Mother Teresa founded the MCs. What is the truth of



the matter?

I studied the 50-page CARA document, with special regard to Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs). There is no reference to gay couples whatsoever. Section 5 on the eligibility criteria of PAPs states that they should be “physically, mentally and emotionally stable” (5a). It expects such a couple to have “at least two years of stable marital relationship” (5f). The “consent of both spouses is required” (5e). However, it also states, somewhat contradictorily, that PAPs, irrespective of their marital status, and whether or not they have their own biological children, can adopt a child (5b). Couples with more than four children would not be eligible as PAPs (5j).

The PAPs are expected to register online in Schedule 5. They must declare their status as “single/ spinster/ widow/ widower/ divorcee/ separated or married couple”. There seem to be many anomalies here. For example, a separated singleton is still legally married. Then how can such a person adopt without the consent of the spouse (cf 5e)?

The guidelines stipulate that the PAPs should have compatibility (1.15). They also state that “the child’s best interests shall be of paramount consideration” (3a). One could presume this rightness of intention in a childless couple. It would be difficult to establish this in the case of singletons, divorcees and separated persons. Would such persons be looking at the “child’s best interests”, or their own vested interest of security and social acceptance?

When the MCs established their Shishu Bhawan in my hometown, Kanpur, about 50 years ago, I was a frequent visitor. Many abandoned and orphaned children were lovingly cared for. At that time there was a stigma attached to adoption, and ironically, till just a few years ago, Christians did not have the right to adopt, till an amendment in the Juvenile Justice Act. The MCs brought up these children, and even arranged their marriages. I myself have been god father to several of them.

Then the tide turned. Whether it was changed lifestyles, career options, or indiscriminate use of artificial birth control methods – there was a sudden spurt in infertility of couples and a corresponding demand for adoption. Initially the first choice was for a boy child. That prejudice soon disappeared as well, and there was a long waiting list for adoptions. Whether by rule or discretion, I am not sure, but the MCs only entertained those PAPs who were medically confirmed as being infertile. And they did not entertain those who already had children. That was a fair proposition.

Another procedure followed was to look for a physically compatible child. In one case we had to locate a child with mongoloid features like the PAPs, from a distant State. Two children, at most, were shown to the PAPs. Even photography was prohibited, to protect the identity and confidentiality of the children. Unfortunately, the new guidelines have turned things upside down. Now everything is online, and PAPs are allowed to view the profiles of up to six children, as per their own preferences. I would here fully agree with the MCs that this would amount to compromising the confidentiality of the child, and a grave injustice. Given India’s penchant for boys, and “fair and lovely”, these guidelines are loaded against the girl child and those of swarthy complexions.

Whether the MCs, with their wealth of

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(Contd.. from p. 8)

experience and depth of commitment, should have challenged these unfair (pun intended) guidelines; instead of meekly surrendering their licences, is now of academic interest only. However, now that the floodgates for surrogates are about to be closed, and the procedures could come under CARA, we needed to revisit the entire issue.

The word “surrogate” literally means a substitute. In the given context it refers to the implantation of an embryo from a couple, for whatever reason, in the womb of a third person, a substitute. The debate on the surrogate is still raging. The Govt’s proposed legislation is against any form of commercial surrogacy, as is the norm now, and will only allow altruistic (unselfish) surrogacy through close relatives. Imagine somebody’s sister-in-law opting to be a surrogate!! Blood relations are loath to donate blood to “blood relatives”, what then of surrogacy?

In the Bible we find that Hagar, the Egyptian slave girl of Sarah, is the first substitute (surrogate) mother. We know that she was barren and therefore asked her husband Abraham to take Hagar and father a child (cf Gen 16:1-2). Abraham’s grandson Jacob also followed the path of surrogacy, as both his wives, Leah and Rachel (who were sisters) were barren. In turn both of them gave their respective slave girls Zilpah and Bilhah to Jacob to bear children for them (cf Gen 30:3-13).

What lessons can we learn from these biblical surrogacies? The first is the anguish of the childless person. Abraham says to God “What use are your gifts, as I am going away childless, since you have given me no offspring” (Gen 15:2). Rachel echoes similar anguish. She was jealous of her elder sister Leah, who had children by then, and said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die” (Gen 30:1). Are these old wives’ tales (pun intended)? Not so. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) promulgated on 11/10/1992 takes due cognizance of these anguished cries (CCC 2374).

Now let us see the effects of these altruistic surrogacies. When Hagar conceived through Abraham she became conceited “and her mistress counted for nothing in her eyes” (Gen 16:4). Resenting Hagar’s conceit, Sarah ill-treated her, resulting in her running away (cf Gen 16:6). Altruism indeed! Childlessness does cause anguish, and even rivalry, as evidenced in the sisters Leah and Rachel, with their respective slave girls thrown in for good measure. Some of the statements that they make, and the names that they give to their children, are telling. Leah named her first son Reuben, which meant “Yahweh has seen my misery” (Gen 29:32). When Rachel’s slave girl Bilhah bore a child Rachel proclaimed “God has done me justice” (Gen 30:5). Similarly, when the second child was born she said “I have fought a fateful battle with my sister and I have won” (Gen 30:8). Later, when she had her own biological son she said “God has taken away my disgrace” (Gen 30:23).

In the more celebrated case of Sarah we find that God uses even more extraordinary means for her to conceive. In a divine apparition at Mamre, when Abraham was already old, and Sarah was long past menopause (cf Gen 18:11), the divine apparition says that Sarah would conceive a child, Isaac.

Let us now move to the New Testament, where Jesus is questioned about Moses permitting divorce. On the one hand he upholds the indissolubility of marriage, while on the other he makes a calibrated statement “It was because you were so hard hearted, that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives” (Mat 19:8). Is this a case of situational ethics, where the specific circumstances determine the law, and not vice versa? Had not Jesus himself said that the Sabbath was made for man and not the other way around (cf Mk 2:27)? Will law makers, constitutional or canonical, pay heed?

From the above instances I dare to draw a few conclusions: 1. There can never be hard and fast rules, or water tight compartments, when dealing with deeply personal issues like child

bearing 2. Altruistic surrogacy, where the parties are known to each other, would be a conundrum, raising more questions than it answers. Anonymous surrogacy, as presently practiced, is a safer option, especially with the built in safeguard of DNA testing to verify progeny 3. One should understand the anguish of childless couples, and not pontificate to them.

Now let us examine the Catholic Church’s response to surrogacy. Other than personal opinions, there is very little official teaching to go by. The CCC was brought out in 1992, a time when bishops and moral theologians would not have known much about it. There is only one passing reference to surrogacy. It states, “Techniques that entail the intrusion of a third person (surrogate uterus) are gravely immoral. It betrays the spouse’s right to become a father and a mother only through each other” (CCC 2376). I find this a contradiction in terms. On the one hand we talk of the right of parents to have children, and then deny that right through surrogacy, which is scornfully referred to as a third party “intrusion”! However, in the instant cases of Sarah, Leah, and Rachel, there was situational ethics, and third party intervention (not intrusion). The CCC further contradicts itself when it states that “a child is not a right but a gift. Only the child possesses genuine rights” (CCC 2378). This is the theatre of the absurd. Which celibate old males in boardrooms have made these rules for young couples in their bedrooms? Were the effected parties ever involved in this legislative process?

Let me draw another parallel. In his time Jesus performed many miracles like curing leprosy, blindness deafness etc. Many of these are now curable through advances in medical sciences, the modern miracles. Science is also God’s gift to the human race. So if scientific procedures are used to perform miraculous treatment, are they to be condemned? If, in situational ethics, moral aberrations like sleeping with slave girls could be condoned, the same principles should apply in sci-

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(Contd.. from p. 9)

entific procedures that puritans would consider "gravely immoral".

When will we stop pontificating? The recently held Laity Synod had raised great hopes that the genuine issues of married people – like divorce, infertility, surrogacy, family planning etc would be addressed. It was a complete let down. All we got were pious platitudes, like this old howler, "Physical sterility is not an absolute evil. Such childless couples should unite themselves to the Lord's cross, adopt a child, or perform demanding services for others" (CCC 2379). Ouch! That hurt.

While writing this article I heard Anupriya Patel, Minister of State for Health, (who belongs to my hometown, and studied in a Catholic school here) state that poor women should look for gainful employment, and not "sell their bodies" for surrogacy! It sounded like she was comparing this to prostitution. Shame. It looks like the Govt and the Catholic Church are on the same page when it comes to surrogacy, and insensitivity to individual aspirations or feelings.

While welcoming the Govt's endeavour to regulate (not control) surrogacy, especially to protect poor women from exploitation by avaricious doctors; I would conclude by saying that just as in CARA the child's interests are paramount, so too in surrogacy, the prospective parents legitimate desires should be considered sacrosanct. As for the Catholic bishops, it is time that they became more sensitive to ground realities in the family, and involved the actual stakeholders in any process of legislation. It is easy to close the floodgates on unbridled surrogacy, but it could open up a much bigger floodgate of exodus from the Church, with affected parties saying, "I care two hoots for a church that does not care for me". We could, quite literally, be throwing the baby out with the bath water, a flood of it.

** The writer has for years been involved in marriage, family and youth counselling*

Mother Teresa is now Saint Teresa

Mother Teresa's selfless and untiring service to the poor of the poorest, orphaned and sick people on the streets of Calcutta, now Kolkata will be remembered by every Indian. It is gratifying to note that Pope Francis, the Head of the Vatican has recognized her charitable services to humanity and declared her a saint on September 4. September 4, 2016 was also Mother Teresa's 19th death anniversary.

With the canonisation of Mother Teresa as a saint, India now has six saints of her own. They are — St Gonsalo Garcia, St Alphonsa, St Kuriakose Elias Chavara, St Euphrasia Eluvathingal, St Joseph Vaz and St Mother Teresa.

Mother Teresa will always be remembered for what she said and what she did while on this earth. She started her work with no money, depending only on God to help her. Mother Teresa and her followers nursed the sick and dying, taught street children, gave shelter to the homeless, cared for the unloved and the lonely and proclaimed the Word of God to one and all. The rich and the poor alike have felt explicably drawn into the mercy of God's tender embrace by her example as a follower of Jesus Christ. Her selfless love is a powerful example of what it means to love others as Christ loved us and a sign that God still loves the world today.

Clad in a khadi sari with its three blue line border, Mother Teresa along with her sisters of the Missionaries of Charity became a symbol of love, care and compassion for the world. Mother Teresa was a ray of hope for many, including the aged, the destitute, the unemployed, the diseased, the terminally ill, and those aban-

doned by their families. Blessed with profound empathy, unwavering commitment and unshakable faith since young, she turned her back to the worldly pleasures and focused on serving mankind ever since she was 18. After years of service as a teacher and mentor, Mother Teresa experienced a call within her religious call, which changed her course of life complete-

ly, making her what she is known as today. Founder of the Missionaries of Charity, with her fervent commitment and incredible organisational and managerial skills, she developed an international organization that aimed towards helping the impoverished. For her service to humanity she was honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

Mother Teresa, even though she has been declared a saint by the Catholic Church is still a Mother to us. She will be remembered for her good deeds for years to come.



by Jubel D'Cruz

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Cracks in the RSS

The Goa outfit of the RSS has revolted to form a political party to fight the BJP in Goa – unbelievable. The RSS which was formed in 1925 in the wake of Hindu – Muslim riots, was known for its disciplined cadre. Its hold on its members was complete. The word of the Sarsanchalak was final as politics was never on its agenda. Hindu unity was its focus so much so that their ultimate aim was 'Hindu Rashtra' till Dattatray Deoras took over and he permitted members to be actively involved in politics. Even when the BJP came to power in the last decade of the 19th century it had to tread with caution when it came to challenging the authority of RSS. Whatever the differences, were discreetly discussed within the four walls. Nothing came to light in the open. Even when questioned by the media about the parallel seat of power, the BJP skirted the issue as just imagination.

The recent revolt in the Goa outfit has sent shock waves in the RSS because never before the authority of the Sarsanchalak was 'challenged'. Even powerful men like L.K.Advani had to meekly submit to its diktat [and even resigned] in the face of Jinnah controversy. Even in matters of government formation the RSS has a big say, their denials notwithstanding. A relatively small man – Subash Velingkar, Head of the Goa outfit openly defied the RSS. The culture is changing. More and more of its followers appear to be getting suffocated. Differences over English in schools may not be the real reason. Significantly when the Goa outfit revolted there was no counter movement to suppress the defiant group. Normally, there would have been reactions. Does it mean that more and more members of the RSS who have been forced into submission are finding a whiff of freedom to defy the authority? This could be just the beginning. Wait and watch!

Ever since the BJP came to power, the RSS is behaving as if they are the sole guardians of nationalism and they will decide on the parameters. The issues like love jihad, cow protection and other such sensitive areas are brought into focus again and again knowing fully well that such an approach will further alienate the minorities. But that is what they really want. The controversy over

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sainthood to Mother Teresa shows their insecurity. She does not need a certificate from anyone much less the RSS. The BJP though not very comfortable with extreme posturing is nonetheless not distancing itself totally with the basics of nationalism and patriotism as defined by the RSS.

It is surprising that the organization which considered its own saffron flag superior to the tricolour until Sardar Patel forced them to accept the supremacy of the national flag over its own as one of the preconditions for lifting the ban on RSS. They are questioning the loyalty of other minority. The RSS refused to hoist the national flag within its complex in Nagpur for over 52 years [from 1950 to 2002]. On the eve of independence, the Organizer, its mouth piece wrote - "The people [read Congress] who have come to power by the kick of fate may give in our hands the tricolour but it will never be respected and owned by Hindus. The word three is in itself an evil and a flag having three colours will certainly produce a very bad psychological effect and is injurious to a country". Actually, they wanted the saffron flag to be hoisted on the 15th August 1947 instead of the National Flag. Their real agenda of a Hindu Rashtra will remain their focus and it will not change.

Growing Chinese intransigence

With the dismantling of the erstwhile Soviet Union, the Super Power was severely dented, leaving the United States more powerful than ever. India while maintaining cordial relations with Russia, it began moving towards America to counter the growing threat perception from China. Undoubtedly, China has taken the place of USSR with its growing economic and military power in this region which does not augur well for India.

China on the other hand, seeing India move westwards, substantially increased its stake in Pakistan with military, economic and other assistance. In doing so, Pakistan which is literally bankrupt, stands to gain while China gets a foothold which it can increase at will. They have a right to do so but if the intentions are dubious, then it is a matter of concern particularly China's growing presence in POK. Chi-



by Marshall Sequeira

na also tried to draw Nepal into its fold which saw some aberrations in Indo-Nepal relations. The same ploy was used for Maldives and even Sri Lanka. That was a dangerous situation for us.

Keeping the potential of China in mind, perhaps India did not want to take it head-on and preferred to play down the frightening situation. When China failed to rein it Pakistan on terrorism issue and to make things worse it announced huge investment package running into several billions of dollars. India woke up and decided that enough is enough. First it signed the strategic defence agreement with the USA which jolted China. India kept the pressure on and befriended Vietnam much to the discomfort of China.

When Modi met the Chinese leadership they mellowed down and agreed to work closely with India. The Indian PM did not take the bait but instead told them in no uncertain terms what exactly India feels about China's covert support to Pak which is encouraged by it and feels it can continue with its agenda of cross border terrorism. Even dragging its feet in matters concerning the globally named terrorists is viewed by India very seriously.

Narendra Modi's parting shot was a master piece. He warned both Pakistan and China – one for spreading terrorism and the other for supporting it. This message coming in the presence of G-20 leaders must have hit both the countries hard. Now that India has decided to hit back, it will not slow down and the coming months especially in the USGA the matter will be brought up more forcefully and expose the duo globally. With the likes of ISIS and other outfits like Boko Haram the world is concerned about the future. These heartless people are capable of doing anything. It is in this context that terrorism in any form is to be eliminated globally.

Monti-Fest & Konkani Day Celebrated at Mira Road



Konkani Manyatha Divas was celebrated by St. Joseph's Konkani Welfare Association, Mira Road on 08.09.2016 at Community Hall of St. Joseph's Church. Program started with a welcome dance. Mrs. Hilda Serrao, Member of the Association



offered '*Paanpode Udaak*'. Mr. Digo Rodrigues, President of the Association welcomed the gathering. Fr. Melwyn D'Cunha (Spiritual Director of the association and Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Church), Fr. Joseph Martis (Rector of St. Joseph's Seminary, Mangalore) Mr. Lawrence Coelho (Editor of Konkani Weekly 'Divo'), Sr. Serena (Superior, Holy Cross Sisters, Mira Road), Sr. Superior of Ankur, Mira Road along with Mr. Digo Rodrigues, Sofia D'Sa, Mr. Lawrence Mathias, Mr. John Crasta, Mr. Arun Noronha inaugurated the function by a unique way i.e. by symbolic harvesting the new crop. Two minutes silence was observed for all those Konkani writers, actors and all who worked for it. Mr.

Lawrence Coelho was felicitated on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Lawrence Coelho expressed his gratitude towards Konkani people of Miraroad. Fr. Joseph Martis said he is very happy to know about St. Joseph Konkani Welfare Association and praised St. Joseph's Konkani Welfare Association for the good work it is doing in the field of Konkani. He asked the gathering to teach the culture and values of Konkani to our children. Fr. Melwyn emphasized that Konkani should be like our shadow, wherever we go, our language should follow us.



Merit holders (children of Association members) in SSC and HSC were honored. Prizes were distributed to the winners of Talent Competition held on 21.08.2016.

Members of the association and their children entertained the crowd with jokes and songs. During the occasion small kits 'Rooma Badyak', 'Clinic 420' and 'Bill Problem' were enacted.

The second part of the Program was 'Noven Jevan' program in traditional way. Before the 'Noven Sevnche', Fr.

Joseph Martis conducted the prayer in traditional way. Thereafter Noven was distributed to all. President of the Association, Digo Rodrigues, invited all to the Dinner by traditional way 'Jevnak Udak'. Vegetarian 'Jevan' (Dinner) was on the banana leaf and Lavdate was sung by the members of St. Joseph's Konkani Welfare Association. Mrs. Sofia D'Sa, Secretary of St. Joseph's Konkani Welfare Association, Mira Road offered vote of thanks.

Mr. Arun Noronha compared the program beautifully.



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Mangalurean Mariner in daring rescue

Pope Francis has frequently urged the international community to take serious action over the deadly surge in migrants attempting to cross the dangerous Mediterranean Sea. Pope's appeal came after a large number of boat people lost their lives at sea.

At that point in time, it was unnoticed here though the international press was all praise; a Catholic master merchant mariner rooted in Mangalore, was instrumental in saving 510 lives in the Mediterranean off the Italian coast. Capt. Joshua Peris Bhatt is our unsung hero, against odds he took on board his ship 'CS Caprice' these sinking humans saving children, women and men. The rescue story is a thriller. He has been lauded by print and electronic media, even local TV and radio has aired his story, let us look at it in brief now.

Daring Rescue in the Mediterranean :

A soft spoken, tough, kind, Sea dog, merchant navy master mariner, the Captain Joshua Peris Bhatt and his terrific crew of 20, of the bulk ship 'CS Caprice' saved a boat load of 510 refugees in distress. In Capt Bhatt's own words: "CS Caprice, with a bulk load from Liepaja, Latvia was heading to her destination Umm Said in Qatar, on October 22, 2014 at 1.50 pm Local Time, a distress call from Malta Radio Control Centre informed that a boat carrying more than 500 people needed to be rescued not far from our course. I contacted Malta RCC and confirmed the distress message, sea was getting rough and the distressed boat was listing precariously. I contacted my ship owners who made it very clear that we had to save them, 'save all at any cost' our commitment was final, we plunged into readiness".

Soon divine courage and confidence



Capt. Joshua Peris Bhatt

took over and a miraculous professional operation unfolded unbelievably. The old boat was tilting with people all around. Fear was in all the 20 crew and in most of the 510 miserable souls – it seemed that only a Supreme power was guiding. Capt Bhatt went on to explain, the pilot ladder was lowered, the weather and sea were getting rough, the distressed boat was made fast with ships line fore and aft and the crew commenced embarkation of the dazed people. Firstly the crew calmed them with reassurance

and got the ladies and kids on board. About ten ladies were pregnant and a few mothers had infants in arms, they managed carrying them and climbing the rope pilot ladder; then it was the men's turn to get on to the vessel. CS Caprice was the lone angel of mercy on the vast blue

black waters of the Mediterranean high seas, saving all 510 human lives, the drifting wreck was abandoned.

Capt. Bhatt goes on, the survivors were on board CS Caprice, cooks and steward produced hot tea to keep the people warm and distributed milk packets for the babies and kids. Malta advised CS Caprice to proceed towards Sicily, near sixty hour sailing. The situation was explosive handling a huge desperate crowd of humans with a small crew. Women

who were given shelter fore and men were asked to stay around in mast the house. Ladies who were pregnant and mothers with infants faced a difficult time so they were given safe space secure and comfortable. Soon some order and peace settled and sailing for Sicily port in Italy made progress. The crew arranged to serve 'Kitchdi' made of rice and lentil, and other food by the enthusiastic cook from store of food available. It was a hard task serving the famished and large number of 'guests', it was below decks as the sea had turned very choppy, splashing on the entire main deck. Capt Bhatt said, "The boat people's attitude was indeed a gratitude to the Almighty, " A medical emergency, a Syrian lady was gasping for breath, arrangements were made with the Rome medics and soon she was air lifted by an Rome ambulance helicopter. Team work won, it was all thanks to crew, divine force on board and the Campbell shipping management's concern at all times all went well.

About our heroic Captain:

Capt. Joshua and his parents Lawrence Peris Bhatt and Juliana lived long in Attavara following their illustrious ancestors, in the Ruzai Parish. Born 29th May 1982, Joshua had his first education in Roshini Nilaya. Primary, high school and college studies were done in famous St Aloysius College. Capt. Joshua is one of three siblings. Capt. Joshua married his admirer, Sonia Monica Fernandes from a well known Bendoor family on 29 December 2008, they are blessed with two children Jude and Jordan bouncing with mischievous energy and intelligence.

Young Joshua joined the Training Ship, 'TS Jawahar', Colaba, Mumbai for pre sea training. After completion of pre sea training in the year 2004 completed cadet-ship and cleared 2nd officers exams in the year 2005

(Contd.. on p. 18)



by: Ivan Saldanha-Shet

(Contd.. from p. 4)

denced by the choice of the liturgy, that of the 23rd Sunday of ordinary time! The First reading, from the Book of Wisdom, and the Second from St Paul's letter to Philemon were totally irrelevant. The Gospel from Luke on the cost of discipleship could easily have been misinterpreted because of the emphasis to hate one's own, in order to become a true disciple of Jesus. Horrendous. What message were we conveying to the non-Christian world?

As a proud Indian, minus the jingoistic nationalism, I always look forward to watching the Republic Day parade. My eyes well up with tears and my heart swells with joy. What enhances the parade is the lucid running commentary, especially when Rene Simon did it. Imagine watching a cricket, football or tennis match without a competent commentator? If nothing, the Vatican could have hired out of work and party comicator, Navjyot Singh Siddhu! He would have spiced it all up.

Today the medium is the message. Without the medium there is no message. After watching the canonisation the only message that I came away with is that the monolithic Catholic Church seems stuck somewhere in the European Middle Ages. What a wasted opportunity to highlight the work, the mission and the motivation of Mother Teresa. Opportunity doesn't say "knock, knock, knock". It only strikes once.

Perhaps this is why commentators kept harping on the two "miracles" that facilitated Mother Teresa's canonisation. The healed persons were not present, nor their testimonies given. This lent grist to the mill, that how could one go by miracles that could not be scientifically established beyond reasonable doubt? Can we blame them for missing the Saint for the Miracles; as the adage goes, "Don't miss the wood for the trees". Do you now understand why I have so much angst about the canonisation? Many others may be sharing similar

sentiments, but not knowing how to articulate them.

Among the few Indians that I did spot were Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Mumbai (one of the Pope's 8 special advisors), Abp Thomas D'souza of Kolkata, who were beside the Pope at the altar, and Cardinal Telesphore Toppo from Ranchi. A minor miracle was to spot Bp Patrick Nair, retired bishop of Meerut, now settled in Dehradun. I say miracle because when I first met him about 40 years ago, he told me, with a twinkle in his eye, that he never went to Rome, not even for the mandatory Ad Limina visits. He would perhaps have preferred playing his guitar for the orphans, cycling around the parish, or playing basketball with his seminarians. So what miracle now brought him to roam (pun intended)?

The last time that I had met him he told me how he had almost lost his vision in his one good eye. Then some of Mother Teresa's sisters brought him a swab of cotton that had some blood of Mother Teresa's on it. It had been picked up from an operation theatre where she had a surgery earlier. Bp Patrick applied this swab to his eye, and Alleluia, he could see again. Maybe Pope Francis should have called Bp Patrick up to the podium to give his testimony.

Miracles and mismanagement apart, Mother Teresa is a Saint in every sense of the word. For me she is an embodiment of Christian virtue, compassion and renunciation. As in the last judgement all that counts is what we did for the least of the brethren (cf Mat 25). I hope not to miss that.

* The writer has been associated with Mother Teresa and her sisters for the last 40 years.

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Canonization of Mother Teresa Celebration Mangalore diocese



Most Rev Dr Aloysius Paul Dsouza Bishop of Mangalore diocese blessed the Statue of Mother Teresa at Mother Teresa convent falnir. Grand procession was begun at Mother Teresa convent at 4.15 PM with a short prayer service and blessing of the statue.

Mother Teresa convent Superior sister Bernadette welcomed the gathering. Around 500 people joined the holy procession soon after the blessing of the statue.



Procession witnessed the devotion of the people who were part of this great ceremony.

In memory of this event Falnir road was renamed as mother Teresa road. Mr. J R Lobo MLA of Mangalore inaugurated the board by opening the name board cover. In the mean while balloons were left to sky in memory of mother Teresa.

Holy Mass was celebrated at Milagres Church. Inaugural of 2 books in memory of Mother Teresa and our lady of Fathima was conducted soon after the mass.

Photo and news :Roshan Madtha

No Longer Naked, But Liberated

(George Menezes 10/4/1928 – 9/92016)

OBITUARY



by chhotebhai *

George Menezes



Two years ago I did a review of the book “The Naked Liberal”, an anthology on George Menezes, written by Selma Carvalho. I enjoyed reading the book, and also writing the review; because it was a labour of love for someone I loved, cherished and respected.

Now he has crossed to the other shore and will probably be surprised to find himself no longer, “naked”, for he will be covered with “the robe of righteousness” (cf Rev 7:9), with a halo teasingly resting on his bald pate! St Peter would not have been surprised to find George Menezes at the Pearly Gates, but by George, I am sure that he would have been pleasantly surprised to find himself up there, and now beaming down on us with a wily wink.

Now that he has been liberated from his suffering body (he was in the ICU of Holy Family Hospital, Mumbai for quite a few days) he will be even more liberal, experiencing the glorious liberty of the children of God (cf Rom8:21).

Towards the end of the anthology there is a chapter “Watching my own Passing Away”. It is a naked liberal’s flight of fancy about his own funeral. In typically self-deprecating humour (indicative of a wise and humble person) he portrays only three persons at his funeral - a frustrated money lender, a jilted lover and a cop looking for the dead body! Now that the chapter has closed I daresay that there are many of us who are indebted to him, his pass-

ing on has broken our hearts, and we sure know where to find him, for he has gone ahead of us into Galilee (cf Mk 16:7). And lest I forget, there were more than the imaginary three mourners at his funeral celebrated by Bp Perceval Fernandes at St Andrew’s Church, Bandra, on 11th September.

Though I am familiar with George’s writings, his humour, his persona and

the presidentship of the AICU was looked upon as a crown of thorns. George willingly donned, and subsequently adorned it.

At the time he was an Executive Member of the BJP, which he termed a political experiment. He now felt that this was incompatible with his new role as the NP of the AICU. He immediately relinquished his position in the BJP. That was the naked liberal in him.

The first time that I actually met George was a year later, when he came to Kanpur to conduct the first ever North Indian Laity Training Programme. He was brutally naked about what he believed to be true, and liberal in understanding ground realities in both Church and society. The programme was called Effective Christian Leadership (a term that I have continued to use in my own training programmes over the last 30 years). How effective the training was is evidenced by the fact, that even though north India hardly counts for anything in the real politick of the Catholic Church, it produced 3 NPs for the AICU – myself from 1990 - 94, Norbert D’souza of Jhansi/Lucknow (1996 - 2000), and Dr Remy Denis of Gorakhpur (2008 - 2012). As one

of the recommendations of that programme Remy was also appointed a member of Uttar Pradesh Minorities Commission. The fruit was there for all to see.

I have never forgotten his gems of wisdom. Talking about leadership he said a rider was galloping through a village when a villager asked him “Where are you going?” The reply came fast and furious, “Don’t ask me, as the horse where it is taking me”! It would have sounded silly, had it not been true of so many of our leaders in various fields. He then asked us if a bald man like himself could be a mod-



his family, I will here restrict myself to his role as a lay leader of the Catholics. It was way back in 1986, when I was attending the Annual General Meeting of the All India Catholic Union (AICU) for the first time, in what was then Calcutta. The organization was going through a rough patch and leadership crisis. It was through the intervention of late Bp Patrick D’souza of Varanasi, that George’s name was proposed for the National President (NP). Ironically, George himself was not there, but Antony Vellara the indefatigable Secretary General of the AICU lobbied hard for George, and he got elected in absentia. At that time

(Contd.. on p. 19)

Statue of Jesus Christ vandalised in Mumbai after canonisation of Mother Teresa



Mumbai: A statue of Jesus Christ was vandalised by unknown persons at Juhu Tara road in Mumbai on Sunday. An NGO called the Watchdog Foundation has also claimed that a police officer tampered with evidence related to the incident.

The NGO has demanded that the police officer be also booked along with the attackers, reported CNN-News18.

“Even if all the churches were destroyed, would people stop their work of mercy and compassion? The fundamentalist agenda never works,” Father Francis Gonsalves, theology expert, told CNN-News18.

This incident is being reported on the day when Mother Teresa, the nun whose work with the dying and destitute of Kolkata made her a global icon of Christian charity, was made a saint.

Her elevation to Roman Catholicism’s celestial pantheon came in a canonisation mass in St Peter’s square in the Vatican that was presided over by Pope Francis in the presence of 100,000 pilgrims.

“For the honour of the Blessed Trinity... we declare and define Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (Kolkata) to be a Saint and we enroll her among the Saints, decreeing that she is to be venerated as such by the whole Church,” the pontiff said in Latin.

The ceremony came a day before the 19th anniversary of Teresa’s death in Kolkata, where she spent nearly four decades tending to the poorest of the poor.

Saint Mother Teresa

(A Tribute to her “call within a call” on 10th September, 1946)

(Dated 5th September, 2016, her Feast Day)

S - ‘Saint’ of the gutters, she was called by the world’s laity
A - Actions sublime and divine were indeed of God’s beauty
I - Inspiration for individuals to follow her ways so secure
N- Nobel Peace Prize and a Bharat Ratna bestowed on her
T -Testimony on tablets of flesh and blood to always endure

M- ‘Mother’ to destitute and dying of any caste or country
O - Offerings of shelter to outcasts of society and all sundry
T -Treasures of water and food for the thirsty and hungry
H - Humility and holiness, the heritage she left to behold
E - Enthusiasm and joy was her abounding charity for souls
R -Righteousness and reverence inscribed as honor rolls

T - ‘Teresa’ means ‘summer harvest’ she wore as vestment
E- Eyewitness to misery, she cast aside her inner raiment
R - Rosary in hand, a renewal of the sick, a healing garment
E - Embrace was so very tender, a reflection of Jesus’ Light
S - Service to the least and lost, she brought them in sight
A- Angel of Divine Mercy, true love and a future ever bright

—DR. TREVOR COLASO

(Now temporarily at Memphis, TN, USA).

A Mother’s Birth, matters the most!

Who can deny the fact,

That a best mother’s birth, matters the most?

Didn’t Mary’s birth turned out to be the best?

It gave the world its saviour, the Redeemer Christ!

She was most humble and pure in God’s sight,

By God’s choice, she was gracefilled and blest,

Though married, became the Virgin-Mother of Christ,

Thus shone like a precious diamond the rarest!

At her birth, the world rejoiced along with Joachim-Ann,

Seeing the girl-child, heaven smiled with joy and satisfaction,

In her birth, world saw the dawn of its redemption,

The world rejoiced, hoping for its forthcoming salvation!

“We too rejoice Mary at your birth,

And hail and greet you for it’s worth!

But we ask you, to think a while of this earth,

‘Do all rejoice at all girl-children’s birth?’

Some girl-factus’ are aborted before birth,

Some girl-children die, before they begin to live on earth,

Some die at the hands of others, for many-a-reason,

Some are abused or killed for pleasure and fun!

While growing, many face neglect or torture,

Some are forced to indulge in sex and ugly pleasure,

As if they are born only to suffer,

Thus they end their life on the sacrificial altar!

O Mary, on their your Birthday,

“Happy Birthday Mamma Mary!” we say,

Strewing flowers around you, we sing and pray,

Come to the aid of all girl-children today!

—Sr. Marie Ange, Bethany Convent, Bendoor

Fundamentals Of The Faith

Understand and Defend Your Faith

By Peter Kreeft

ST PAULS – ISBN 978-93-5015-261-4 – Pp 328 – Rs 300

If understanding the Faith and living it is a delightful task enjoined on us by our Baptism, talking about it and defending it with conviction is the twin-challenge posed not only by our Confirmation but, in large measure, by the fact of our belief in the Eucharist, the high-point of the Church's liturgy. And helping us to fulfil both obligations admirably is this book by an author who has the knack of finding the clear and to-the-point analogy that brings alive many ancient and orthodox principles of the Catholic Faith which in turn so seize you as to make you want to share them with all and sundry! Indeed! **FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH** is a book that considers all the fundamental elements of Christianity and Catholicism, explaining, defending and significantly linking their relevance to our life and the world's yearnings. A solid and orthodox resource in Christian Apologetics, to say the least! Or a condensed version of the Church's Catechism if you please!

There is no gainsaying the fact that though not meant to be a complete treatise of the Church's Theology, the forty-six essays that make up the three sections of this book do foray into key areas of the field where rages the greatest battle ever fought, the battle for the mind and soul of the human person, the very image and likeness of God. Again, not intended to be a bold, path-breaking thesis as such, all content of this book is essentially a clear, pointed affirmation of the ancient and orthodox Faith of our Fathers, the true essence of which the minds of very many young believers have simply failed to grasp.

The one avowed objective **FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH** doubtless purports to fulfil is to reach out to both sides of the war zone, i.e. to arm be-

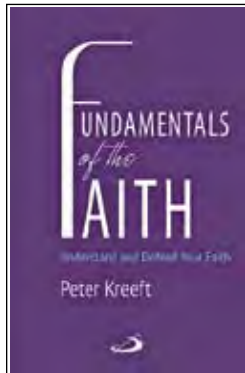
lievers with razor-sharp weapons of the mind and engage unbelievers in a loving duel, making for a win-win situation across the spectrum! No mean ambition this coming as it does from a Calvinist turned Catholic whose springboard to conversion was the result of his own

investigation into the Catholic Church's claim tracing itself to the early Church. From being suspicious of the Catholic Faith he has gone on to become one of its staunchest defenders as is evident from the contents of this volume (and of numerous other best-sellers that have made him one of the most read authors of our times), the first section of which concerns itself entirely with the 'Fundamentals of Christian Belief' (pp 13-176). From being suspicious of the Catholic Faith

to becoming one of its staunchest defenders as is evident from the contents of this volume (and of numerous other best-sellers that have made him one of the most read authors of our times), the first section of which concerns itself entirely with the 'Fundamentals of Christian Belief' (pp 13-176), Peter Kreeft has surely come a long way!

Deserving of special mention is Kreeft's treatment of the three Theological virtues, viz. Faith, Hope and Love in Section II (pp 181-204) that discusses the 'Fundamentals of Christian Living'. In his own words, "Faith, hope and charity are, quite simply, the three greatest things in the world. We cannot possibly over-emphasize their importance. Together they make up the "one thing necessary" (p 181).

That the Church is communitarian is significantly borne out by Section III which dwells on the 'Fundamentals of Christian Community' (pp 269-326). Notably, in this section are discussed certain essential characteristics of the Catholic Church that distinguish her from Protestant churches whereby there's no identity crisis for the individual reader, rooted as he/she is in the very fundamentals of the Faith!



Book Review by Ladislaus L D'Souza

(Contd.. from p. 14)

and chief officer in 2008 and got promoted to chief officer 2010; clearing the Master Mariner's exams he got his four stripes as 'Captain' in 2013. He is a valued part of Campbell shipping company Ltd. NASSAU. BAHAMAS; with 16 ships mainly bulkers sailing worldwide.

He has since received many awards and recognition, one early award, 'CMA' (Connecticut Maritime Association, New York USA), recognizing the humanitarian initiative in the face of grave danger. Indeed it is a matter of exclusive pride that Bendoor's very own Mariner was Captain of the Ship and also it is a matter of pride for all, that St. Sabastian was surely a force on the ship too. This rescue is widely reported by marine sources and web sites. A publicity shy Capt. Joshua Peris Bhatt who was in Mangaluru after receiving much applause has personally given inputs, he is wished many more great sailings on the high seas.

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Donald Miranda, Dubai : 971507286671

(Contd.. from p. 16)

el for a Brylcreem ad? His not so obvious answer was "Yes, this is what will happen to your pate if you don't use Brylcreem". The man was brilliant, converting adversity into an opportunity. Another endearing gem was that a public person was public property to be used and abused. How true of Effective Christian leadership.

He told us the story of the hen and the pig. They passed a shop selling farm fresh eggs and bacon. The hen boasted of how it gave its eggs for others to consume. The pig retorted that its own commitment was total, for without dying we could not get its bacon. Thanks George, you gave us the bacon and the eggs.

Let me now tell an anecdote that probably nobody knows. The next AGM of the AICU was being held in 1988. Nobody expected George to not stand for re-election. As a result nobody filed any nomination, George, the naked liberal, included. At the time he was away in France. Trust him. I then "conspired" to have his nomination papers "sent" to France, and get them submitted in time! Else we would have had a constitutional crisis on our hands. After two terms he felt that it was time for change. Back then nobody wanted to don the crown of thorns as the NP of the AICU.

He chose me in 1990, as his handpicked successor. After a long line of eminent and venerable personalities – Members of Parliament, Chevaliers and Professors, from the Catholic bastions of the south and the west; here was a 39 year old northerner, a college dropout, on whom he bestowed the mantle of leadership. I believe that I lived up to the trust that he reposed in me.

George gave us our bacon and eggs, taught us how to hold the reins of the horse, and a lot more that would make this obit too long. It was he who gave me the KISS for my writings. He had said, "Keep It Short Stupid"! As he now enjoys the heavenly repast I wish the Naked Liberal Au Revoir, till we meet again, up there hopefully.

Read

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*The writer
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Menezes as
AICU
National
President
from 1990 to
1994

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MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 30 years, Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., CWA (Inter), CA (Inter), working as an Accountant. Contact email : saviopinto23@gmail.com OR 9619520408 **(Regd. No. 6588)**

MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 32 years, Ht. 6', Wt. 95 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. working as a Civil Engineer. Contact email : matrimonial.2312@gmail.com OR 9833483113 **(Regd. No. 6587)**

MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 28 years, Ht. 171 cms, Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. HSC., Diploma in Aviation, working for a Foreign Cruise line in USA as a Security Officer. Visiting India shortly. Contact immediately. Contact email : stayblessed1287@gmail.com OR 9820942790. **(Regd. No. 6546)**

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 38 years, Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBBS, DNB, Orthopaedic Surgeon Doctor by profession. Seeks a suitable match preferably Doctor. Contact email : roshan.nazareth@gmail.com OR 9323541575 / 9892820018 **(Regd. No. 6567)**

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(Regd. No. 6573)

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 29 years, Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BE (EXTC), working as a Network Engineer. Contact email : ivorbritto@gmail.com OR 9820055655 **(Regd. No. 6572)**

MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 57 years, Ht. 5' 7" Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. SSC., having own business. Contact email : pearlfernandes81@yahoo.in OR 9869557072 / 8291403075 **(Regd. No. 6551)**

MUMBAI : Keralite + Mangalorean Roman Catholic Widow, aged 57 years, Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. SSC, working for Dimond Company as a Assorting Diamond. No encumbrance, having own Flat. Seeks a simple and poor girl. Contact Mob: 9821078194. **(Regd. No. 6547)**

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 29 years, Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 80 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., + Diploma, working on Cruise Ship. Contact email : roshandsouza412@yahoo.com OR 8652883768 **(Regd. No. 6544)**

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic, aged 47 years, Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. SSC, having own business. Contact email : allwynsequeira@gmail.com OR 9819082447 **(Regd. No. 6541)**

MANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 36 years, Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 69 kgs, Handsome, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.A., Having own business and accommodation. Contact email : proposal564@gmail.com OR 9535051204 **(Regd. No. 6534)**

Members are requested to inform us when they are settled, so that publication of their details can be discontinued.

MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 33 years, Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 69 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Wheatish Complexion, Working with Disney Cruise line, Well settled. Contact email : joseph_almeida15@yahoo.in OR 98925 81515 / 98338 31515 **(Regd. No. 6533)**

POONA : Tamilian Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 40 years, Ht. 6', Fair Complexion, Handsome, Edn. M.Com., Having well established business. Contact email : tony137@rediffmail.com OR 9552148871 **(Regd. No. 6531)**

MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 39 years, Ht. 6', Fair, Handsome, Edn. B.Sc., MBA (HR) full time, working as Manager in MNC. Well settled. Seeks alliance with Goan RC Spinster. Contact email : alliancedec2@gmail.com. **(Regd. No. 6521)**

MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, aged 26 years, Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 64 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. P.G.D.B.M., working as a H.R. Contact email : leo.rglobus@gmail.com OR 9324900279 **(Regd. No. 6515)**

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee, aged 35 years, Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 80 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Masters in Computer, working as a Sr. Tech. Anyl in Bank. Contact email : melwyn-gdsouza@gmail.com OR 9004748881. **(Regd. No. 6510)**

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor aged 29 years, Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 80 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E., working as a Asst. Manager in German Company. Seeks a tall, well educated homely Mangalorean girl. Contact email : colind.3010@gmail.com OR 99200 63946 / 98203 73826 **(Regd. No. 6508)**

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MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, aged 25 years, Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA Marketing, working as an Analyst, Contact email : noreen13nov@gmail.com OR 9004572793. (Regd. No. 6563)

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MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, age 25 years, Ht. 5' 3", Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BBI, P.G.D.M. (H.R.), working as an Asst. Manager H.R. Contact email : venita.sal@gmail.com OR 8108113888 (Regd. No. 6570)

DUBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, aged 29 years, Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.S. in HR, working as a Admin. Exec. (HR) seeks a Mangalorean bachelor preferably Postgrad./MBA/BE, working in Dubai/Canada/USA. Contact wedd_prop@hotmail.com OR 9892656367 (Regd. No. 6566)

MUMBAI : Mumbai broughtup Keralaite Anglo Indian Spinster, aged 28 years, Ht. 5' Wt. 48 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as

a Computer Operator. Contact email : elenarosedcosta@gmail.com OR 9881422683 (Regd. No. 6565)

BANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee, aged 27 years, Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 55 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.C.A., working as a Software Engineer with Reputed IT firm. Contact email : dsoupri@gmail.com OR 9740552806 (Regd. No. 6556)

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MUMBAI : TAMILIAN Roman Catholic Spinster, aged 30 years, Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 66 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. PGDBM NMIMS, working as a Manager. Contact email : prabha.nadar@hotmail.com OR 9819818741 (Regd. No. 6548)

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, aged 26 years, Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA Finance, working as a Financial analyst. Contact email : elveera.26@gmail.com OR 9004982464 (Regd. No. 6545)

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Born Again Spinster, aged 28 years, Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 53 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA in Finance, PGDM., working for a co-op. Bank in Mumbai. Contact email : brinliafernandes@yahoo.com OR 9619445121 (Regd. No. 6492)

MUMBAI : Maharashtra Protestant Spinster, aged 38 years, looks much younger to her age, Ht. 5', Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. T.Y. B.Com., working as an Account Assistant. Contact email : sonali_waghchoure@yahoo.com OR 9819673935 (Regd. No. 6543)

AUSTRALIA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, aged 27 years, Ht. 159 cms, Wt. 57 kgs, Fair, good looking, Edn. Masters in Biotechnology from University of Queensland, Australia, working as Scientist (Research) in Australia, Seeks qualified and godfearing boy settled in Australia, US and

Canada. Contact email : patsynazareth123@gmail.com OR 9225652875. (Regd. No. 6542)

MUMBAI : God fearing Mangalorean RC Spinster, 36, 5' 6", from good family working for a MNC seeks groom. Reply with recent photo to innlo@hotmail.com (Regd. No. 6538)

MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, aged 25 years, Ht. 168cms, Wt. 64 kgs, Beautiful, Fair Complexion, Edn. Master in Dental, studing PG in Doctorate, Dactor by profession. Contact email : kcmcs@gmail.com OR 9821087883 (Regd. No. 6536)

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MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, MBA, Fair, Dec'83, 5' 1"/46 kgs, employed with a reputed Pvt. firm. Seek alliance from India / Abroad. Please send details and photograph to email : fedora48@hotmail.com OR call 24303096 / 9833125356 (Regd. No. 6474)

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(Contd.. from p. 3)

It's not necessarily going to be of biblical proportions, but our living conditions are at risk of deteriorating somewhat with the effects of global warming, which is why it's so important to do something about it. The world of the next generation will be likely to be less healthy, more dangerous and less pleasant to live in.

Climate change also allows insects and other disease carriers to migrate farther north and to higher elevations, potentially introducing diseases such as hantavirus and Dengue fever into new areas. In general, insects and rodents are the key vectors of disease, and they love disturbance. They do very well when there are droughts and floods, etc.

Heat waves, the spread of infectious disease and winter weather anomalies are the three big [climate-change issues] directly for human health. But the pests and diseases that affect livestock, wildlife, agricultural and marine systems are also going to affect public health in very profound ways because that's what provides us with life-support systems, meaning air, water and food.

Extreme heat, for example, affects the circulatory system in ways that tax those who already have problems regulating blood flow. Night-time temperatures that don't drop substantially from midday highs put extra stress on the body.

When humans get hot, their hearts beat faster and their bodies attempt to cool off by sweating, which calls for increased blood flow to the vessels near the skin and decreased blood flow to vessels around major organs,

As the world begins to see a greater number of weather extremes, state and local public health departments need to fortify their public-health tracking systems and know where their vulnerabilities are,

With more carbon dioxide in the air, allergy sufferers and people with asthma also may have a hard time. The higher carbon counts appear to favor ragweed growth and make poison ivy not only more prevalent but more toxic as well,

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www.sezariworld.com/the-secular-citizen-and-divo-issues.html
or
www.issuu.com/divowebweekly

As far as time is concerned, there are two issues. Firstly, greenhouse gasses live a long life in our atmosphere. So not only are we suffering from the actions of the past few generations, we won't see the benefits of our own efforts for another 100 years. Secondly, although the changes have been gathering pace lately, they are still relatively slow as far as we humans are concerned.

Lately I have come to see climate change as an opportunity for great coming of age for the human race. In order to solve the complex and multidimensional problems we are now facing, there will have to first be a tremendous shift in our understanding of ourselves and our place in Existence before we can acknowledge the problems – this is already happening to a certain extent. Secondly a great growing up process will have to happen, as we finally take responsibility for the problems we have created.

There can no longer be such a concept as an "act of God" Since mankind first started cultivating crops the climate has been getting gradually milder due to the small increase in greenhouse gases that agriculture produces. This wasn't a bad thing at all in the beginning, since it enabled modern civilization to develop as ice ages were avoided. However since the industrial revolution this emitting of greenhouse gases has speeded up exponentially, with the result that the climate has started to change dramatically.

Now that science has proven that we are changing the climate, we cannot see ourselves anymore as passive spectators: we will have to take responsibility for the climate and learn to manage it for the long term benefits of ourselves and all other species on Earth. We can't blame God anymore or plead ignorance. Our scientific instruments tell us that we are doing it. We broke it and we have to fix it.

So growing up on all fronts will be needed to solve the problems. And I feel that this has to happen to the majority of individuals. I've noticed in spiritual circles a certain attitude that is along the lines of "I'm going to put all my energy into spirituality and not bother with this problem. We'll all meet on another planet if this one becomes unviable". There is a certain truth to that, but for me it shows a great lack of compassion and connectedness. **WE ARE THE WORLD** and if we cannot look after this planet, then we will destroy the next one too. This attitude sounds like apathy disguised in a New Age wrapper. Awakening must be our priority. Living in a sustainable way is an integral part of that awakening, not something separate.

The more connected I feel with the environment around me, the more I want to do something to help. As the wonderful bird-song I hear touches my heart I feel a great connectedness with this beautiful Earth and I want to protect it. These birds can't fix the climate, but we can. Climate change is giving humanity a great hefty push towards consciousness and it's an opportunity that we can't afford to miss. Time is speeding up.

So growing up on all fronts will be needed to solve the problems. And this has to happen to the majority of individuals. This awakening seems to typically be a process of four stages; denial of the problem, then apathy, then choosing to be part of the solution and finally taking action. The last one is the most difficult. I've talked to many people who acknowledge the problems but think nothing of flying around regularly or of driving 45 minutes to work and back each day alone in an SUV. Indeed it took me quite a while after learning about these issues just to do the easy things: signing up for green energy at home, getting efficient cars, riding the bus to work.

The Stern Review that came out recently, written by top economist of the UK, made a point of the tremendous need for international cooperation. The report concludes that reducing the risk of climate change requires collective action. It requires cooperation between countries, through international frameworks that support the achievement of shared goals. It requires a partnership between the public and private sector, working with civil society and with individuals. **It is still possible to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, through strong collective action starting from now.**

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