

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

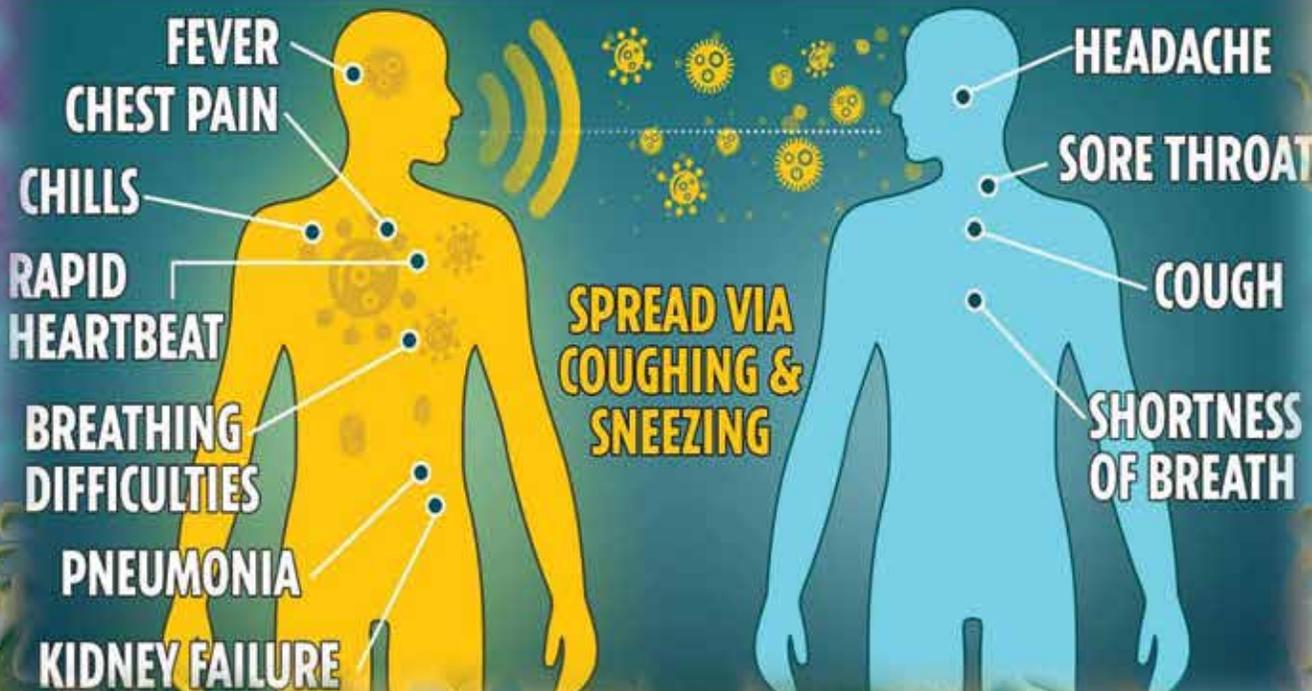
Vol.29 Issue No.05 ■ (Total Pages 24) ■ Mumbai, 3-9 February, 2020 ■ Rs. 10

A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

The Deadly Coronavirus

CHINA CORONAVIRUS

The symptoms of 2019-nCoV and how it spreads



The Palghar Wonder

.....Bishop Percy

From Manor in Maharashtra, around fifteen kms away, in Palghar, and 60 kms away from Borivali in Mumbai, stands an Institute on a 20 acre land, which I or anyone who visits the Institute is bound to call it a "Palghar Wonder" in the Diocese of Vasai!!!!

Within a 20-acre plot stand 1) St. John College of Humanities and Sciences (BSc in Hotel Management) affiliated to the University of Mumbai; 2) St. John College of Engineering and Management, with Courses in Civil Engineering, Computer Engineering, Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering, Information Technology and Mechanical Engineering, degree and diploma level in the Engineering sector, and a two year full time Post Graduate Degree Course in Management (MMS), affiliated to the University of Mumbai, 3) St. John Institute of Pharmacy and Research, offering D.Pharm B.Pharm and M.Pharm degrees, recognized by DTE and affiliated to the University of Mumbai; 4) St. John Junior College, approved by the School Education and Sports Department, Government of Maharashtra; 5) St. John International School, affiliated to CBSE; and 6) An 8 acre plantation of variety of fruit-yielding trees, assuring a green campus!

All the 5 Institutes mentioned above are registered as Christian Minority Institutions, certified by the Maharashtra State Minorities Development Department, and are owned and managed by ALDEL Education Trust, with its office on Holy Cross Road, I.C.Colony, Borivali West, in the parish of Immaculate Conception Church, Mt. Poincur, Borivali West, in

the Archdiocese of Bombay!

One of the things that draws your attention as you visit this campus and go around the Institutions is their Catholic Character. All over the place, crucifixes and pictures of the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart of Mary are proudly displayed. When you enter the office of the Founder of these Institutions a beautiful picture of the Founder with the Pope stares at you. Indeed, in our beloved country there isn't any other Campus of this type on a 20 acre plot with five institutes of learning with over 5,000 students, 19 Degree and Diploma programmes, a faculty of 280 and non-teaching staff of 120, surrounded by a 8 acre green plot of fruit trees!

It is interesting to note the dream of the Founder of this Wonder! It was to develop the youth of our beloved country by providing them with both, basic and specialized education in one campus, enabling youngsters to seek promising careers, by building up their character and moral fibre.

Any progressive country longs to develop science and technology among its people. To do this the country needs trained and skilled manpower. And this is the objective of the institutes under the ALDEL Education Trust.

ALDEL Education Trust is a Christian Religious Minority Trust established in the year 2007, with the objective of providing professional knowledge, by developing expertise and enhancing the creativity of India's youth, with its vision "Excellence in serving to

educate and educating to serve". The Trust began to achieve its objective by first establishing Engineering and Pharmacy colleges in the year 2008. It is to be noted that in the whole of India this Pharmacy College is the only Catholic Pharmacy College! Three cheers to the ALDEL Education Trust and its Founder!

This institute is the only Catholic Institute in our beloved country, offering Courses in Management, Engineering, Polytechnic, Pharmacy Degree and Diploma, Hotel Management, Humanities & Sciences, International CBSE School and a Junior College, spread in one Campus of 20 acres, including a green belt of around 8 acres!

It is unfortunate that the Catholic Church in India has still to establish a methodology to recognize and honour individual Catholics or groups of Catholics who strive to protect and spread Christian Values embedded in the Gospel through the best available means to do this: under graduate and post graduate Education of its youth!

I conclude this brief article by thanking Mr. Albert D'Souza, a person of Catholic Vision, a Philanthropist and a renowned Industrialist, for his determination to spread Christ's message of love through the best means available to him as a lay Catholic, committed to Christ and His teachings, by establishing the ALDEL Education Trust and empowering it with five training institutes in one 20 acre campus, making it the only Catholic Campus of this type in the whole of Mother India!



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Modi is Pushing India into a Backwater

By Don Aguiar

In troubled times, it may seem to us that a great man with a definite message could have the answers to all our problems. Of course, it is comforting, when our leader single handedly, takes upon himself the task of redemption.

But, however competent he might be, if a leader does not carry along with him a set of other leaders with divergent views and diverse perspective, the shocks and costs would eventually weigh all the benefits down. Though we might win the battle or two we are certain to lose the war.

In view of this many intellectuals are alarmed at **Prime Minister Modi manner of functioning by stoking sectarian feuds and polarising the Indian population with regards to the issues of national stability and prosperity.**

Once you get into ethnicity and religion, and drag those two topics into a political agenda, you are asking for trouble. Modi wants to play more and more ethnicity and religious cards. The argument is that a primarily Hindu India is the vision that Modi's BJP and its parent organisation, the RSS, had sought, resulting in Modi's calculus of satisfying his base.

The current attacks on Indian universities, and the chaos resulting from the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the onerous requirements of the looming National Registry of Citizens as well as the steps the Indian government have taken against protesters across the country, including in Kashmir and Assam could have a disproportionate impact on Minorities.

Most Indians look at the present situation as 'There Is No Alternative'. The challengers are very weak. If the challengers were stronger, the course Modi and the party have taken... they would not be taking.

Once you accept that people of two different religions cannot live together, you have to accept that people of two different ideologies cannot live together either. What is religion, after all? It's an idea. Once you

(Contd.. on p. 4)

(Contd.. from p. 3)

accept this, then anyone who differs from your point of view becomes the 'other'. Pakistan is an example of that – it became a Muslim nation but did the Sunni majority accept other Muslim sects?

The British gave us independence in a hurry and left. If we had got from them a dominion state, we would have had time to discuss and have a version of democracy that was adapted to our needs and traditions. It should have been followed up with mass-scale social reforms and education. **But the government did not see citizens beyond their role as voters. As a result, the country continues to vote for the promise of employment and education 70 years after Independence. Whatever little socialism existed at the time of Jawaharlal Nehru is now long dead.**

Few could have imagined a religiously intolerant India before the felling of Babri Masjid. In the years since, the division of people on the basis of religion has been on the rise. Unity, secularism and cross-cultural understanding were at the core of the idea

of India when it was being formed, and CAA now threatens that. The current government has changed the Constitution without changing it. Their actions go against Gandhian values but they have co-opted the Mahatma and use him as a shield against anyone who questions them. But who is to blame for it? The Left and socialist movements have died because they did not remain connected with the masses.

Outsiders looking at India may not know about contemporary history. They see problems with the police and in civil society, raids on university campuses. Civil strife distracts politicians from doing what they should be doing. **It creates a lot of investment problems for outsiders. There is nothing without stability, which for the Indian prime minister, there is negative confidence beyond his base.**

India is still a poor country, and investors like stability and high growth, which could be hampered by protests and repressive measures.

The biggest hurdles are those facing the economy, while India has a potential growth rate of 8 percent, this year it will have trouble getting even to 4 percent.

Indian banks are at the epicentre of the problem. They created a credit explosion and (now there are) credit lapses, and as the economy progressively slowed down, bad debts have begun to show up which include that of shadow banks, which are actually not banks but finance companies that also lent money to people with weak credit.

The elephant in the room is the bureaucracy, which requires to be sharply rationalised, and also public sector banks privatise, and economy deregulated.

Modi seems either unwilling or unable to stop his government from alienating investors, raising tariffs, and generally returning India to the autarkic

1970's. **All the hallmarks of that dark period are available today:** not just open suspension of "predatory" foreign investors, but paranoia about imports and public policy that replaces efficiency with tokenism. **When a government is seized by the protectionist urge, good sense is rarely on display.** Investors will now probably wonder whether the slog to gain a foothold in the Indian market is worth it.

The current system is a result of Brahmins (that form the core of the RSS) educated in British schools being seduced by the British socialist movement at the time of Independence.

Modi is wasting his time with ethnic and religious things; he should be rationalising the bureaucracy so it parasitizes less on society as doing business in India is a nightmare.

The best model for India is one based on Singapore, which was poor and risked being riven by civil war at the time of its independence in 1965.

Lee Kwan Yew, its prime minister for three decades, made it an economic powerhouse, discouraging ethnic and religious strife, and focusing on five main themes:

- 1) Stable money, relying on automatic systems to keep the value steady.
- 2) A refusal of all foreign aid.
- 3) Producing a first-world competitive, private enterprise system, relying on light taxation and regulation, and free trade.
- 4) Ensuring personal security, and protection of private property.
- 5) Putting together a small, transparent government that reduced red tape, but was run by the best civil servants who got top wages.

By comparison, Modi is pushing India into a backwater.

Outside investors don't want to get tangled up in a religious war. It's a wise idea for politicians to avoid ethnic and religious issues.

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India's Priorities!

—Dr. Hazel Colaso, *Bandra (W), Mumbai.*

The *Maha Vikas Aghadi* government of Shri Uddhav Thackray is set to launch a 18,000 thali a day scheme costing Rs 6.4 crore for three months. This utility of Rs 10-a – day thali will be served at 15 places in Mumbai including public hospitals such as KEM and Nair) -Refer page 07 of *Mumbai-Mirror* 22 January 2020. This thali was inspired by the popularity and success of *Jayalalitha's Amma Canteen* in Tamil Nadu, and Congress' *Indira Kichen* in Karnataka.

But *The Times Of India (TOI)* on the same date page 10, issued an ominous news item that the Defense ministry has short-listed Mazagoen Docks and private ship-builder L&T to bag the project to construct 'six new stealth submarines' with foreign collaboration costing Rs 50,000 crore!

I appreciate this Rs-10 thali scheme, and pray that this humanitarian gesture be extended to more poor deserving cases. What Mumbai and parts of India require are these priorities – *roti, kapda aur makhan*; as also 'clean unpolluted air'!

On the same day 22 January, *TOI* on page 09 cautioned in bold heading: *Mumbai's air most toxic in State – Study*: Mumbai has the most toxic air in the State. The concentration of the deadly *Particulate Matter (PM10)* in the city is eight times the *World Health Organization's (WHO)* safe standards. This "Forth Airpocalypse" report was released by the environmental watchdog, *Greenpeace India!*

What is true spirituality to combat inequalities and calamities: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (*James 1:27*).

Solving the NRC conundrum!

A BJP leader may have unwittingly solved the NRC conundrum by profiling people on the basis of their food habits. This method does away with the headache of cumbersome documentation. You will not be required to produce any proof of birth in India. You will not be required to disclose your religion. The only question you will be asked is: "What is your food preference?"

Every state in the country is known for its food speciality. Maharashtra like misal pav; Gujaratis prefer Dhoklas; people from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are partial to Biryani; Sikkimese will swear by their momos; Goans relish fish-curry rice; if you have a weakness for rogan josh you are a Kashmiri and so on. But if you eat poha you are doomed, you'll be sent back to Bangladesh!

— *Prof Robert Castellino Mumbai*

Anti-CAA protests by Church in Goa

The contentious Citizen Amended Act (CAA) which was initially made out to be an innocuous piece of legislation by Parliament has caught the BJP govt at the centre on the wrong foot. Its efforts to downplay the ramifications inherent in the act through its damage control exercise and state-wise door-to-door campaigning are proving to be fruitless as the entire country is engulfed in a spate of re-

lentless non-stop protests, violence and arson for over a month. Everyone has the right to protest peacefully in a democratic country. This is the hallmark of democracy as no one can suppress the voices of dissent. Therefore, the decision of the church in Goa to join the national bandwagon of protests to condemn the CAA as discriminatory, divisive and unconstitutional, on the grounds that citizenship cannot be granted or taken away on the basis of religion in our secular and democratic Republic, seems justifiable. The church cannot remain a silent spectator and unconcerned about our affected brethren just because Christians will not be affected by the CAA. We need to show our solidarity with the suffering. Ultimately, it is the Supreme court which will decide whether the CAA meets the Constitutional requirements or not.

—A. F. Nazareth
Alto Porvorim



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Church in Karnataka burgled - Eucharist desecrated

-Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

St. Francis Assisi Catholic Church,

Kengeri, a satellite town 20 kms from Bangalore, was burgled on the night of January 19-20; the Sacred Species was strewn all around the sanctuary outside the Tabernacle, Rev. Satish, Capuchin, Parish Priest complained to authorities. The Archbishop of Bangalore Rev Dr. Peter Machado stated, "I am not only terribly shocked but also greatly grieved that desecration was done to the Eucharistic Lord in that church. A complaint has already been lodged at the local Police Station, and investigation is being conducted" this is underway at present.

The Archbishop went on to say that this sacrilege and serious dishonour done to the Blessed Lord and Saviour is a matter of great concern not only to the Parishioners of St. Francis Assisi Parish but it also affects the religious sentiments of all in the entire Archdiocese and beyond. In such cases, it is called for to do penance and reparation in the Churches and Religious Houses for this sacrilegious and ignominious deed. He went on to add, "Hence, may I request you to observe Friday,

24th January, as A Day of Reparation in the Archdiocese to praise, worship and glorify the Eucharistic Lord in a

However, on January 21, the Archbishop of Bangalore Rev Peter Machado,

differing and anxious regarding the St Francis of Assisi Church's break in as burglary, said the burglar broke open the tabernacle, the sanctum sanctorum of the Catholic church, and threw the Holy Communion and the sacred spices. It is imminent that all possible action must ensure it is not a communal hate action and done with a motive.

Earlier, Kengeri Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) U.D.

Krishna Kumar dismissed the burglary as a mere theft. "There is no communal motive to the burglary, it was only a theft," Kumar told media



very special way. Let us also pray for those who grieved Him by doing such sacrilegious act. I request at least 12 hours from morning till evening to



ACP Krishna Kumar said an FIR has been registered on a complaint filed by the church priest Rev Satish Kumar, according to whom the thief broke into the church at around 11 p.m., and decamp with the offering box, while leaving a trail of brutal destruction. The police are yet to arrest the culprit. Archbishop, Machado expressed hope that the police will nab the culprit/s and uncover their real motive of this horrible crime soon.

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hold a public veneration in all the Churches and the Religious Houses of the Archdiocese". I have requested the Parish Priests/Chaplains to expose the Blessed Sacrament for adoration on this day, and keep it for at least 12 hours from morning till evening for public veneration," he said. This is being followed now in many churches, institutions and groups.



Prophets of Doom!

The U.S. President Donald, in his keynote address at the World Economic Forum 2020 at Davos, Switzerland, has decried Environmental activists whom he referred to as, 'Prophets of Doom'.

So, there is no Global Warming after all, judging from what the American president had to say. There are no climatic changes, the Earth is fine, everything is fine, this is what one can imply. The glaciers may melt, wild fires may rage, there may intense heat waves across the world; tornadoes, hurricanes may sweep across the world, there may be excessive cold or heat conditions, large number of animals may die, the seas may get heavily polluted, but they shall not be moved.

It seems like Greta Thunberg's outbursts at various forums on the environmental damage to our planet, was a little too much to stomach. There is little doubt that the situation is getting critical, the environmental damage is real. The signs are there for all to see. Greta Thunberg puts it rightly, *'the world, in case you hadn't noticed, is currently on fire'*.

Corrigendum

The misprint in the issue of the Secular Citizen (20 – 26 Jan). A three-line article has appeared on page 6 with the title "Importaucation" is due to oversight. Kindly ignore the same.

—Ed

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On the other hand, one fails to understand why the American president is in denial mode. Calling environmentalists, "prophets of doom" is disheartening.

It would be interesting to know the reactions of certain other personalities around the world to Trump's speech. Economist Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Laureate, said it was *"astounding" and made "as if what we are seeing with our eyes are not there"*. Robert Habeck, a leader of Germany's Green Party, remarked. *"only self-praise, ignorance, disregard for everyone, no perception of global problems. It was the worst speech I've ever heard in my life."* *If this is the attitude of world leaders towards the environment, then perhaps the "doom" might be closer than we think. In the meanwhile, we need to do our bit in saving the environment, to save the planet from further destruction.*



Melville X. D'Souza
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Goa church spearheads anti CAA protest

The church backed anti CAA protest in Goa, has demanded that the state assembly pass a resolution asking the central govt to revoke unconditionally the CAA and all activities relating to NPR and NRC. The large protest, held at the Lohia Maidan in Margao, was spearheaded by the Council for Social Justice and Peace (CSJP), the social wing of the church in Goa. A large number of people from all parts of Goa took part in the protest.

Catholics make up just about 26% of the population in Goa, but play an important role in political life. Five out of 12 ministers in the BJP led govt are Catholics. No govt can survive in Goa without the support of Catholic MLAs. Now that the church has taken a strong stand on the CAA, Catholic MLAs in the ruling party are unnerved about their political future. No longer can they ignore the protests that are playing out across the country. The church must press on with its demands so that pressure is built on the Goa govt to take up the matter with the centre.

I believe that this is the opportune time for the church in Goa to go one step further by leveraging its political clout a week bit more. Last year the Holy Father visited neighbouring Myanmar and Bangladesh--- both countries with not too many Catholics. The pontiff would have willingly visited India but did not because he was not invited. Being head of the Vatican State protocol demanded that he be invited by the head of state of India. The church must now impress on the Catholic MLAs and ministers in Goa to bring pressure on the state govt to take up the matter with the centre for an official invitation to the Holy Father.

—Prof Robert Castellino
Mumbai

WHETHER DEMONETISATION AND UNPREPARED GST IMPOSITION ON THE COUNTRY HAS MAINLY CAUSED THE PRESENT DROP IN GDP?

by Eric D'Sa

When the figures for economic growth in the first quarter of the the year 2016-17 were released, there was much celebration within the Narendra Modi government and among its acolytes. The fact that the economy had grown at a fair clip, 8.2 per cent in that period, albeit as per the new series, was enough for them to claim that all was well with the Indian economy. Also, the fact that this rate of growth was the highest in the last nine quarters was more than enough cause for celebration.

The experience in the last three years ought to have had a sobering effect on those who were rejoicing in these numbers. In 2016-17, the growth in the first quarter was 8.1 per cent but fell sequentially in each of the succeeding three quarters. The annual growth was finally 7.1 per cent, way below what was registered in the first quarter. Much of this deceleration would have been caused by the demonetisation of November 2016. But Modi and his acolytes were embarrassed to admit it. Some of them even today try to defend it. They claim the master stroke won for BJP the UP state election.

The first quarter GDP growth estimate for 2017-18 was 5.7 per cent, but the economy managed a far more respect-

able growth rate of 6.7 per cent in the full year despite the twin strokes of demonetisation and goods and services tax. That is not how economists are supposed to interpret data. In an environment in which investment is not happening—evident from the slide in the capital goods sector—and in which employment is simply not picking up, they asked: Where is this growth happening? How is it that an economy that is growing in excess of 8 per cent in a world that is witnessing a far slower recovery shows no evidence of the scorching pace that ought to be in evidence somewhere?

Even more damaging for Indian economic statistics, for long considered to be among the best in the developing world, has been the manner in which the ruler that measures the value of output and, therefore, growth has been bent out of shape. This pertains to the new series introduced by the Central Statistical Organisation with the base year set at 2011-12.

The fundamental problem with statistics is that it cannot be used to compare the output generated by the economy in the past. The point in measuring the output of today is to be able to compare it with yesterday; and, what is observed today serves as a benchmark to measure output that happens in the future. The serious problem with the new methodology is that it remains incompatible with the data of the past measured by the older series.

Even keeping the above in mind the latest data on the Indian economy is not a pretty picture. Economic growth is at the lowest in six years, while inflation is at its highest in five years. The signs of economic stress are undeniable. At the same time if one looks at the rest of the Asian region, especially at countries that are broadly at a comparable level of development as India, there are a lot of sobering lessons we can learn. Most people will be surprised that at this point of time eight regional economies including China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Nepal. Or whatever reason all these countries are growing faster than India is a hard fact that Indian policy makers can not ignore.

This points to the hasty implementation of unprepared GST coming just after the country was coping with the demonetisation, has caused this difficult situation the country is now facing and struggling to cope with in the year 2020. Only by accepting this fact can remedial actions can be taken.

YOU THE CITIZENS DECIDE:

In any branch of statistics one set of data is often correlated with another to check how far it reflects observed reality. Thus, in the case of the GDP numbers, the obvious question would be to look for components of GDP that would have enabled this rapid increase—employment, performance of various industries, the value of agricultural output, performance of export industries and various other indicators.

Supporters of the Modi government cited data from the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) to claim that employment growth had been robust.

Other critics who sifted through the data came up with the finding that almost half the increase in employment in the EPFO data came from establishments that were deploying outsourced labour, effectively acting as labour contractors. What this meant was that the perceived increase in employment was actually greater casualisation within what has been regarded as the organised sector. Thus, the logical inference seemed to be that if economic growth was about better jobs that was not the case in Modi's India.

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I AM GOAN

(A beautifully articulated poem by Adv. Radharao Gracias in response to a derogatory statement made about overseas Goans by Goa's ex CM last year. I am extremely proud to be a Goan & an INDIAN)

I am Goan.
You find me here, there, everywhere.
In London or Swindon.
In Lisbon or Melbourne.
In Mississauga or Mississippi.
No borders confine me.
No occupation confounds me.
I am called, by many names,
Consider :

I am the Prime Minister of Portugal.
I am the son of celebrated Writer, Orlando da Costa.
The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, hugged me when I visited India.
My name Antonio da Costa from Margao,
I am Goan !

I have been Member of the House of Commons, UK since 1987.
My sister Valerie Vaz, and Suela Fernandes too are members of the 'Mother of Parliaments'
My name is Keith Vas.
We are Goan !

I was the Commander in Chief of the Indian Army.
And with me the GOC Commanding Southern Command was Lt.General F.T.Dias.
My name Sunith Rodrigues, from Curtorim. We are Goan!

I was Police Commissioner of Bombay and was known as Supercop.
And when Punjab was in turmoil, during the Khalistan movement, I was posted there to restore order.
My name Julio Ribeiro, from Porvorim.
I am Goan!

I am considered as a major figure in contemporary architecture around the world.
I was awarded the Padma Shree in 1972 and the Royal Gold Medal in 1984 by the Royal Institute of British Architects.
Buildings designed by me, dot the world.
My name Charles Correia, from Porvorim.
I am Goan !

I am the CEO of Diageo, the world's largest liquor company.
I am son of Manuel Menezes former chairman of the Indian Railway Board.
My brother Victor Menezes is the former chairman and CEO of Citibank.
My name Ivan Menezes, from Pomburpa / Divar.
I am Goan !

I am the CEO and Vice President of Cognizant.

My father, Placido D'Souza IFS was High Commissioner to Trinidad, Hongkong and Kenya.
My name, Francisco D'Souza, from Anjuna.
I am Goan !

I am the CEO of Air Asia.
I am the majority owner of Queen's Park Rangers.
I figure on the Forbes list of the rich in Malaysia.
I studied Epsom College and the London School of Economics.
I am the son of Dr.Steven Fernandes.
My name Tony Fernandes, from Velim.
I am Goan !

I have figured in the Forbes list of Indian billionaires.
I am the CEO of Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, founded by my late father Gracias Saldanha, today one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in India.
When Goan politicians fall sick they use, our medicines to get cured.
My name Glen Saldanha, from Saligao.
I am Goan !

My family lived in Karachi and later migrated to Canada.
I resigned from my job and set up a company in the basement of my house called SOTI.
My company is now valued at a billion dollars.
My name Karl Rodrigues, from Curtorim.
I am Goan !

I was a student at Grant Medical College, Bombay, when I was crowned Miss World 1966.
I completed my medical studies and now live in Ireland.
My name Reita Faria, from Mapusa / Tivim.
I am Goan !

I came to the USA as a Fulbright Scholar.
I am the author of several New York Times Best Selling Books.
I released my film Obama's America, in 2016 which is the second highest grossing political documentary styled film produced in the USA.
My name, Dinesh D' Souza, from Assagao.
I am Goan !

I was a journalist, politician and Freedom Fighter.
I was elected Member of the Kenya Parliament and I had two other Goans with me, F.W.D'Souza the Deputy Speaker from Cujira and Anthony Joseph Zuzarte from Guirim, Vice President of Kenya.
And I was assassinated. My name Pio Gama Pinto, from Saligao.
We are Goan !

(Contd.. on p. 17)

Where Have All The Parish Missions Gone?

“Meanwhile the word of God was increasing and spreading. Barnabas and Saul carried out their mission and then came back to Jerusalem.”

(Ac.12:24-25).

Jesus is the divine presence of the word. Scripture, truth and tradition of the Christian faith needs effective people today to spread the foundational values of trust and belief in the faith. This has been the heartbeat of a spiritual journey for preachers, priests and the catechist, each responding to the fundamental gift he/she has received to resurrect the Faith in each new generation.



BY MELVYN BROWN

In a broad perspective we find that our times are exploding in sin and evil deeds. We often think: where have all the parish, personal and school retreats gone? While growing up I recall ‘living-the-faith’: At home with parents who instilled in their children Christian prayers and the values of speaking the truth, keeping a promise, and forgiving our enemies. Reading the Bible was a daily practice. The Church taught us about the sacrifice Christ made to be our savior and redeemer. We were the children of God, that Jesus was the Messiah divine and human. Schools spoke about the values of our faith and that we should always radiate our Christian lives as examples for others to

observe.

Preachers, priests, nuns, teachers and catechists, all revived the stories of Christ’ mission: for us to gain salvation and to find eternal life. They teach us that the Sacrament is the presence of the divine. That in our human relationships we should emphasize love, charity and the truth. These pious religious and priests ceaselessly nourish us with words of wisdom – and all this is done in parish missions, retreats and on days of recollection.

Frequently promoted by the Redemptorist’ Fathers, “Day of Recollection” were the building blocks to our spiritual growth. This effort in the church has never stopped, but it has slowed down. I recall the words of St. Augustine who said, “ God is a spirit, to be adored in spirit and in truth,” if we look to try and find him “abroad, out of ourselves, we shall not find the God of our hearts.”

The Passionist’ Fathers are also among one of the best speakers in the Catholic Church. The religious congregations plan their retreats, missions and day of recollections much in advance.

What was once a common feature of parish life is now a ‘sudden-happening’, yet these events always draws a full- attendance when announced, evidence of a spiritual hunger!

From my perspective, these events results in enthused youth, and often the return of lapsed Catholics. The faith must spread, develop in growth and fulfill the Lord’s desire and command to reach out to everyman.

The Church, more than ever needs an ongoing catechesis to build more pillars to give God’s earthly kingdom the glory it deserves. At this point I recall the words of St. Luke 7:16, “A great prophet has arisen among us and God has visited his people.”

The Church trains leaders to spread the word with vision, strength and courage. Today, we must renew the Catholic faith in a dialogue with Christ to show us wisdom to have a fearless heart enriched by the power of a brave spirit. “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear, what can man do to me?” (Heb.13:6).

Turn to the Blessed Sacrament in prayer, asking Jesus to inspire those who matter to organize a regular program of missions, or retreats, or day of recollection. Humanity is moving forward in fear and confusion. What tomorrow will bring is anyone’s guess. We need to be spiritually trained to tackle the frustrations and upheavals in our lives and in society.

Let us make the resurgence of missions, retreats and day of recollection help to heal the torn wounds of Christianity across the world.

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

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ROLE OF FINANCIAL ADVISORS

There are many types of financial advisors who are supposed to be qualified to handle a client's portfolio. There are those big brokers who undertake Portfolio Management [PMS] assignment for a fee. They also charge graded fees for higher returns etc which is also fair. However, there are those small time brokers who may either not be competent enough or have dubious intent but are endowed with the gift of the gab and one tends to trust them. In this world where you cannot trust anyone anymore, it is all the more important that gullible investors are not taken for a ride.

I was introduced to one such share broker by a dear and well meaning friend. When someone recommends in good faith you land in a comfort zone and go ahead. The name of the broker is being withheld for obvious reasons. I had entrusted to the share broker a tidy sum in 2007 which he was to use for trading to generate profits. He was given a free hand to invest in shares and he did that diligently for a couple of years and even sent soft copies of the transactions. All was well till then and suddenly there was silence. Despite requests no details of transactions and the actual position of the amount invested were made available. After a couple of years he gave a highly condensed statement showing a huge deficit which meant that the entire capital was eroded. He tried to tell me that actually he was entitled to claim the deficit from me but accepting moral responsibility he would try to salvage the capital but that never happened. I stoutly rebuffed his contention and told him that I having entrusted the amount to him I will have to bear the loss of the capital but the deficit is not my baby.

There were some shares which he had recommended that I buy and bought shares in my name as well as my wife's name. The values had depreciated significantly of those shares and when the matter was discussed with him he suggested that I transfer all those shares to 'his Demat' account and he would sell them and reinvest in new good shares. He sold the shares and bought some but never gave any detailed account of the transactions. Whenever the issue was raised I got evasive replies. No copies of contracts

VIEWS on NEWS

of sale or purchase were sent or any reconciliation statement provided. I never got the final account. I even sent emails to the so called 'Compliance Officer' of the firm but he was more evasive. That is the time I realized that they were not transparent in their dealings. Exasperated I stopped all dealings having lost the capital invested as well as the mess that was created by sale and purchase.

A few years down the line NSDL started sending alerts of the data received from the brokers. In one such alert I found that the same broker was holding some Rs 46,000 on my wife's account for almost 8 to 10 years. I then realized why he was being evasive. He wanted to ultimately adjust this amount against the losses he had incurred in my trading account. This was the most dubious thing to do as the two accounts were not inter-related. I immediately shot an email and demanded that the payment of this amount with interest along with a detailed statement as well as interest for almost a decade. After some delay and my persistence, the cheque was issued for the amount as he had no option. Else, I would have taken up the matter with NSDL. Only the net amount was paid but no interest.

The purpose of this article is to caution prospective investors to be doubly sure when it comes to dealing with small time brokers. Not that the bigger ones are good but at they have a name and goodwill which they would be keen to protect. Recently a big broker was accused of pledging the shares of their clients with banks for loan without investor's consent. Of course the culprit will always show you the fine print that allows the broker to pledge the shares but the fact remains that this is not clearly explained to the client. Gone are the days when you could blindly trust someone.

Uncle Sam is coming

The American President – Donald Trump is finally coming to India. It is rather strange that he assumed power of the world's most powerful nation over three years back and has travelled far and wide but could not find time to visit the most populous democratic nation. Every time the Indian Prime Minister



by Marshall Sequeira

met his 'dear friend' he hugged the big President and posed for photographs. In their bilateral talks India always featured as one of the most strategic partners of the United States. Each time the PM returned, singing praises of his American friend and gave an impression to the Indian public that the friendship between the two countries is 'atoot'. The Americans are a shrewd lot. For them their own interest is paramount and for that, if needs be, they will dump their best friend. They will not have a second thought when it comes to their national interests. India is needed to counter China. Any genuine thaw between USA and China will render India redundant for the Americans. This is the reality. Pak is required to ensure safe passage home to the beleaguered American troops in Afghanistan.

If the Americans considered India as important as we tend to believe, why on earth it would take over three years to pay an official visit to India? If I recollect correctly, Trump was supposed to be the Chief Guest at the Republic Day festivities last year. A lot of publicity was made months in advance only to be told at the last stage that he was not coming. At the last moment the Indian government had to hurriedly find an alternative and settle for whoever agreed to come.

In the latter half of 2019, the American President has let down the country on a number of occasions on one of the most sensitive issues – Kashmir. Despite India's assertion that no third party is welcome, time and again, the American President has offered to 'mediate' on Kashmir ostensibly to keep Pakistan PM Imran Khan happy. This virus is spreading with even Nepal coming with a similar offer. So what do we expect from the American President, come February. Nothing! All that we can expect is some unsolicited advice and a few hugs. It would therefore be futile to expect anything more.

Taking Business to the Next Level

Mumbai based Christian Businessmen's Group '**Dimensions**' held its 164th Monthly Meeting at Hotel Kohinoor Continental, Andheri East on Saturday 25th January 2020 at 8 A. M. in the Morning.

The star speaker for the day was Ms. Faye D'Souza, a well known TV Anchor who spoke on "**Impact of Media on Business and Impact of Business on Media**".

The Meet was attended by a large number of Christian businessmen from Mumbai. The programme includ-

ed a presentation by Mr. Raymond. D'Souza, Passion Preneur Coach and Business Strategist. There was ample opportunities for networking. New comers gave their introductions.

The meet was also addressed by Mr. Albert W. D'Souza, MD of Printania Offset Printers and Mr. Raphael D'Souza, President, Bombay Catholic Sabha.

This organisation benefited many businesspersons in improving, and giving new shape to their business. It has various Chapters in Mumbai, Pune, Goa, etc.



Mr. Freddy Mendonca, Founder of 'Dimensions' presenting a memento to Ms. Faye D'Souza



'Dimensions' Diamonds

President of Bombay Catholic Sabha presented Bishop Barthol, a copy of the Preamble of the constitution of India



(Standing left to right – Alwyn Furtado (Hon. Treasurer), Vinod Noronha (Hon. Secretary General), Lawrence Fernandes(Vice president), Bishop Barthol, Adv Raphael DSouza (President), Bento Lobo (Vice president), Gordon DSilva (Hon.Jt. Treasurer)



BCS President Raphael DSouza presenting Bishop Barthol a copy of the Preamble of the constitution of India

The principal office bearers of The Bombay Catholic Sabha met Bishop Barthol on Friday 23rd January 2020 and President Adv Raphael apprised him about the activities organized and conducted by the Sabha units in the city of Mumbai. He was also extended an invite for the Sabha day to be held on 23rd February 2020 at St.Paul grounds . Dadar east.

President Adv. Raphael DSouza also presented Bishop Barthol with a copy of the Preamble of the constitution of India.

The Bishop appreciated the work done by the sabha units and has encouraged them to carry on with the good work done by the Sabha. He also encouraged them to start units in the Bhayender Uttan area and assured the team that he would give his full support.

This is a great encouragement for the Sabha to work hard for the community in their endeavour to be "COMMITTED TO A BETTER TOMORROW, TODAY "

ALTINA CREATES WEALTH OF OVER Rs 100 CRORE THROUGH VALUE UNLOCKING

Wealth creation can occur either through the income mode or the saving mode. In the Income mode wealth can be generated either as a job creator (employer) or job seeker (employee). As far as the income mode is concerned substantial wealth cannot be created as an employee (Job Seeker) and similarly as far as the saving mode is concerned substantial wealth cannot be created by investing in risk free avenues like fixed deposits.

Wealth can only be created through the job creation mode or by investing in risk oriented assets like equity shares. There are several instances where start ups have grown into huge conglomerates. A classic example is that of Reliance Industries which commenced operations with an investment of only Rs 1000 is today valued at over Rs. 10 lakh crore.

On the savings front an investment of Rs. 10,000 in the year 1984 in Eicher Motors is today valued at around Rs. 900 crores without taking dividends into consideration. Both these illustrations may be extreme cases.

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world driven by economic reforms, a highly developed financial system and a large consumer base. When investments are in equities, it is an investment in the country's investment potential across traditional sectors like infrastructure, consumption, pharmaceuticals, banking & financial Services etc.

With an aim to emerge as a \$5 trillion economy by 2025 the country is set for fast paced growth. The small & medium sector plays a very crucial role in any developing economy and India is no exception. In India the sector contributes 17% to GDP, 45% in the share of industrial output, 40% to exports, employs 69 million & every year creates jobs to the extent of 13 million.

SME's in India account for over 90% of industrial enterprises and are home to over 5 crore units. Therefore if India has to emerge as a \$5 trillion economy by 2025 the participation of the SME sector is paramount. Hence this sector has a huge potential in the years ahead and with the setting up of the SME exchanges both at the NSE & BSE a new avenue has been opened up for companies in the SME sector to garner funds to finance their growth plans. This is achieved by listing on the SME exchanges and thus unlocking value.

Altina Securities has been playing a major role in mentoring & unlocking value of companies in the SME Sector. Over the past one year Altina Securities has unlocked value in four companies where the returns have been astronomical within a short period of time, the details of which are as follows:

Name of the company	Date of Listing	Market Cap (at peak prices (Rs.))
Mac Hotels Ltd	4-10-2018	36 crores
VR Films & Studios Ltd	30-04-2019	25 crores
Evans Electric Ltd	13-05-2019	32 crores
Misquita Eng Ltd	4-10-2019	14 crores
Total		107 crores

The wealth of Rs. 80 crores has been created for promoters and Rs. 17 crores for investors.

Languages you probably haven't heard of

We take a look at some of the rarest languages you probably haven't heard of.

Chamicuro : Chamicuro is such a rare language that it has only eight native speakers living today! It is an official language in Peru.

Faroese : A North Germanic (Scandinavian)

language closely related to Icelandic, Faroese is spoken by the people on the Faroe Islands (Denmark).

Shona : Fewer people are aware of the Narrow Bantu language in the Nigger-Congo region which has the most number of native speakers, Shona.

Tok Pisin : With over 800 languages being spoken here making it the most Papua New Guinea is the most linguistically diverse place in the world.

Of these languages, only three are recognised as official state languages with Tok Pisin, an English-based creole, being one of them

Ad. Rates for Thanksgiving

	Colour	B/W
Favours granted minimum	Rs. 800	Rs. 500
i.e. 15 words + 1 block(1 photo of saint)		
each additional block	Rs. 400	Rs. 300
Holy Spirit Prayer	Rs. 1000	Rs. 700
Other small prayers (upto 100 words)	Rs. 1000	Rs. 700

Contact: Tel.: +91 - 9820485389, 9820473103

THE SECULAR CITIZEN,

99, Perin Nariman Street, Fort, Mumbai - 400001

Thanksgiving

Novena Prayer to St. Jude

O Holy St. Jude, Apostle and Martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my present urgent petition, in return I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked.



Say *Three Our Fathers, three Hail Mary's and three Glory be's.*

St. Jude pray for us and all who invoke your aid. Amen.

—M. Fernandes, Mumbai

Thanksgiving

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, you who makes me see every- thing and who shows me the way to reach my ideals, you who gives me the Divine gift to forgive and forget all that is done to me, and you who are in all the instincts of my life with me, I, in this short dialogue, want to thank you for everything and affirm once more that I never want to be separated from you, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in their perpetual glory. To that end and submitting to God's holy will, I ask from you..... (your request)



—Mable Lobo, Thane



Masala Omelette

Ingredients:

- 3 eggs
- 3 tbsp cooking oil
- 3 green chillies, finely chopped
- 2 tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/2 tsp jeera powder
- 1 tsp dhania powder
- Salt to taste
- 1/2 tsp sugar
- 1/4 capsicum, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp coriander leaves, chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp grated cheese

Method:

- Heat one tbsp oil in a non-stick pan. Add green chillies and onions. Sauté till golden brown.
- Now add tomatoes and sauté for two minutes on high heat.
- Add chilli powder, turmeric powder, jeera powder and dhania powder and stir well.
- Add salt and mix well. Sprinkle some water and mix well.
- Add sugar and capsicum and mix well.
- Switch off the heat and allow it to cool.
- Break the eggs in a bowl. Add little salt and beat well.
- Add the prepared mixture to the eggs and mix well.
- Add coriander leaves and mix well.
- Add cheese and mix.
- Heat remaining oil in a nonstick pan.
- Pour the mixture and spread evenly.
- Lower the heat. Cover and cook for two to three minutes or till eggs are cooked.
- Remove in a serving plate and serve hot with toasted bread.



by Jubel D'Cruz

The Deadly Coronavirus

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause a range of symptoms including a runny nose, cough, sore throat and fever. Some are mild, such as the common cold, while others are more likely to lead to pneumonia. They're usually spread through direct contact with an infected person.

The coronavirus gets its name from the crown-like spikes on its surface, according to the CDC. (Corona is Latin for crown.) Including the newly identified form of the virus, there are a total of seven coronaviruses that can infect humans, the CDC says. Other well-known coronaviruses include SARS and MERS.

The new virus is called 2019-nCoV. It's unclear how easily it spreads from person to person, but the CDC recommends that anyone who may have been exposed to the illness monitor themselves for 14 days after close contact with an infected person.

Symptoms to watch for include fever, cough, shortness of breath, trouble breathing, body aches, sore throat or vomiting and diarrhea.

How does the new coronavirus spread?

Coronaviruses in general are spread through close contact — a range of about 3 to 6 feet. The virus is primarily spread through a sick person coughing or sneezing on someone, said Dr. Kathy Lofy, a health officer in Washington state.

A person could also become infected through contact with the virus particles on a surface, though it's unknown how long the new coronavirus can survive on surfaces outside of the body. If an infected person sneezes or coughs onto a surface, such as a counter-top or doorknob, and another person touches that surface and then rubs his or her eyes or nose, for example, the latter may get sick.

A coronavirus outbreak that originated in Wuhan, China, has killed 56 people and infected more than 2,000, Reuters reported few days ago. The virus has spread to at least 12 other countries. Authorities have quarantined the entire city of Wuhan and a handful of other cities, with all transportation halted.

Medical Predictions are that probably 65 million will die.

And it's spreading worldwide. Already 1 case detected in Singapore, 2 cases definitely certified as Coronavirus in the UK and a huge hunt on for Chinese travellers who came from Wuhan 4 weeks ago. 2 cases are suspected in Sri Lanka - a Chinese and an Asian.

This is even worse than the Ebola crisis.

So great a need for prayer for medical personnel, for laboratory researchers and pathologists in the frontline.

The SARS virus was also spread through feces. Denison suggested the same spreading mechanism may be found in the new virus, but it's too early to know for sure.

How long does it take for someone to get sick?

The new coronavirus's incubation period — meaning the time it takes from a person being infected with the virus to when they start showing symptoms — is still unknown.

However, public health experts are working under the assumption that the incubation period is about 14 days. It's unclear whether a person is contagious during the incubation period.

Does a face mask protect you from coronavirus?

The CDC recommends that patients with the coronavirus wear a face mask to protect others around them, or, if

the patient cannot wear a face mask, others should if they are in the same room together.

Caregivers or people living in the same house as someone who is sick should also wear disposable face masks, along with gloves and disposable gowns, when coming into contact with the patient's bodily fluids.

For health care workers in contact with coronavirus patients, the CDC recommends a more specialized type of mask — one that is individually fitted to a person's face to create a seal and that filters out 95 percent of particles that at least 0.3 microns in diameters. (A micron is 1/1,000th of a millimeter.)

How can I prevent coronavirus?

One of the simplest prevention measures a person can take is proper hand-washing.

The CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, and before and after caring for a sick friend or a family member.

The most effective way to clean hands is to wet them with clean water, then apply soap and scrub for at least 20 seconds, before rinsing and drying with a clean towel.

The Prevention method now is to **Keep your Throat Moist, Do Not let your Throat Dry up.** Thus do not hold your thirst because once your membrane in your throat is dried, the Corona Virus will invade into your body within 10 mins. *Drink 50-80cc warm water, 30-50cc for kids, according to age.* Everytime you feel your throat is dry, do not wait, keep water in hand. Do not drink plenty at one time as it does not help; instead, continue to keep throat moist. Till end of March, *Do Not Go to Crowded Places, Wear Mask as needed especially in train or*

(Contd.. on p. 22)

Santa : My wife's birthday is in the next week and you know what she has started leaving magazines lying around with jewellery advertisements circled.

Banta : Wow! What have you planned to gift her?

Santa : I have understood the hint! I am planning to gift her magazine rack.

Two boys were so disorderly in school that their teacher ordered them to remain after school hours and write their names 500 time. Some 15 mins later one of them burst out in anger and sorrow and between soba said, "This ain't fair his name is Sam and my name is Gulshandeeep".

Teacher : People celebrate Thanksgiving Day in USA. Don't you think India should start celebrating the same?

Student : No! In India people first reject the gift and in no time accept it an says, "Iski koi jaroorat nahi thi"

Height of attitude

An old man's t-shirt had words: "I am not 60, I am 18 with 42 years of experience."

Sam : I love her so much

Raj : She's just 14 and you are 28

Sam : Age is just a number

Raj : And jail is just a room

I was in a cab today and the cab driver said, "I love my job, I'm my own boss. Nobody tells me what to do." Then I said, "Turn Left."

Son : Give me money for gym **Mom** : Will you become John **Cena by going to the gym?**

Son : Am I becoming Einstein by going to school?

Kids : I love walking in rain so that no



one can see my tears.

Adults : I love walking in the fog so that no one can see that I am smoking.

Legend : I love walking, because prices of petrol and diesel are skyrocketing.

Graham Alexander Bell : I used to study under a candle

William Shakespeare : I used to study under street light

Mr Bean : What did you guys do during the daytime?

Love is one long sweet dream, and marriage is the alarm clock.

At the pub with wife

Random girl : Hey handsome, can I have your number?

Me : Hey, I'm with my wife, please don't disturb me. I've told you this 9047125563 times.

If we shouldn't eat at night, why do

they put a light in the fridge?

Wife : If you keep losing your hair at this speed, I shall divorce you.

Husband : Oh my God! And I was stupid enough trying to save them!

Banta reading newspaper news : Indian athlete lost gold medal in long jump.

Banta comments : Idiot! Who told him to wear gold medal while jumping!

Doctor : Madam, your husband needs rest and peace so here are some sleeping pills.

Wife : Doc, when should I give them to him?

Doctor : They are for you!

Husband throwing knives on wives picture. All were missing the target! Suddenly he received call from her "Hi, what are you doing?" His honest reply, "Missing you"

Plastic surgery

Wait for me honey, I'm just finishing my make-up.

You don't need make-up, Jane.

Oh, Richard.... Really? That is so sweet of you!

You need plastic surgery.

What is a black hole?

A black hole is an area in space where matter (what everything is made of) has collapsed in on itself. This means a lot of matter takes up only a tiny amount of space. A black hole has a strong gravitational pull that sucks in everything nearby even light. Nothing can escape it. Should you be worried that a black hole will suck up the earth and the rest of our solar system? Definitely not.

Many galaxies have black holes in them. A black hole is large enough to pull objects near it but not those far away. Even super massive black holes will not continue to grow forever. Just as the black hole was born, it will one day die. A black hole will slowly evaporate, releasing the energy it took back into space.

(Contd.. from p. 9)

I was a physicist, journalist, diplomat and a social scientist at the Eduardo Mondlane University.

I fought for the freedom of Mozambique.

I was principal adviser to Somare Machel, the President.

I died with him in a plane crash.

My name, Aquino de Braganca, from Mapusa.

I am Goan !

I won a bronze medal in tennis 1996 Olympics.

I have won twelve Grand Slam titles in doubles and mixed doubles and several gold medals at the Asian games.

And my father Vece Paes has won a bronze in hockey playing for India in 1972.

My father is a doctor and so was my grandfather.

My name, Leander Paes, from Assolna.

I am Goan !

India failed to qualify in hockey, for the Beijing Olympics 2008 but I was there playing for Canada.

My name, Kenneth Pereira.

I am Goan !

I captained the Mexican hockey team in 1968 Olympics.

I was goalkeeper.

My name, Zeno Rodrigues, from Raia.

I am Goan!

I represented New Zealand at the 2016 Olympics in boxing.

My father Dr. John Fernandes was the Director of IPHB Goa.

My name Selma Fernandes, from Velim.

I am Goan !

I am a fashion designer in Bombay.

I design clothes for Narendra Modi the Prime Minister of India.

My name, Troy D'Costa, from Majorda.

I am Goan!

I work at Heathrow Airport.

Five hundred years ago my community discarded the belief, that any group of people, could be condemned as untouchables and forced to do the "dirty work" for others.

I have been brought up, by my church, to believe in the dignity of labour.

Here at the airport there are people from Asia, Europe, Africa, all doing, all types of work.

We believe, work is worship.

You may call me, by any name.

I am Goan !

Pray, tell me who is this Pratapsingh Raoji Rane ?

Does he not know people migrate when Governments fail to deliver?

Does he not know there are millions of descendants of Indian indentured labourers derisively called coolies living in Fiji, Guyana, Trinidad South Africa and elsewhere ?

What is his contribution to alleviate the unemployment problem ?

2020:

'March for Life'!

The 47th year's theme for the 2020: 'March for Life' is: "Life Empowers: Pro-Life is Pro-Woman"! It was chosen to mark the centennial anniversary of women's right to vote in the United States, through the 19th Amendment in 1920.

A crowd estimated in tens of thousands flooded the Washington D.C.'s National Mall for the 'March for Life' on Friday 24 January. President Donald Trump became the first U.S. President to address the gathering.

"All of us here understand an eternal truth; that every child is a precious and sacred gift from God! We are here to defend the right of every child born and unborn, to fulfill their God-given potential. As President I am proud to stand with you; to protect and cherish the dignity and sanctity of every human life!"

"Young people, you are the heart of the 'March for Life' that's making America the 'pro-family, pro-life nation! This life movement is also led by strong women, amazing faith leaders, and brave students; who carry on the legacy of pioneers who fought to raise the conscience of our nation and uphold our citizen's rights."

"My administration is also concerned about protecting religious liberty; and in taking care of doctors, teachers, nurses, and groups like the Little Sisters of the Poor! Together, we are the voice of the voiceless –'Made in God's image!'" (Genesis 1:26).

And if I may add: "You have been clothed with the 'new self', being renewed in the image of Its Creator! In that renewal, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, slave or free; but Christ is all and in all" (*Colossians 3: 10-11*).

**—Dr. Trevor Colaso,
Bandra (W), Mumbai.**

The first Indian saint

(St. Gonsalo Garcia)

By Fr. F. M. Britto

Who is the first Indian-born saint? He is also the first Indian martyr and the first saint of the Indian sub-continent. His picture is there in this year's Mission Sunday calendar that you have received. Many are unaware that our first Indian saint died as a missionary in Japan. Gonsalo Garcia was born on Feb 5, 1557 in the Portuguese occupied Agashi village in Bassein (now called Vasai), north of Mumbai. His father was a Portuguese soldier and his mother was a native Konkan inhabitant, whom the Portuguese called as Canarim.

Garcia spent eight years in Fort Bassein, reserved for the Europeans. He studied at the Jesuit school of Fort Bassein and helped in their Church of the Holy Name of Jesus. Now it is known as St. Gonsalo Garcia Church. Here he came into contact with the Jesuit missionaries and Jesuit Father Sebastiao Gonsalves became his friend and guide all through his life. Here he learned grammar, philosophy and Roman history.

The Spanish king sent Jesuit missionaries to Japan from Bassein. Garcia was willing to accompany them. In the first week of March 1572 he accompanied Father Gonsalves to Japan. During these four months of voyage in the ship, Garcia learned Japanese from a Japanese native, who accompanied them. In Japan Garcia was appointed a catechist. By his friendly manners he attracted children and served for eight years.

He desired to join the Jesuit Order. Though promised, his Indian ancestry proved to be a bar to his entry in that religious order. So Garcia left the Jesuits, much to their regret.

He went to Alacao city and became a merchant. His business flourished. His commercial relations brought him into contact with Manila, Philippines. But



he continued his Christian zeal and piety. And there he came into contact with the Franciscan friars.

He was accepted to become a Franciscan lay brother. Thus began his second phase of missionary activities. The Franciscan missionary Friar Peter Baptist remained his companion until their shared death. The Spanish governor of Manila selected Peter Baptist as the leader of the delegation to go as missionaries to Japan and Garcia as his companion and translator. The delegation left Manila on May 21, 1593 and reached Hirado, a harbor of Japan, on July 8, 1593.

The Franciscans settled in places like Kyoto, Osaka. Though the Jesuits had lots of opposition, Japanese appreciated the simple ways of the Franciscan friars. Japan became the centre of evangelization for the Franciscan missionaries.

As the Franciscans succeeded in their conversion works, the traditional religious leaders also opposed them. Matter became worse when the captured captain of the Spanish ship wrongly informed the Japanese customs officials that the king of Spain had sent the missionaries to instigate the local people against their ruler. When the matter was reported to the regent Toyotomi Hideyoshi, he was enraged. An order was issued to arrest and execute all Christian missionaries in Ja-

pan. Garcia, other Franciscan friars, three Jesuits, fifteen teenage boys who were members of the Third Order of Saint Francis and the native seminarian Paul Miki were arrested on Dec 8, 1596 and were sentenced to death.

The 26 sentenced prisoners began their journey on Jan 4, 1597 from Kyoto. Travelling 600 miles, they reached Nagasaki on Feb 4. Next morning they were taken to a hill called Nishigaoka to be crucified. Since Garcia was prominent among them, he was kept in the middle.

The 40 years old Garcia was crucified along with others and the executioners stabbed their spears into the missionaries' chests. The soldiers drove away the Portuguese and Japanese Christians who were witnessing the martyrdom and were collecting the holy relics. Local authorities left the corpses on the crosses expecting vultures to eat them.

Since a series of miracles began to occur on that hill of Nagasaki, 35 years after the crucifixion on Sept 14, 1627 Pope Urban VIII beatified Garcia and his co-martyrs. The matter was neglected for more than two centuries and on June 8, 1862 Pope Pius IX canonised them. Thus Garcia has become the first Indian and the first Indian sub-continent martyr-saint.

Garcia had been declared the patron saint of the newly created Vasai diocese in 1998, bifurcated from Bombay. His feast day is celebrated on Feb 6. A church in his honour was built in honour of him in 1942 and was renovated in 1957 and is considered to be the tallest church in Vasai. A college in Vasai has been also named after him. But he has not become very popular in other parts of the country.

In spite of the small Christian population, India takes pride in giving the church a martyr-saint way back in the 16th century.

Cave Of Plenty

By Father George Ponodath, SJ

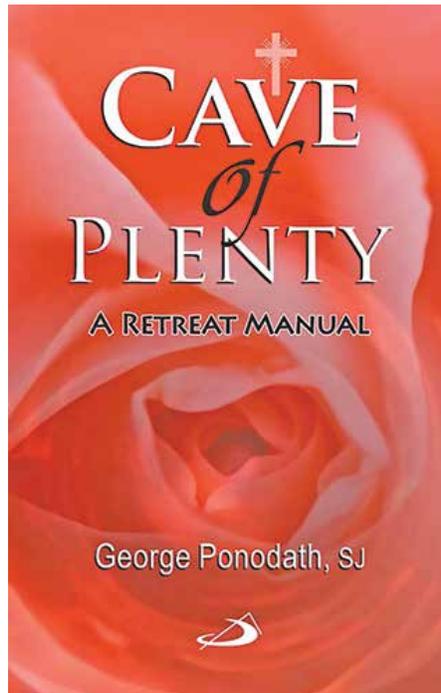
ST PAULS – ISBN 978-93-5015-358-1 / Pp 376 / Rs 350

Reviewed by Ladislaus L D'Souza

Time was when one attended an annual retreat, entrusting oneself to the Lord through the priest preaching the Retreat. The scene today is different, what with retreats now not only being 'preached' by priests and bishops but also 'conducted' by nuns and lay people, with even lay folk 'giving' recollections to bishops! George Ponodath is a Jesuit priest who, having witnessed firsthand the sea change in the retreat scenario, has felt the need to bring out a book that would be an effective aid to all concerned. **CAVE OF PLENTY** is fruit of that witness and of his concern for both *retreatant* and retreat giver.

Father Ponodath is obviously so steeped in the Retreat ministry as to remind the reader that a retreat may be made 'good' by our effort but is made perfect by God alone. He adds: "I do not like the phrase "retreat director" and would much rather prefer to use "retreat assistant", or even "facilitator" because I think God is the real retreat director! What God does in the soul of the retreatant and how he/she responds is more important than what the preacher says. Therefore, your talks should *assist* the retreatant to make that connection with God and then promptly, quietly, stand aside" (p 12).

CAVE OF PLENTY is a 'retreat manual' that differs from other books of the same genre in that it contains a number of topics dealt with so lucidly that a reader would be able to use the book in a myriad ways! He/she might consider the contents as an aid for either preparing to give a retreat or *attend* one or even as a resource book for *personal reflection*. After all, every topic covered has been talked about and tested over a period of time with individuals as well as among several



groups of people who, after listening to the talks, have invariably asked the author for printouts. Salubriously, the author has carefully grouped his talks thematically to enable the reader to choose a chapter or topic at will and benefit greatly from putting the concepts and sentiments involved to meaningful use.

Essentially, the talking style in evidence does on the one hand make for easy handling of the topics and, on the other, challenge the user of the book to be imaginative, bringing creativity to the fore in the enjoyment of the exercise. In the process, you both experience yourself what you set out to do for your retreatants and witness firsthand the effect of the exercise on their faces as they emerge from the cave of plenty well fed on peace and zest, ready to face the world the way the Lord wants them too!

Father George Ponodath SJ is a man with a passion for mission as is evident from the fact that, after his priestly formation and studies in media, he commenced his media minis-

try as a 'producer', in time going on to become Director, Educational Multimedia Research Centre [EMRC], Calcutta, a Central Government initiative, making educational television programmes for *Doordarshan*. Post retirement, he breathed the air of Manresa, Spain, where Ignatius of Loyola wrote the Spiritual Exercises, dwelt in the very cave that Ignatius inhabited, walked the paths the saint had tread and touched the waters of the River Cardoner, returning there to re-live the Spiritual Exercises in *toto* in a full month-long retreat, before concentrating on bringing Ignatian Spirituality to the masses! It is this lived experience of the author that backs up **CAVE OF PLENTY** in helping you take a look at the kind of retreatants you are slated to preach to and accordingly work out a thematic plan vis-à-vis the term of the retreat, the examples given in the Appendix helping you enormously.

In terms of self-help, one would find oneself facing an exhilarating challenge - like an invitee to a buffet dinner looking over a great variety of dishes! A word of caution here, from Father Pierre Jacob SJ [*Preface*]: "Beware of indigestion! Assimilate the text, ruminate over it in the same way as the cow chews the cud, making it your own, letting yourself be challenged and transformed by it" (p 10), thereby making the Emmaus walk on which **CAVE OF PLENTY** leads you an experience of wonder and amazement that any retreat is meant to be, whereby we exult unabashedly, "Did not our hearts burn within us, as He talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?" (Lk 24:32)

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Indonesian president sends official invitation to Pope Francis



Indonesian President Joko Widodo has extended an official invitation to Pope Francis to visit the Muslim-majority country after news reports emerged last week saying the pope wanted to go there.

A copy of the formal invitation letter began spreading on social media later last week.

In the letter, Widodo said he had been informed about the pope's plan to visit the country.

"With that regard, I am delighted to extend to the Holy Father, as the Spiritual Head of the Catholic Church, an official invitation to be our guest," Widodo wrote.

He said a papal visit would further strengthen bonds between Christians

and Muslims in Indonesia.

"His Excellency's visit would provide very good momentum in strengthening friendship and cooperation for the sake of our mutual benefit," Widodo wrote. "Please accept, Holy Father, the assurances of my highest esteem."

Shanti Purwono, a presidential adviser, confirmed the invitation was sent to the Vatican.

Pope Francis' wish to visit was revealed by Yahya Cholil Staquf, secretary-general of Nahdlatul Ulama, the country's largest Islamic organization, following a meeting with the pope on Jan. 15.

Staquf, who was in Rome to attend an Abrahamic Faiths Initiative meeting

which gathered Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders, told Catholic News Agency that Pope Francis planned to visit Indonesia and neighboring Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea in September.

Achmad Nurkholish from the Indonesia Conference on Religion on Peace (ICRP) said a papal visit would be a welcome boost to interfaith relations.

"The visit can strengthen Catholic-Islamic relations by energizing interfaith dialogue and cooperation," he said.

By coming to Indonesia, the pope would see for himself the dynamics of the relationships between religious communities, he added.

Father Antonius Benny Susetyo, a member of a presidential unit promoting communal tolerance, encouraged Widodo to push for the visit, calling the invitation a good opportunity within the framework of international politics to show a strong commitment to a culture of dialogue amid various conflicts around the world today.

"I think Indonesia is important in the context of it being the world's largest Muslim country pursuing democracy with an emphasis on tolerance enshrined in the Pancasila philosophy," he said, referring to Indonesia's national ideology that stipulates belief in one God, a just and civilized society, a united Indonesia, democracy guided by consensus, and social justice for all citizens.

"It is hoped that the pope's presence will enable the world to learn from Pancasila and see it as a more pro-humanitarian alternative to the new world," he said.

ucannews

(Contd.. from p. 15)

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1. Repeated high fever.
2. Prolonged coughing after fever.
3. Children are more prone.
4. Adults usually feel uneasy, headache and mainly respiratory related illness.

This illness is Highly Contagious:

Corona virus, 90,000/-Cases reported but data hidden from world due of extremely dictatorial regime in China. Death toll 80 plus, increasing rapidly.

Is there a coronavirus vaccine?

There is no specific treatment for the new virus, and no vaccine to prevent it. The National Institutes of Health confirmed Tuesday it's in the "very preliminary stages" of research to develop a vaccine, but declined to provide details.

In addition, the drug company Regeneron is in the early stages of work

on a potential treatment for this coronavirus. The company previously developed a similar treatment for Ebola.

Do disinfectants kill the coronavirus?

Yes, they can. The CDC suggests that anyone exposed to an infected patient clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets and bedside tables.

Cleaning agents can include a household disinfectant with a label that says "EPA-approved," according to the CDC. A homemade version can be made, using one tablespoon of bleach to one quart of water.

What's the risk this will spread in India and other countries?

The likelihood this coronavirus will spread from person to person in India may be low. However, isolated cases from travelers are likely. There is no case reported so far.

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