

# THE SECULAR CITIZEN

(Total pages 24)

A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

Vol.26 No.35 ■ Mumbai, August 28, 2017 ■ Rs. 5

## How safe is Your Child in the Digital World?



# Konkani Manyata Day Celebrated by DIVO and Kavita Trust



**Mangaluru:** 'DIVO' Konkani weekly (a sister publication of The Secular Citizen), in association with Kavita Trust, Mangaluru celebrated 'Konkani Manyata Day' and get-together of writers at Bishop Jattana Auditorium Mangaluru on Sunday, August 20, 2017.

The occasion is graced by Dr. Ronald Fernandes, Bureau Chief of Decan Herald, Mangaluru and President of Mangalore Press Club as Chief Guest. Senior Konkani Writer Eddie Netto and Senior Writer-Editor Dolphy Cascia as Guests of Honour

In his address The Chief Guest Dr. Ronald Fernandes said its time that Konkani journalism should introduce more professionalism as we see it today based on amateur thinking. Moreover articles need to be more research oriented.

Eddie Netto and Dolphy Cascia also address the gathering and stressed in bringing new thinking and innovation in their writing

Earlier in the introductory speech DIVO editor Lawrence Coelho gave background on DIVO Konkani Weekly publication, its various programmes organised during 23 years period.

Founder president of Kavita Trust and poet Melvyn Rodrigues conducted recitation of Konkani Kavitas which is participated by poets, Wilson Kanteel, Roshan Bajpe, Vincent Pinto Angelore, Naveen Kulshekar, Stany Bela, Felcy Lobo Derebail and Umer Bhatkal.

A large number of Konkani writers were present on this occasion.

Earlier DIVO Mangaluru Bureau Incharge Naveen Kulshekar Welcomed the dignitaries and gathering. Richard Pereira introduced the guests. Suzan Coelho publisher DIVO proposed the vote of thanks. Santhosh Omzoor Compared the programme.



Photos by Dayanand Kukkaaje

## 'Thought for the week'

*The happiness of the world is transitory. The less you become attached to the world, the more you enjoy peace of mind.*

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**Cover :** How safe is your child in the digital world?:

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● Rs. 2000 for 12 insertions. (1 year The Secular Citizen FREE)

## Becoming a Republic of Fear

by Don Aguiar

Everyone is busy planning for, waiting for, and dreaming about the present government they had voted to power in 2014. Whether it's just a simple price reduction or a long, tax break for businesses and the people or the 'Acha Din' they promised the people in their election manifesto, talking about the present government has become an integral part of life, a time when people feel they are short charged. And then when the present government starts becoming bias and authoritarian as the months go by, the perceived bliss of democracy starts fading. But isn't what the people are dreaming and the government is doing, just an escape from themselves?

India has become a Republic of Fear where justice, democracy and the basic right to life lie in tatters, and the Constitution of Dr Ambedkar is violated daily with the government's blessing. The issue in India today is no longer corruption. Not even secularism. It is freedom pure and simple.

India has become a country where Hindu supremacist gangs can lynch and rape freely and without any fear of punishment. Where children, women and men are brutally killed for what they eat, who they love and simply for who they are

Does the present government seem schizophrenic to you? Media headlines are divisive, full of government views and their targeting of dissent or for praise on them, but read the morning newspaper and it's all about dealing with stress, about living in fear, and about becoming a more revengeful individual. So how did we achieve this balance, how did we become like this?

This government has made you schizophrenic, split. They have created guilt in you by creating a split; it is their whole business. Only a greedy man will go for the governments' bait of their development plank; otherwise there is no need. If you are one, you would like to dance in the open air under the sun. That will be your real acceptance. Nothing is said, nothing is asked, but you are showing your gratitude to the government.

***This is a smart way of this government to keep people passive and obedient in strictly limiting the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum.***

The only motive for attacks on Christians is religious hatred. The recent launching of a campaign against Christian conversions by Jharkhand's BJP government, which misleadingly invokes Gandhi, appears to be an ominous prelude to more violence against the Christian minority

(Contd.. on p. 4)

Where can you escape to? Wherever you go, you go to another place in your country. You cannot run away from your country. Whatever place you reach, you will realize that you are still in your country with the Hindu nationalists chasing you. Then you have to run away from that place, and from the next place... and in this way you will have to keep running from the Hindu nationalist

**Dividing humanity into parts by creating division by religion, cast, and creed is the game of the politician. It is poison to humanity**

The fact that Prime Minister Modi, and those closest to him, have refused to condemn these incidents and focused instead on targeting any dissent as 'anti-national' and on whipping up exclusionary and violent Hindu nationalism is further cause for deep concern about India's future

It is a cause for concern that, under the present government, religious minority communities feel vulnerable due to Hindu nationalist groups engaging in violence against non-Hindu individuals and places of worship

While the national government sometimes speaks out against incidents of violence, local political leaders often do not, which has left victims and minority religious communities feeling vulnerable. And that leads one to learn to love their fate, taking a lead from our holy books.

Learning to love your fate is an attitude in which one sees everything that happens, including suffering and loss as necessary. Whether one likes them or not, it is accepted with Zen like serenity.

Thomas Edison was at home eating dinner. A man burst into his house interrupting him. He had bad news. His research facility was on fire.

Now how would you imagine Edison react? Do you imagine Edison panicking or do you hear him scream out "Why me?" or is he deeply distraught or do you see him in deep agony?

None of these happened. Edison requested his son to go and get his mother. It seems, Edison excitedly told his son, "She will never see a fire like this again."

Naturally, Edison's son thought his father had lost his mind, and rightfully so. All of Edison's experiments, things that never could

## Wheelchair And Disabled Catholics Can Also Be Apostles

**A**mid violence in the world today we must keep fast the Light of God in our mission to provide hope to everyman. Pope Francis said, "Hope teaches us to smile. One of the first things that happen to people who withdraw from God is that they are people without smiles..." Hope comes with trusting in God, in his Son and the Holy Spirit. The key players in this mode can also be the wheelchair, disabled and armchair (elderly) lay-Catholics, shepherds who are homebound and who radiate the Light and Promise of God's Word.



BY MELVYN BROWN

Pope Francis spoke to new Cardinals and Archbishops to be "apostles on the go" not armchair Catholics, at a recent Mass on the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul in St. Peter's Square.

For that matter is it too much to find that lay-Catholics who are retired,

widowed, not mobile because of injury could also be silent apostles of Christ.

In the same homily at St. Peter's Square, the pontiff said, "armchair Catholics, who love to chat about how things are going in the Church and the world... apostles on the go who are on fire with love for God and ready to offer their lives for him.... Apostles for Christ know that they cannot just tread water or take the easy way out, but have to risk putting out into the deep, daily renewing their self-offering," Pope Francis stated.

Lay people in wheelchairs, disabled ones and those elderly who are on armchairs can also be Apostles for Christ.

(Contd.. on p. 15)

be replicated, were inside his laboratory, burning to the ground.

"Don't worry it's all right," Edison said calmly, "All my mistakes and a lot of unnecessary rubbish have just got burnt."

In this, Edison revealed the true nature of "learn to love your fate" no matter what.

Not only was he not broken hearted, he was revitalized. Despite losing over \$ 1 million at the age of 67 in a fire, he persevered and made over \$ 10 million thereafter.

I am in love with learning to love your fate. Why? Because, the power that we have in life by accepting our fate is so immense that you feel nothing is impossible for you. **You believe that everything has a purpose and that it is up to you to make this purpose something positive and active.**

Maybe you lost your job or your trust was broken with impunity or someone ill-treated you. The challenge of your life may be considerable and inescapable. And yet you're given a choice to greet it with a smile. And

then act. That's learning to love your fate.

It's to make you feel great irrespective of what happens. If it happened, then it was meant to happen. You are meant to make the best of it. It is unnatural to feel calmness when faced with calamities. **But see it this way. It is fuel for you to push harder when you felt lost, when you want to quit or to think big when nothing is going right.**

*But what's valuable—and impressive—is when someone can look for solutions and opportunities instead of just looking for problems. Any dimwit can find a problem!*

We must not remain silent and allow the forces of the Hindu right to transform India into a Republic of Fear

We have to bring this to the notice to the common people of our country. They are the best ones to judge what is going on in India. According to me action means to create awareness amongst the people about what is happened, we must do exactly that and ensure that India continues to remain a secular democratic republic.



## Corruption aisaahi chalegaa?

I was disappointed to realise that in your 14 August issue Mr. Don Aguiar in his article on "Corruption" seems to say: there is no medicine on corruption in India, "Yah aisahi chalenga!"

He makes no mention of the AAP experiment in Delhi. .Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi state is giving a corruption-free government. Mr. Kejriwal has in last 3 years of his reign, given the Delhites water free of charge, electricity at half rate,, medical facilities in every Mohalla at affordable rates, clean night shelter for the homeless, DTC buses at concessional rates, and Public schools are made attractive even to the middle class people. Many more services are given without spending ex-chequekers money.

In fact we Christians should be the first to encourage such corruption-free political parties and their humble efforts. But alas! That was not seen in last Goa elections! I am so sorry that even the Delhi Christians do not support the AAP. If they had to support by now some Christian ministers would have been serving the country. AAP is the only formidable party today that opposes BJP tooth and nail. Tomorrow if the BJP succeeds in crushing the AAP we will be guilty of the sin of omission if not commission!

—Fr. Michael G.,  
Samajshudhdi Abhiyan, Vasai

## On short homilies

This is with reference to the letter 'Preparing homilies no easy task' By Prof. Robert Castellino( Secular Citizen, Aug. 7). The message of Catholic priest Fr Paddy O'Kane of Northern Ireland to his parishioners, on short homilies of 5 minute duration, should

be heeded by all priests of the Catholic church. Homilies should ideally focus on the day's readings and the gospel, and on the message they wish to convey, and not on fairy tales. This should not exceed 10 minutes at the most. Instead, today's homilies are a mere repetition of what has already been read, which often happens when the priest comes unprepared. Secondly, preparing a sermon should not be a daunting task for a person with several years of seminary training in theology and philosophy. Every priest may not be gifted with oratorical skills, but communicating the Word of God should not be a problem, whether on a Sunday or week day. Finally, it is true that a short and good homily will help to bring more people to church on a Sunday without a feeling of compulsion. The message of the wise priest should instead read "If you cannot strike oil in 5 minutes, then stop BORING, not drilling".

—A. F. Nazareth  
Alto Porvorim  
Goa.

## Pope Francis on Twitter and Instagram

On 10 August 2017, Zenit.org reported that, "Pope Francis Uses Twitter to Remind the World that Jesus Does not Leave Us Alone, because We are Precious to Him!" And on 11

August, he reminded the audience that, "When Something Makes Us Suffer, Let Us Listen to the Voice of Jesus in our Hearts – 'Do not fear! I AM with you!'" (cf. Matthew 28:20; & Mark 6:50).

According to Vatican Radio, Pope Francis has more than 35 million followers on his Twitter account in nine languages – the top four being, 13.6 million in Spanish, 12.1 million in English, 4.52 million in Italian, and 2.79 million in Portuguese.

This @Pontifex account, opened by Pope Benedict XVI on 03 Dec. 2012, is among the most followed in the world, and the one that records the most 'retweets'! Since 19 March 2015, Pope Francis is also present on Instagram, with the account @Franciscus, which has recently exceeded 4 million subscribers.

However, if I may be more explicit: "For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Christ Jesus. For God Who said, 'Light will shine out of darkness' (Gen1:3), is the One Who has shined in our hearts, for the enlightenment of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:5-6).

—Dr. Trevor Colaso,  
(Boca Raton, Florida, USA).



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# Trains & Alarm Chains

**W**hen I travel by train I feel relaxed. I am not tensed about the journey because I trust the driver, the guard and the system. I am not constantly on edge about what may happen, and it hasn't even crossed my mind to look for the alarm chain or how to use it.

Yet there are many alarmists on every gravy train. They see ghosts, devils or assailants under every berth. This morning (10th August) I received a video sent by a sister in Rome. It was about one Rajiv Dixit. He went on a 5-minute harangue about how Christian churches and convents in India were actually the largest land owners. They had got these vast tracts of land for a pittance from the British, he alleged.

He then went on to say that 92% of the students in Christian "convents" in Mumbai were Hindus, and the amount of fees they were paying annually was equivalent to the budgets of some small States. What he conveniently glossed over was why these 92% of Hindus had so much faith and trust in "convent" schools. He did not also see the need to mention how much expenditure was involved in imparting such quality education.

I always take forwarded messages with a large pinch of salt. I immediately asked the Roman informant where she had got the video from, and if she could authenticate it? By evening one of my wife's relations had forwarded her the same video, saying that Christian institutions and properties were under threat. Again I questioned the source, only to be told that the person in the video had died in 2012/13. So where did this video resurface from in 2017?

**the most alarming cases of orchestrated violence against Christians were the attacks on tribal Christians in the Dangs area of Gujarat in 1998, and the sustained pogrom in Kandhamal, Orissa, in 2008. A horrendous personal attack for being Christian was the burning of Rev Graham Staines and his two minor children, again in Orissa, in 1999/ 2000(?).**

Recently an Open Letter to church heads was signed by 101 eminent Christians (not Dalmatians). One of the contentions in that letter was that there had been over 600 attacks on Christians in the last three years. I did not sign the petition. Among other reasons, I queried if the authors of the letter could document and authenticate these 600+ attacks? My question remained unanswered.



by **chhotebhai \***

Ironically, on the day that I received that appeal (28th July 2017) I also saw a full page "Catalogue of Horrors", or hate crimes, listed in the Hindustan Times. The newspaper acknowledged that the list was incomplete. Nevertheless, of the hundreds of cases reported, only 4 were against Christians, all pertaining to vandalism. I know the list was incomplete because recent heinous crimes in

Bengal, vandalism in Agra, and detentions in Madhya Pradesh were not listed.

The dichotomy between 4 and 604 made me sit up. There could be two reasons for this. First, that the Christian community (myself included) is collectively very poor in its public relations hence unable to draw the attention of the nation or the media, to atrocities against the community. The second reason, is that we could be turning alarmist, with a persecution complex, possibly blowing minor incidents out of proportion. In some instances we could also be inviting trouble by aggressive evangelization, and telling the "pagans and idol worshippers" that they are all going to hell!

To my memory, the most alarming cases of orchestrated violence against Christians were the attacks on tribal Christians in the Dangs area of Gujarat in 1998, and the sustained pogrom in Kandhamal, Orissa, in 2008. A horrendous personal attack for being Christian was the burning of Rev Graham Staines and his two minor children, again in Orissa, in 1999/ 2000(?).

If we compare these incidents with the massacre of Sikhs in 1984, Muslims in Gujarat in 2002, or earlier in Nellie (Assam), and the increasing attacks on Muslims in recent times, for being beef eaters, we would have to acknowledge that we Christians are relatively safe in our motherland, India. Certainly safer than in our neighbouring countries of Pakistan, China, Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh; or in the Middle East – Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and sub-Saharan Africa – Nigeria, Southern Somalia etc.

While writing this a fresh controversy has erupted with outgoing Vice-President Hamid Ansari, stating that

(Contd.. on p. 7)

Muslims in India were beginning to feel insecure, and the incoming Vice President, Venkaiah Naidu, saying that Minorities in India were safer than in other countries. Propriety apart, both statements were true. What also needs to be said is that the insecurity and intolerance levels have spiked in the last three years; and growing unrest among Muslims could reach flashpoint. The tremors are there. The volcano could erupt at any time.

To revert to the Christian community, I do not for a moment wish to belittle the hardships that many Christians face, especially in remote rural areas. There is no doubt that “eternal vigilance is the price of freedom”. My only contention is that we should not get alarmist and start pulling the chain every now and then.

We know that bonafide passengers get very irritated with chain pullers, if there are insufficient grounds for doing so. So we need to strike a balance in our public relations. Remember the boy who kept crying “wolf”? When he was actually attacked he had lost all credibility and consequent assistance.

We Christians also tend to press the alarm button every time an anti-conversion bill comes up. The latest one is to be tabled in the monsoon session of the Jharkhand Assembly. The bill has the same draconian provisions as in the earlier Himanchal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh acts; about seeking prior permission for conversion from the District Magistrate. If indeed this bill becomes law then its unconstitutional provisions will have to be challenged in the courts. Yes, we should be alert, but not unduly alarmed. Shortly after Independence the first such enactment was by the Congress in the 1950s, a consequence of the infamous Niyogi Commission. Thereafter several other States have made such enactments. However, there has not been a single conviction; as I wrote to the then Congress Chief Minister of Maharashtra,

when he was contemplating such a move.

Other than judicial intervention, we also need to build public opinion by countering wild allegations with facts and figures. The best tool is the data from the Census of India, the latest being that of 2011. Most importantly, the Christian percentage of the population has remained static at 2.3% since 1971. Significantly, the Decadal Growth Rate (DGR) of the Christians at 15.5% is more than 2 percentage points less than the All India DGR of 17.64%. Almost unbelievably, Nagaland, (a Christian majority State) actually has a negative DGR of -0.58%! Old Christian bastions like Kerala and Goa also have significantly lower DGR at 4.91% and 8.3% respectively.

The percentage of Christians in both Kerala and Goa has reduced drastically. In Kerala in 1961 Christians constituted 21% of the population, down to 19% in 2001 and 18.38% in 2011. In Goa the fall is even more drastic, from 36% in 1961 to 27% in 2001 and 25.1% in 2011. Himanchal Pradesh, the last State to feel “threatened” by Christian conversions has just 0.18% Christians, and Jharkhand too has a mere 4.3% Christians! One therefore wonders why various political parties make such a hue and cry about conversions?

Ironically, Arunachal Pradesh that has a strict law against conversions now has 30.26% Christians. It is one of the four Christian majority States in India; the other three also being in the North East – Meghalaya (74.59%), Mizoram (87.16%) and Nagaland (87.93%). Manipur, also in the North East, is not far behind with 41.29% Christians, just 0.1 percentage points behind the Hindu population at 41.39%.

On their part, Hindus should not be alarmed by these statistics, because most of these conversions in the North East have not been from among Hindus, but from the indigenous or animist tribal religions.

Whether or not Christians should pur-

sue an active agenda for conversions will be the subject of my next article, a sequel to this one.

For now it should suffice to reiterate that eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. To travel safely on the train we should not buy food from unauthorised vendors (not succumb to rumour mongering or unverifiable Whatsapp messages). We also need to chain our luggage to the hooks under the seats (avoid unnecessary risks, bravado and keep our houses in order, so that there are no “raids” by the FCRA or other Govt agencies). Yes, we will pull the alarm chain when there is an emergency, but we should first take all preventive measures to ensure that such a situation doesn't arise.

\* *The writer is a former National President of the All India Catholic Union*

## 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.**  
(THANKS FOR FAVOURS GRANTED)

—Mrs. Lydia Fernandes,  
Andheri (w)

# The Parish Book Centre



## Where the Word Meets the World!

“What’s in a name?” says Juliet in Romeo and Juliet by the Bard of Avon. If there’s one book outlet on the media firmament whose name could fascinate the discerning book enthusiast no end, it is the **FAITH CENTRE** of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Orlem, Malad! Open every evening apart from Sunday mornings, it is a small facility run by the parish prayer group and has a little of everything [largely books] that helps foster the faith of the community. But this article is not about Orlem’s Faith Centre per se but about the need for every parish in every diocese in our country to have such a facility that caters to the faith enrichment needs of the parish community.

### Book most widely read

“No two persons ever read the same book,” avers Edmund Wilson. Wilson is absolutely right, because choices and tastes differ. Yet he is also quite wrong, eh! Well, here’s why! When James Chapman listed the 50 most read books in the world based on the number of copies of each title sold in

a given 50 year period, it was the Holy Bible that trumped the rest, with sales grossing a whopping 3.9 billion copies and counting! Proof enough that not only is there a growing hunger for God’s Word but that the Bible is one book that is being read at any given point of time by more than two individuals in some part of the globe or the other. Versions of the holy book, not to speak of language translations, abound but the Word per se remains the same – “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb 13:8), publishers registering high sales of ‘Bible diaries’ in various parishes being further proof!



by Ladislaus L D'Souza

### The Word and its expression

In the context of the age of the internet when all its attributes dominate social communications media, even with reference to education, it is imperative that we begin to see the Word of God being spelt out in various ways that could well pose a challenge to the electronic media. This is possible only if we look at any good book, a really enriching compilation, as an expression of the Word-made-flesh in print

giving a face to the morals and values that have witnessed the growth of the human person from civilization to civilization. Seen in this light, publishing books cannot but be considered a significant ministry or even a mission. It is indeed gratuitous to note that the Church both in India and the world is blessed with religious congregations that produce Christian as well as other wholesome literature that benefits readers tremendously—Media House (*Capuchin friars*), Franciscan Publications (*OFM friars*), St Paul’s (*Pauline priests & brothers*), Pauline Publications (*Pauline sisters*), and Claretian Publications (*Claretian Missionaries*) to name but a few, besides Asian Trading Corporation, a privately owned entity. Books published and distributed by these are sold in various Christian book-centres across the country. However, how many such outlets have we in any given diocese? Expecting the prospective buyer to travel long distances to pick up a title is the last thing a publisher must have in mind!

### Dissemination of Literature

Time was when the ‘Daughters of Saint Paul’ nuns visited Catholic homes with literature meant to deepen faith and morals. They don’t do that anymore - for a variety of reasons, obviously, one of those being that times have completely changed. With an increasing number of neutral families where both parents are at work, there’s no one at home to even meet the goody good Sisters! There’s also the danger now prevailing in relation to conversion allegations. However, what has over the time emerged as the rallying point for literature is the space allowed on parish premises on Sundays for makeshift stalls displaying a limited selection of titles, largely during dry weather. Not to be overlooked is the fact that most such stalls are manned by the elderly whose limitations include age associated issues concerning distance, mode of travel, finance etc in relation

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to selecting/ordering titles. The result: the timeframe between one visit and the next is such that titles selected earlier are long outdated!

### Marketing Strategy

Incidentally, to those involved in the distribution of the treasures of the Church in print form, Blessed James Alberione, initiator of the Pauline apostolate of the media and whom Pope Saint John Paul II hailed as “the first apostle of the new evangelization,” says, “Consider yourselves servants of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God” (UPS IV 87). Indeed, it is not for nothing that he also clarifies that “distribution is done with the head,” adding, “Don’t think that distribution is to be left to those with less intelligence” (Pr D 487). And so, turning net-savvy and floating apps galore—easy work! No leg-work involved!!—need not make Catholic publishers content. Au contraire, **one must seriously consider the number of titles thus sold and the quantum of book sales for any given timeframe or rather, the number of individuals reached.**

**Timings** - Then there is the timing factor. Our Catholic book outlets generally close by 7 pm, which happens to be precisely the time when most work-

ing people are returning home. Such folk are deprived of the opportunity to pick up the wholesome literature our Catholic book-centres have to offer. Extending evening working hours by at least an hour, if not more, is also an option that could be considered to the benefit of all.

**Gifting facility** – Books sure make good gifts! And so, some publishers have what is known as the ‘Gift Voucher’ option, a facility that needs to be widely promoted so as to enable the prospective buyer/gift-giver as well as the recipient of a gift voucher to avail directly of the choice of purchases available on redemption of the voucher at all outlets of a specific publisher anywhere in the country or at least within a diocese or city, including their occasional book display in parishes.

**Parish facility** – The writing on the wall is clear: **the future of dissemination of Catholic literature lies in direct networking with parishes, not in the general/secular marketing network, nor even in the limited number of Catholic outlets in evidence.** As the Turkish proverb retold by Francis Bacon puts it, “If the mountain will not go to Muhammad, Muhammad must go to the mountain!” Catholic publishers need to reach out to parishes with a view to helping set up a book-store/stall and establishing an active link whereby titles are delivered and replaced at least on a monthly basis if not oftener. Given the fact that it is from Saturday evening to Sunday evening that parishioners come together in worship, those running Catholic book facilities need to think in terms of giving themselves their weekly rest on some other day of the week if Sunday happens to be the only day personnel concerned in any parish are available, the nitty-gritty of all transactions being worked out as per mutual convenience.

**Parish Library** - Finally, a parish could further enhance the benefits accruing to the reading habit by providing a suitably stocked library or at least a ‘Reading Room’. Here again it’s the publishers whose aid could come in

handy, with parishes taking the lead in initiating the process. The question of stocking titles in such a facility can be well answered by the parish periodically calling for old books to be dropped in a carton placed at a convenient spot on parish premises, Catholic bookstores setting up a similar arrangement. Could parishes that are self-sufficient take the lead in addressing the issue?

### The Goal par excellence!

Vera Nazarian, modern day American writer, says, **“Whenever you read a good book, somewhere in the world a door opens to allow in more light.”** Are our parishes and Catholic publishers willing to go the extra mile to collaborate in opening doors to more light and windows to fresh air for the sake of the Gospel? Seen objectively, making good literature available to believer and non-believer alike is definitely much more than a commercial enterprise. In fact, Alberione was wont to caution his sons and daughters in the media apostolate thus: “Our book-centres are focal points of apostolate,...not commercial shops but centres of service to the faithful.... The book centre is a temple; the religious who serves a preacher. Light, holiness, joy in Jesus Christ and Christian life are the goals sought, the counter is the pulpit” [UPS IV 162]. In effect, **a parish book facility, whether bookstore, reading room or library, is a place of profound encounter between the Word and the world!**

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### MATRIMONIAL

**MUMBAI** : Mangalorean Roman Catholic spinster (Born in April 1973), 5' 5" tall, looks much younger to her age, good looking, fair complexion with qualifications, B.Com. (Mumbai), M.B.A. Finance (Canada), M.B.A., (H.R.) and Diplomas in I.T. (NIIT), Comp. (APTEC), and Cert.Ind Acct. (I.C.A.), working in good position. Graduate / Post Graduate unmarried R.C. Bachelors upto 47 years, employed in good position and well settled in Mumbai or abroad. Contact email.: bellwether77@yahoo.com OR Mob.: 9892700617

# How safe is Your Child in the Digital World?

**H**ave we ever been made aware of or stopped to notice the shadowy world surrounding us? Whether we acknowledge it or not, it is very much part of our existence and makes its presence felt in the most unpleasant of ways, sending shockwaves to rock our peaceful existence. The “Blue Whale” video game for the kids has been making headlines in newspapers as it challenges children to take their own lives. Falling victim to such foul play has prompted me to share my experience with you.....

My family from the other side of the globe was visiting the old parents bringing with it a breath of fresh air and a new dose of enthusiasm. At home, the young kids, grown up with knowledge beyond their years were glued to the computer most of the time, exploring the world of science, imagery, fiction and games, under strict supervision. Nevertheless, I ruefully wondered about the changing times. Gone are the days when all nature used to be a playground and every rock and tree, a playmate!

When the visit ended, leaving behind memories to treasure and moments to count, it was time to get back to the business of living the old lifestyle routinely practiced over the years.

The home computer monopolized by the wiz kids of the family, now beckoned. When the screen lit up, the flashing pictures and messages sent me spinning away into a total shock....Well, something unwanted had entered my little world through the computer without my permission or knowledge! Like most of the parents and grandparents, my home computer too is just a means of communi-



cation with the family, some research and a storehouse of my thoughts and expressions. How on earth could this have happened? The time the kids spent at the computer playing games and videos was last on my mind, as I sent an SOS to the professionals to take over.

Truth was revealed as the technicians had encountered the same problem elsewhere recently. They sheepishly queried me on the absence of kids in the house. On my admission to their presence, they explained how the greedy and unscrupulous elements of the Digital world use their technical expertise to corrupt software using kids' websites. The websites of games and imagery designed for children often are vehicles to sneak in a virus or two, usually pornography. He named it as ‘Malware’, short for ‘malicious software’. It seems it is an umbrella term used to refer to a variety of forms of hostile or intrusive software including computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, ransomware, spyware, adware, scareware and other totally malicious programmes!

This was indeed news to me. My knowledge of computers fails to run into technicalities and is limited to plain simple usage and emergency tinkering .....

But, this dark world of all kinds of malicious software exists in reality

and our growing children who are encouraged to attain knowledge through what the digital world offers, could anytime fall prey to it. What is worse is they may learn to like it or become addicted to it without the knowledge of the parents! Isn't it a frightening scenario- corruption of young minds with a sneak peek into the evil world?

It was time the computer was put to more use and find solutions to its own problem. Surfing through, I came across

elaborate explanations about such problems. I share them here -

**“The way malware goes about doing its damage can be helpful in categorizing what kind of malware you're dealing with. The following is a list of common classes of malware, but it's hardly exhaustive:**

**Virus:** Like their biological namesakes, viruses attach themselves to clean files and infect other clean files. They can spread uncontrollably, damaging a system's core functionality and deleting or corrupting files. They usually appear as an executable file.

**Trojans:** This kind of malware disguises itself as legitimate software, or is included in legitimate software that has been tampered with. It tends to act discretely and create backdoors in your security to let other malware in.

**Spyware:** No surprise here: spyware is malware designed to spy on you. It hides in the background and takes notes on what you do online, including your passwords, credit card numbers, surfing habits and more.

**Worms:** Worms infect entire networks of devices, either local or across the internet, by using network interfaces. It uses each consecutive infected machine to infect more.

**Ransomware:** Also called scareware, this kind of malware can lock down



BY VERA ALVARES

(Contd.. on p. 16)

## BJP – Time to wake up.

Let us not go into how many kids lost their lives during your time and my time in Gorakhpur. The fact remains they died and all that is important is to know why they died. This has been an annual phenomenon in the BRD hospital. So concerned about the issue as an MP [now CM of UP] he had been relentlessly raising this in Parliament for decades. He was well informed then and obviously as CM much better informed now. He cannot deny that. All that he needed to do was get to the bottom of the problem no sooner he donned the mantle of Chief Minister. He did not do that since it was not 'in the news' anyway.

The problem Yogiji lies elsewhere. The death of hundreds of kids each year, was not your priority No 1. Maybe you thought, it is a routine matter. You were more concerned with illegal slaughter houses and closing them was the first thing you did on assuming office. Nobody had died because of illegal slaughter houses or by eating beef sold from such outlets. You focused on who sings or does not sing Jana Gana Mana, Vande Mataram, who refuses to say Bharat Mata Ki Jai. You want Yoga in schools. Your party is suddenly concerned about triple talak and the 'injustice' done to the poor Muslim women. The problem with the BJP it wants to focus on issues which 'affect' Muslims adversely. Trying to insist on issues which are very sensitive to that community [rightly or wrongly] has been your government's priority. You concentrate on who eats beef, who carries it, who transports it etc not realizing that there are more important issues that need tackling on emergency basis. No doubt the cow is sacred and everybody accepts that but protecting the cow at the cost of social disharmony and unrest is not desirable for a country with diverse faiths and beliefs. Hundreds of cows die due to malnutrition every year in the scores of gaushalas which you founded. Nobody bothers about them but one cow being transported by a Muslim is a huge problem even if he has purchased the animal.

Coming back to Gorakhpur, sacking a couple of low level functionaries [with no political clout] will not help. There is a problem of cleanliness, sanitation, filth etc in the hospital which every news channel could see but not your administration. A young kid just out of ICU is taken by his parents for a bath outside because conditions inside are appalling. The hospital was spruced up overnight for Your Majesty's visit, patients lying on the floor were cleared, windows washed, everything was given a face lift. You saw what

## VIEWS on NEWS

was shown to you and not what you should have insisted on seeing. Again the hospital was decked up for your second visit at a cost of about a million rupees and then you cancel it. First you sack all who ordered a make-over for your visits. This is something they are supposed to do every day. Go incognito to each and every hospital not with Black Cats and Commandos in tow. Sack your Health and Medical Education ministers forthwith. Don't shift the focus on non issues. Make videography compulsory in hospitals on how patients are being treated and not in Madrasas to find out how they are celebrating Independence Day. The PM spoke about introspection. If anybody, the BJP and the RSS need it more than anybody else.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Congress outsmarts the BJP

Normally Rajya Sabha elections happen at periodic intervals either because of the term of the outgoing members is over or due to death or resignation. Never before in the history of Independent India did one witness the hype and drama that surrounded the election for Rajya Sabha from Gujarat – the home of the two most powerful men in the BJP today. The election was contested among others by Ahmed Patel – Sonia Gandhi's Man Friday and for BJP his defeat at all costs was more important than who wins from BJP. Amit Shah had an axe to grind with Ahmed Patel as the former believed that the latter was primarily responsible for his incarceration in the fake encounter case. Naturally Amit Shah had a big stake in ensuring that Ahmed Patel lost – cost immaterial. No stone was left unturned and it may be fair to believe that the sudden desertion of Congress Party by Shankersinh Vaghela could have been engineered and mind you, he was a former BJP leader. With him remaining in the party with his MLAs, the election of the Congress candidate was a mere formality.

The day of election witnessed hectic activities with the fortunes of these contestants [particularly Ahmed Patel] vacillated between hope and despair. In this drama, the game played by NCP led Sharad Pawar needs mention. Known for his fence-sitter tag, he smartly tried to ride two horses at the same time. One of his MLAs voted for the Congress, the other for the BJP and then announced that one of his MLAs cross voted. This was a drama because the concerned MLA is neither suspended nor expelled for violating the party line [in



by Marshall Sequeira

fact there was no other line]. It may not be a rash judgment to assume that it had something to do with the pending inquiries against his nephew Ajit Pawar and Praful Patel. By giving one vote to the Congress, he has ensured that he remains part of the Opposition Unity. Who knows with Nitesh out and Rahul Gandhi not in the reckoning, the opposition could rally around Sharad Pawar. Shrewd man!

The JD[UP] backed the BJP and ensured its entry into the NDA at the Centre. But its lone MLA voted for the Congress defying party diktat. Obviously, he is a supporter of former party Chief – Sharad Yadav now at logger-heads with Nitish Kumar for his decision to form the government in Bihar with the help of BJP. The party in Bihar is heading for a split but with the loaves of office with Nitish Kumar, the majority of the MLAs are likely to remain loyal. It is said that the two rebel MLAs of the Congress who had crossed over to the BJP actually voted for Ahmed Patel. This is something unheard of in politics. But considering the prestige attached to this election, money power could have played a very significant role, first in defection and then in cross voting. Ahmed Patel won much to the disappointment of the BJP. Amit Shah who had made it his prestige issue to ensure that his bête noire Ahmed Patel lost the contest was shell-shocked. The BJP was very confident and were even seen celebrating before the results were out

The BJP had not factored the brains in the Congress Party. Unlike in Goa, they had Plan B ready the moment the two votes [which were shown to unauthorized person – Amit Shah] became an issue. Once the Returning Officer [RO] rejected their objection, their Plan B swung into action with facts and documentary evidence to take the issue to its logical end. The BJP kept taunting and mocking at them and advising them to take the verdict of the EC sportingly [expecting it in their favour] and not to knock the door of the Apex Court. In the final analysis, the EC over-ruled the RO and declared the two votes invalid. Now it appears the BJP is contemplating moving the Supreme Court. Another example of double standard!

# Achievers Honoured by Vikhroli Unit of BCS



Vikhroli unit of the Bombay Catholic Sabha (BCS) organised its annual felicitation program on 15th August 2017 at the St. Joseph's Church Hall.

A total of 48 students comprising of SSC, HSC, Graduates and Post Graduate who had scored above a fixed criteria were felicitated during the event by special guests who are achievers in their own fields.

Optimum use of the event was made by felicitating the unit football players and their coaches, journalists, sponsors and the volunteers who had provided their services to the unit. Simon Pereira a marathon runner aged 61 was also felicitated.

Others felicitated during the event in-

clude Mr. Anthony Chettiar and Advocate Aileen Marques.

During the event representatives of political parties namely Shiv Sena, MNS, NCP and Congress were felici-

Chief Guest Alfred Arambhan spoke on the topic "Retired at 40". He stated be what you want to be and make yourself capable to achieve by using the various services and resources that are available and constantly get updated with the latest. He used the importance of making the most of the word "Why" – for understanding the reason, cause or purpose and to find the right approach by making the most of what's available today in terms of internet, books, lectures and pep talks.

tated including the local corporator of ward 119 – Ms. Manisha Rahate.

The Chief Guest for the occasion was Mr. Alfred Arambhan an Entrepreneur owning, managing, operating and representing a diverse set of enterprises. He addressed the gathering and honoured the achievers.

Mr. Bobby Singh Chandal – founder and CEO at MyDisha graced the occasion as a Special Guest, spoke on youth skills and right attitude towards workplace environment.

Other Guest of Honours include Mr. Dolphy D'Souza, Former President of BCS and Convenor of SOUL (Save Our Land)]; Adv. Rahael D'Souza, State President of the All India Cath-





olic Union; Lawrence Coelho, Editor - The Secular Citizen; and Susan Coelho of DIVO Konkani Weekly

Fr. Sachin Lopez – Principal of St. Joseph’s High School – spoke that the students of SSC and HSC had a fixed curriculum but the students need to take a proper call on what they want to be based as per their interests and understanding their strengths with the vast opportunities available for them to build their future and not as per peer pressure or following blindly their friends. He further spoke about having the right friends and the right attitude.

Also during the event young children came up with excellent stage performances under the guidance of Mrs. Jessy D’souza and her daughter Elysia D’souza

The event concluded with lunch and one to one interaction of the students and their parents with the speakers. More than 300 parishioners were present for the program.

Dolphy D’souza spoke about the need of our Catholic brethren to join the Government administrative services and also join political parties. He appreciated the unit for its outdoor activities and having protest events amongst the people on the streets. And spoke about continuing the same approach.

Adv. Raphael D’souza said about the neglect by and lack of priority by the Government to the overall medical care resulting in child deaths in Ghorakhpur and also elsewhere. He said questions from today’s young brains should be why the administration in our country deteriorating? Whether in 70 years we can truly say we are independent? What is the role of youngsters who constitute 45% of electorate? He invited youngsters to consider active Politics and Bureaucracy as not \*dirty and dirtier\* respectively, but as an opportunity to serve the country.

Bobby Singh Chandal spoke about having closely worked with job seekers and providers for a long time now. One of the basic challenges faced while hiring fresher’s was the lack of basic workplace skills in addition to the right attitude towards workplace environment.

He spoke about the primary reason why graduates in India stay unemployable for long after their graduation / post graduation is because they lack basic work place skills which makes them job-ready. The academic learning leaves them without the direction of using their learning into their careers. He conveyed the only way we can tackle unemployment was by making our youth realize the skill and competency gap and make them understand their personality profile so that they can prepare themselves for their future and choose a functional role which suits them the most without blindly following their peer.

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# A unique canvas for fledgling artists, talents

Indian artists across generations have communicated ideas, issues and emotions through poetry, music, paintings and many art forms. The life of an artist in India is often filled with struggles. Aiming to provide a durable common platform to struggling artistes and take their art across to those who see value in it, Dr. Alexander Martin started the venture Talents on Display, along with Manpreet Singh Virk and Irene D'Souza on November 16, 2015.

The venture goes with the tagline, 'Art for responsive participation of societies worldwide'. "Talents on Display endeavours to provide a platform to all struggling artistes of various art forms, especially visual, musical and culinary art, who are unable to arrive at a platform that can take their aesthetic talent to a larger audience worldwide," says Dr. Martin. "We want to use art as a medium of communication, whereby we can communicate our culture and develop a foundation for a sustainable future for ourselves and our children." Dr. Martin had an intense passion for music, drawing and painting right from childhood. Although he did his MBBS (1991-92) from St. John's Medical College (Bengaluru) and M.D. in Psychological Medicine (1995-96) from Nair Hospital (Mumbai University) and has been practising in Navi Mumbai since 1996, he nurtured a deep desire to promote art.

"My mother, based in Mangaluru, is a musician and painter. So we were raised in an atmosphere that promoted art. I used to watch with fascination her drawings on nature and marveled at her creativity," says Dr. Martin. Dr. Martin married into a Mangalorean family that too nurtured a deep passion for art. "My mother in law, Irene D'souza, although not an artist, loves art in all its forms. My wife, Shanta



Martin too loves painting," he says.

In 1998, Dr. Martin joined as a lecturer in psychiatry in MGM College, Kamothe where he taught MBBS students. He then moved onto D.Y. Patil Medical College as a Professor in 2012-14. At D Y Patil College, Dr. Martin met Dr. Manpreet Singh Virk, who too shared



by Ivan Saldanha-Shet

a passion for art. However, what motivated him to think of this venture was when he met two aspiring young artists, Samadhan Bhandari (20) and Yogita Shelar (20), residents of Navi Mumbai, in 2014. "I was greatly inspired by the beautiful paintings made by these artists. However, what disturbed me was

that despite being talented, they were unable to reach out to people due to lack of awareness and a platform," says Dr. Martin.

## Art Vestibule and Art Gurukul :

Apart from getting an opportunity to showcase talent, the artists get visibility on the website and sales assistance through the marketing efforts of Talents on Display. "Through this platform we try to widen the network of artists and the buyers of art," says Dr. Virk. Since the brick-and-mortar facility is self owned, the seed requirement

for starting the venture was miniscule. "We realised that we could safely fund ourselves and get the business started," he says.

Talents on Display has two arms- 'The Art Vestibule' and 'The Art Gurukul' at Progressive Sea Lounge, Sector 15, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai. The Art Vestibule is an exhibition gallery while the Art Gurukul is an avenue for artists to impart training to art lovers, especially children. It also prepares youngsters who wish to pursue a career in fine art, applied art, architecture, interior designing, western and Indian music, says Dr. Martin.

The struggling artists also get an opportunity to earn and propagate their art from 'The Art Gurukul'. Nearly 25 students are taking classes in various art forms. "The teachers are the artists working on a part-time basis and are paid 60% of the fees taken from the students," informs Dr. Martin. There are five art teachers –2 for art and one each for guitar, violin, keyboards and Indian vocals respectively. In addition, there is a premise manager who works on a salary. There are four artists (one sculptor and three painters) registered with them, and their works are showcased on the website.

(Contd.. on p. 15)

(Contd.. from p. 14)

Talents on Display intends to hold regular exhibitions of struggling artists "atleast once a month," for which it charges them Rs. 15,000 for a week, says Dr. Martin.

Sara Hussain from Kochi, whose exhibition was at the Art Gallery, says this is her first-ever in Mumbai. "It feels so nice to reach out to a larger crowd." The exhibition has received wide acclaim and led to two projects, says Dr. Martin.

Another painter from Odisha, Parmeswar Samal (27), whose exhibition is scheduled to be held in August, says, "This will be my first solo exhibition in Mumbai and I am really grateful that such a platform has been provided by Talents on Display for upcoming artists." Mr. Samal hopes to spread awareness on deforestation through his art.

#### Future plan :

Dr. Martin plans to look for partnership opportunities in Pune and Bengaluru besides the rest of India, once the business is consolidated in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. "We will be constantly building upon our artist resource, which will be the source of our core capability," says Dr. Virk.

For artists like Mr. Bhandari, the venture offers opportunities for displaying their art to a wider audience. "There is a lack of awareness about art among people, who perceive that art is for the elite and beyond their means. There are several struggling artists who are indeed very good in their work and are desirous of recognition but do not know how to go about it. Talents on Display has provided a platform to all such artists to showcase their talent to a larger audience," he says.

Contact::: [talentsondisplay@gmail.com](mailto:talentsondisplay@gmail.com) (By-Ivan Saldanha-Shet with Inputs from Dr.Alexander Martin)

(Contd.. from p. 4)

"I want to do something for Christ and to make myself useful" blurted Shelton to his family at the dinner table. He was a prisoner in the mobile chair for too long. Shelton was only 32 years old, a victim of speeding on his bike across the flyover

Citing the words of Pope Francis, "The Lord answers prayers. He is faithful to the love we have professed for him and he stands beside us at times of trial."

Shelton's prayer was answered when he applied for a position in the local Catholic TV. Station. His application was accepted and after an interview he was selected in the quota for "handicapped", as a news broadcaster. Shelton made the best of the opportunity by writing short talks (on the side), talks on the gospel and Jesus – truly becoming a lay Catholic apostle for Christ.

We are taught by the pontiff that the life of an apostle is strengthened in edifying prayer, a passionate vocation of faith, and the readiness to endure in patience any type of persecution.

I have seen that elderly Catholics turn to a spiritual life as an answer to connecting with parish and local community through armchair dialogue. The disabled and those in wheel-chairs have beliefs and values which play an important part in their on-going lives. By their actions and outward show of beliefs they are also apostles for the faith.

Religious Congregation's, and a host of other groups have many disabled Catholics who assist care providers, giving encouragement and help, spending time with wounded souls as Care-workers.

In today's world, religion and faith are mere words of expression. Catholics, however, in all walks of life believe and trust in God: Christians keep to the truth of God's religion. All disabled Catholics are missionaries as they promote the Word and reach out to the world.

You can join the AFJ Open Apostleship Society for Lay Catholic Disabled Evangelists.

Contact Melvyn Brown at Divine Mercy Chapel, 3 Elliot Road, Calcutta 700016. (M) 8017934248.

## Prayer to **St. Expedite** for solving a financial crisis



I call forth the Power and the presence of **St. Expedite** in my time of financial trouble. I offer my body, heart, mind and soul upon your altar of light. I have faith and trust and complete confidence that you will be my strength in this time of need. Quickly come to my assistance.

(State Your Petition) \_\_\_\_\_

My financial need is urgent. Be my Light and Guide in this situation so that I may live with peace, love, prosperity and abundance and in the Praise of God.

Amen. (Promise Publication)

—Ms Rosaline G. Lobo, U.A.E.

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# To FOCUS Towards REACH

The Fellowship Of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) has announced on 18 August 2017, that it will expand to 15 new campuses for the 2017-2018 school year. This brings the total number of campuses with a FOCUS presence to 137. FOCUS plans by 2022 to reach 250 campuses.

A Campus Ministry, FOCUS works to inspire and equip college students to know, love and share their faith through intentional virtue based friendships. Committed missionaries stationed at campuses throughout the USA, and even internationally, invite students to grow in their faith through Bible studies, small group events, mission trips, and one-on-one discipleship.

FOCUS missionaries follow a

model of “win, build, send” – winning students through friendship; building faith with Bible studies and catechesis; and, sending out students who wish to evangelize – ‘Digital Campus’!

FOCUS has already started two REACH – *Reaching Every American Campus Holistically* programs through Prayers and Breakfast outreaches in New York City and Washington DC areas. Many more such ‘Reaches’ are being planned.

It was founded in January 1997 by Curtis Martin and Dr. Edward Sri at Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas, USA. For more information go to [www.focus.org/reach](http://www.focus.org/reach).

—Dr. Trevor Colaso,  
(Memphis, TN. USA).

(Contd.. from p. 10)

*your computer and threaten to erase everything — unless a ransom is paid to its owner.*

**Adware:** *Though not always malicious in nature, particularly aggressive advertising software can undermine your security just to serve you ads — which can give a lot of other malware a way in. Plus, let's face it: pop-ups are really annoying.*

**Botnets:** *Botnets are networks of infected computers that are made to work together under the control of an attacker.”*

We can protect our children from the potential dangers by taking a few steps. Get to know how your children use the internet. Ask them to show you some of their favourite sites and talk about them. Make them aware that there are things on the internet which may upset them and that they can always talk to you at any time. Be aware of any changes in the way they use the internet, such as the amount of time they spend online or how often they access the internet through their smart phone. Make them aware of the risks such as people might not be who they say they are and cyber-bullying. Instruct them never to give

out personal details – such as name, address, school and telephone numbers – to online friends they have not met face-to-face. Tell them never to respond to junk email or open attachments that are from people they don't know.

Television, phones, social media, group chatting.....the potential avenues of danger are many-fold. But we need to remember that these are mere tools and if used judiciously could benefit us greatly. Let the ‘Digital World’ serve humanity to build a better world, for us and for our children.

# Thanksgiving



Thanks to St. Clare for the favours granted

—Annie Lemos, Miraroad

# The age of more information and less knowledge!

**We like to believe that more information allows us to make more informed decisions, to be more knowledgeable. That's wrong: knowledge does not grow with information access. Terms like 'knowledge explosion,' 'information overload,' or 'information avalanche' have become part of our vocabulary. So, let's try to figure out why we know more stuff but aren't getting any smarter**

## PRESENT TIMES

Technology has brought a surplus of information to our fingertips but has it made us smarter, we's all be geniuses at this point. But mere exposure to data doesn't make us better thinkers and learners. The fact is, we've never learned how to learn properly. In the present day, the mass media plays a crucial role in the lives of people and the development of the world. Despite the advantages of the mass media as modern day communication its excessive integration and over-reliance in the lives of its users could be detrimental. These users especially the technology enthusiasts' younger generation faces the effects of lower cognition critical thinking. So, what we need to remember is Information and knowledge aren't synonyms: Knowledge is always an interpretation of information. For instance, you can easily collect and recount factual information about someone: where and when they were born, where they lived and studied, what subjects they hold and so on but what does that really tell you about the person? Scientists like to describe such processes as the search for more precise and detailed knowledge.

Today, we have sacrificed the quality of the knowledge for quantity. There's an imbalance between the knowledge we take in and the informa-

tion that we use. Your brain is working as quickly as it can to send data from your working memory to your long term memory, but it can't retain everything. While it'd be perfect to absorb and apply 100 percent of the information, it's not quite possible. So, if we can't take in everything anyway, how can we really learn?

**Filter out information:** Scrolling through the internet is a passive form of knowledge acquisition. The amount of information that we can access is always going to be more than we can process. To filter the information you



take in, focus on what you need to improve. What must you learn to be successful? Taking this simple step enables you to pass over unrelated and tangentially-related information. As you continue to grow your knowledge and skills, you can update the parameters of your filter.

Take information into the real world: You know that reading about something once doesn't guarantee that the information is yours to recall at will. Knowledge isn't useful until you can apply it. If you are trying to learn a new skill, you'll have to do the things that you've read about in your research. It isn't always easy to take information from your computer screen into the real world. There's a fair chance that you are going to fail the first time you attempt something.

Stay alert to what to learn next: You

can't take in every bit of information at once but you can choose to learn more about things you'd like to improve. You'll retain more information when you target your searches as opposed to mindlessly scrolling. Take opportunities to reflect on what you have learned along the way. You'll not only feel better about your progress but you'll be able to make use of what you already know when you take on a different challenge.

Lastly, to get smarter, it's not about how much you've known but how much you've brought into play. To know something deeply, you'll have to engage with it on a consistent basis while giving yourself plenty of opportunities for self-reflection and objective feedback. True learning is not always easy. You'll experience struggles as you tackle new challenges and wade through Digital Age. If you can focus on your efforts and make deliberate choices about your learning, you can navigate the abundance of resources to make meaningful gains in your life.

- No matter how many articles you've skimmed through, you are not getting smarter. Unless we use that information, we're bound to forget it.
- The way that we apply knowledge is different today because we are exposed to so much information every day. Tradition learning styles often involved apprenticeship or immediate active application of skills.
- Our knowledge is like a big balloon, filled with huge amount of information. It continues to expand; growing thinner with each addition of volume, until it finally bursts and sends bits and pieces of knowledge flying across the room.

# Why Do We Still Call Some Of Our Brother And Sister Christians As Sechedule Caste Or Dalit Christians?

by Eric D'Sa

**M**ost liberal Indians, leave alone the foreigners are horrified by the inhuman discrimination meted out to the lower caste and Dalit people by the upper caste people of India..

Christian, Muslim, Parsi, Buddhist, Jain or Sikh religions are supposed not to have caste system, yet carry some vestiges of the caste system in them. Caste and Casteism have been carried to every corner of the globe to which the Indian diaspora migrated, even to USA. Our caste prejudices manifest themselves most clearly in the matrimonial newspaper columns, where prospective brides and grooms of all religions are sought for traditional marriage alliances. Caste and skin colour are the most important criteria for admitting a strange woman into that most intimate circle, the home and the family. The woman who will bring forth children to perpetuate the line, must almost always be fair-skinned and of the same or higher caste. The exceptions to this rule are still very rare.

## What is India's caste system?

India's caste system is among the world's oldest forms of surviving social stratification. The system which divides Hindus into rigid hierarchical groups based on their karma (work) and dharma (duty), is generally ac-

cepted to be more than 3,000 years old.

## How did caste system come about?

Manusmriti, widely regarded to be the most important and authoritative book on Hindu law and dating back to at least 1,000 years before Christ was born, "acknowledges and justifies the caste system as the basis of order

## YOU THE CITIZENS DECIDE:

and regularity of society". The caste system divides Hindus into four main categories - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. Many believe that the groups originated from Brahma, the Hindu God of creation.

At the top of the hierarchy were the Brahmins who were mainly priests, teachers and intellectuals and are believed to have come from Brahma's head. Then came the Kshatriyas, or the warriors and rulers, supposedly from his arms. The third slot went to the Vaishyas, or the traders, who were created from his thighs. At the bottom of the heap were the Shudras, who came from Brahma's feet and did all the menial jobs.

The main castes were further divided into about 3,000 castes and 25,000 sub-castes, each based on their specific occupation.

Outside of this Hindu caste system were the achhoots -the Dalits or the untouchables.

## How does caste system work?

For centuries, caste dictated almost every aspect of Hindu religious and social life, with each group occupying a specific place in this complex hierarchy. Rural communities were long arranged on the basis of castes - the upper and lower castes almost al-

ways lived in segregated colonies, the water wells were not shared, Brahmins would not accept food or drink from the Shudras, and one could marry only within one's caste. India's caste system is among the world's oldest forms of social stratification surviving to this day

Traditionally, the system bestowed many privileges on the upper castes while sanctioning repression of the lower castes by privileged groups. Often criticised for being unjust and regressive, it remained virtually unchanged for centuries, trapping people into fixed social orders from which it was impossible to escape.

Even the British found it difficult to change it. Despite the obstacles, however, some Dalits and other low-caste Indians, such as BR Ambedkar who authored the Indian constitution, and KR Narayanan who became the nation's first Dalit president, have risen to hold prestigious positions in the country.

## Is the system legal?

Independent India's constitution banned discrimination on the basis of caste, and in an attempt to correct historical injustices and provide a level playing field to the traditionally disadvantaged, the authorities announced quotas in government jobs and educational institutions for

(Contd.. on p. 22)

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# Inspiration!

## Release Anger and Forgive

**Holding on to old wounds and grudges hurts no one but yourself. Learn to let go of anger, forgive and be free**

**L**et's face it—we've all been angry from time to time. Anger in itself is not bad. It's a common emotion and expressing it is healthy. But if you're not careful about it, particularly unresolved anger, then you are in for potential trouble.

**Release the anger:** When the feeling of anger wells up inside, it can be frustrating and painful. Sometimes your first inclination may be to lash out and hurt someone, other times you might just stuff it down deep within. Either way is unhealthy. While it is important to express your anger, it is also important to do it in the right way so you can release it, let go and move on.

Allow yourself to fully feel your angry emotions. Acknowledge them along with the hurt. Do the traditional things people tell you to do when you're angry: cry, scream into a pillow, exercise and journal. While they may sound cliché, they are tried and true—

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### Forgiveness is twice blessed

- Forgiveness blesses twice. Forgiveness is just as beneficial to the one forgiving as to the one receiving the forgiveness. It is very important for the person who was wronged to let go of the anger and grief that they are feeling.

and actually do work!

Many times our anger is directed at a person. Communicating with the transgressor may be a good idea. Although you have no control over their response, this does give you the chance to express how you feel—which may help you let go.

**Foster forgiveness:** Once you've let go of the anger, then you can start to foster forgiveness. Although forgiveness doesn't erase responsibility for offensive acts, it does help bring about peace for everyone involved. It is good for the heart both figuratively and literally.

So how can you reach that point of forgiveness, especially when the scars are so deep? Start by taking your time. Forgiveness does not necessarily happen all at once. It can be a process. Give yourself permission to move slowly. You may still need awhile to grieve and reflect on the situation. You can try repeating it aloud as well. It can start the ball rolling. Essentially it works just like an affirmation. By repeating it over and over, eventually it takes root within your psyche and becomes reality.

Actively choose forgiveness. By doing so it shows that you are in con-



trol of your life and destiny. It also serves as a release of energy. When you lack forgiveness you still retain an energetic bond or cord with the transgressor. Although you may no longer be angry, until you forgive, the remnants of the connection are still there. But once you forgive, those energetic bonds are freed. The thoughts and emotional vibrations tangled up with the offender and the situation are transmuted into positive energy. And that's freeing for both of you.

**Be free:** Once you let go and forgive then you are truly free. You will notice a huge difference in your outlook and attitude. It's almost as if a weight is being lifted off your shoulders. You may even question yourself about this whole process asking, "Why did I wait so long to lose the anger and forgive?" if that's the case, don't beat yourself up for it. This is all part of the journey towards compassion, understanding and wisdom. Embrace the lessons along with the newfound freedom.

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(Contd.. from p. 18)

scheduled castes and tribes, the lowest in the caste hierarchy, in 1950. BR Ambedkar, a Dalit, authored India's constitution. GOI for decades now is doing its best to enforce the law and gradually bring a change in the mind set. The Judiciary has also tried to do its duty. However in these days when jobs are become difficult to get, this reservation system is under attack by upper castes.

### **What has been done to change the system?**

Gandhi tried to breakaway from the caste system by calling Dalits as Harijans. Ambedkar tried to break the system by asking Dalits to convert to Buddhism. Congress party tried by electing for the first time to the highest office of the President, a Dalit for the first time. Now the BJP government has also elected a Dalit to be President of India. Both the parties have elected many State Governors and Cabinet Ministers from among the Dalits. Are these just fig leaves and mean nothing to millions of Dalits on the ground? The system still stays entrenched in the country. It not easy for a system which is supposed have originated from the highest Hindu God and is written into the Hindu law more than 3000 years ago being easily changed. It has deep roots in the psyche of the Hindus.

In recent decades, with the spread of secular education and growing urbanisation, the influence of caste has somewhat declined, especially in cities where different castes live side-by-side and inter-caste love marriages

are becoming more common.

In certain southern states and in the northern state of Bihar, many people began using just one name after social reform movements. Despite the changes though, caste identities remain strong, and last names are almost always indications of what caste a person belongs.

### **Why then promote the concept of Dalit Christian?**

Many Dalits and lower caste Hindus to escape from this degrading caste system converted to Christianity. So why is the Catholic Church supporting the concept of Christian Dalits? Why are we with open eyes bringing this repugnant, inhuman social system into Christianity? Our Catholic Priests keep preaching from the pulpits to the congregations, that all Catholics are children of a loving God. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ. We have to be good human beings first, then may be good Indians. Though all of us have our distinguishing mother tongues, and proud of our of own identities of being Goans, Mangis, Keralites, East Indians, Tamils, Telugu etc. these get submerged of us being Christians. So why are we trying to bring the obnoxious caste system into the Catholic religion? Is it just because of the reservations provided to Dalits in colleges and government jobs?

### **What should the Catholic Church do to help the Schedule caste and Dalit converts?**

The most important thing the Church could do is to embrace them as the children of God, equal in a all

respects with the others. Treat them as the brothers and sisters within the Christian community. My late mother was a well known and famous match maker of Mangalorean Catholics. She once told me that when it came to arranged marriages, whether the bride or the groom was from a Brahmin Catholic family or not came up discreetly. However if the bridegroom was well qualified, an engineer, doctor, scientist, army officer, IAS or IPS government employees, a wealthy business man, the brides family overlooked the original caste of his family. As far as the bride is concerned, the factors such as the dowry, fair and beautiful looks and education qualification mattered more than the caste.

Hence what the Catholic Church should learn from the above, is that the Dalit converts should be helped with the best education possible, the bright students encouraged to obtain top class college degrees, high proficiency in English language, good grooming and help to become entrepreneurs. Creation of sufficient wealth in their family hands is what will make their families get over centuries of discrimination and be able to confidentially deal with the higher caste people. Do not do it because they are or were Dalits. Do it because they are poor and uneducated fellow citizens. It is in the capacity of the Catholic Church to do the above. Let us demand that GOI ensure good public schools that have well trained teachers and are free to all poor students. Let the bright students from poor families below the poverty line be provided free college education and 50% of government jobs be preserved for the brightest of these poor students.

Let us Christians lead the attack on the caste system in this country. Let us be the guiding light that tries to dispel the darkness in people's life, for having been born as a Dalit. Should we as Christians banish the words Dalit Christians from our lexicon and stop pleading for government doles for these people? -

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**Royal Christian Family and The Secular Citizen has been serving the community for over 36/26 years**

### Bank details for making NEFT :

Bank: HDFC Bank  
Branch : CST - Mumbai VT  
Account Name: The Secular Citizen  
Account No. 03552000006744  
ISFC code: HDFC0000355

The amount can be paid by NEFT, Cheque, DD, MO or by Cash (in the office)