

# THE SECULAR CITIZEN

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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

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# Together We Can!

*By Don Aguiar*

It is Sunday the 22nd of March, and I am writing from the home office. The home office, although being my normal place of work, is now a reality for most of us. As I understand from my children in the financial sectors in London and New York, it is also a reality for them, and God knows how many other places worldwide.

The corona virus takes its toll around the world, and panic seems slowly but surely to be setting in. Just last week, many Airlines asked their employees (equal to 50% of their staff) to take a forced break from work, and time will show if they will be able to return. A kind of depressed mood has set in, and everything seems to be on hold. All Apple stores outside China have been closed, and Google has some 100k employees working from home currently.

It's a matter of containing the spread of the virus which is also why I told my wife that I can no longer assist her in the kitchen due to the social distance that we need to keep. (As if I ever did spend much time there doing anything besides eating.) Yet, in a time of crisis and seriousness, somehow life has to go on. We adapt, overcome, and with a good portion of humour, life does get easier.

Perhaps something good can come out of this crisis, too. There will be plenty of time to spend with your family, time to contemplate the life you have lived so far—perhaps for some of you in the fast lane, the rat race, stretching to get this or that gadget. Somehow, it all loses importance when lives are at stake, doesn't it? It becomes a matter of overall health, in particular, when you face an enemy you can't see.

My article would be 20 pages long if I listed the events that have been either cancelled outright or postponed, but I can say that in various parts of the world, bishops have cancelled Sunday Masses and other gatherings as a preventative measure against the spread of the coronavirus that causes Covid-19, a potentially fatal infection that seems headed to becoming a pandemic.

It is disappointing, but sadly not too surprising, to see how many Catholics are trying to get around that cancellation, intruding into hitherto small-group Masses at convents and religious houses and thereby forcing those communities to either close to outsiders or cancel their own in-house liturgies.

Can someone get infection in the House of God, whether it is a church, mosque or temple? Is a virus powerful enough to affect worshipers inside holy premises? Can a pandemic challenge God himself?

Some have even disputed the authority of their bishops to issue such cancellation orders. For the record, bishops have that authority, regardless of what people who seem to consider themselves super-Catholics might think. In fact, given the present state of the epidemic and the uncertainty about its likely course, to not cancel church gatherings would be irresponsible on the part of bishops in affected areas.

Apart from those who consider themselves exempt, we Catholics in virus-affected areas have in effect been forced to give up Mass for a major and not-yet-clear duration during Lent. The challenge and opportunity for us is to see how this deprivation might deepen our faith, hope and love in preparation for renewing our baptismal commitment at Easter whether we are able to gather then or not.

Our Lenten fasts and sacrifices are meant in part to increase our awareness of the situation of our brothers and sisters who must do without not by choice, nor for a limited time, but because of enduring poverty, famine, oppression or lack of opportunity.

Of course, the cancellation of parish liturgies does not prevent our using the time we would usually spend taking part in the Mass to read and reflect on the prayers and readings of the day. We may find, in fact, that we are able to develop better personal "homilies" than those we may endure in normal circumstances.

Might not our "fasting" from Sunday Mass give us a closer communion with our sisters and brothers who



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(Contd.. from p. 2)

must do without Eucharistic celebrations for months or even years at a time because there are no priests available to join their gatherings?

Perhaps the temporary Eucharistic fast imposed by the coronavirus will give us all a sense of urgency in preparing to head off Eucharistic poverty. Then, if we — all of us — search out creative answers to the problem, we may find that just as fasting can improve our physical as well as spiritual health, our giving up Mass for Lent will have improved our Church's health.

In the coming week or two, India as a nation is being watched by the world. By the more developed economies like Italy and more influential world powers like USA, by neighbours like China and further away countries like Iran. They are all watching if India is able enough to deal with a looming threat to the healthcare, economy and life of its citizens. At the verge of an exponential explosion, are we as a nation smart enough, strong enough, kind enough and responsible enough to fight against a common enemy. An enemy that is being feared world over.

It's up to us to set an example to all the ones who are watching with intent, if we succeed or fail. People who are looking at us with scepticism because our reputation of being a crowded, overpopulated and unhygienic group of people precedes us. We have a chance to show the world that we are a young, vigilant and united country. And we can fight what might seem so insurmountable.

Do your part. Maintain social distancing, stock up foods but leave enough for others. Have compassion for someone who is underprivileged, use the public resources responsibly.

These are warlike times and it is our chance to create a history. Don't let it pass. Together, we can!-

# *Khul Ja Sim Sim -* **CORONA CARE PROVES CRUCIAL**

*by C.K. Subramaniam*

Clearly friends, life is bottled up. The genie has condensed to a thick layer of smoke and entered the bottle. The lid is screwed tightly and life is in a bind. Children no more throng the lane. Temple bells ring no more. Vehicles are off the road. The survival instinct has reduced life continuously prompting us to wait to live another day. Missing the munch munch and the daily dose of news papers in your coffee table.

How are you coping with the trauma? The relationship between nature and civilisation remains as complicated as ever. While civilisation often draws from nature, Mother Nature is often hurt by the inroads of civilisation. That debate is better left for another day because of the urgency of the hour. Everyone is left to fend for oneself in compliance of social distance norm and with means available.

I have reverted to watching some old Hindi movies in the YouTube. Already done with Dharmendra's Baharein Phirbhi Ayengi, Baharon ki Manzil and Anupama which all I had missed in my youth. Dharmendra epitomised the quintessential of manhood in the cellular world. We were debating passionately taking side either with Dharmendra or Rajesh Khanna during College days. Likewise, it was Shivaji or MGR down south those days.

My sense of intellect drifts me from the make believe world towards literature. I dust off my collection to reach at a Sobha De, Khuswant Singh, Arundhati Roy or Paulo Coelho. Books anyway have so many pages and it may be unwise to tax your mind with serious stuff. I change track to catch a visual on mythology which I have missed. Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana open up new vistas beyond the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. In this way, I toggle between Film, Books and Mythology. You suggest something more. I will take it if my passion suits.

So friends, this lockout has generated fresh options for us. I would have missed them but for the bottled genie. Life is undefinable and coping is the only option we have. Who doesn't want a travel to a hill station in summer? Who doesn't want International flights to be operational soon?

We are all waiting for the D-Day with baited breath when the nation will announce- Khul Ja sim sim. Genie will be out of bottle and Corona will take its place. Once bottled, it will be thrown in the deep sea never to be found again.



## World under lockdown

The world is under siege ----a total lockdown of normal life and activity. Thanks to the killer corona virus ( Covid-19) which is currently on a rampage, infecting and killing thousands of humans every day. It is difficult to understand how a virus of microscopic size could have the potential to bring the entire world to standstill and continue on its unabated killing spree , defying every means to contain its infectious spread. Surprisingly, even superpower America has succumbed meekly and virtually surrendered to the deadly virus, which till date has infected over a lakh of Americans and killed thousands, shifting the epicentre from Wuhan in China to the U.S. While China is almost out of the woods and lifted the lockdown , America is still searching for solutions and struggling to survive. Probably Americans need to get their priorities right by focusing more on public health and care , by using their millions of dollars more judiciously on medical and clinical research to evolve new cures and vaccines to combat the unknown strains of killer viruses that take a toll of millions through pandemics, instead of wasting billions of dollars on projects like, their relentless pursuit for the elusive 'God particle', dark matter and black holes in space, that hardly benefit humanity.

—A. F. Nazareth,  
Alto Porvorim.

## Lockdown Loss

The 21-day lockdown to counter the Coronavirus pandemic comes with the crippling effect of thousands

of people losing their jobs. Daily wage earners and those driving autos and taxis have to stay at home. They will find it hard to make ends meet. At present, we cannot judge how the spread of the disease will effect the economy but what is sure is that the fallouts will be severe. The Government cannot be blamed entirely for this. For we are in the midst of a unique emergency, one we have never seen before. The fallout plans of the Reserve Bank of India as well as the Finance Minister may not be enough. Some business sectors need direct support.

— Jubel D'Cruz,  
Mumbai

## Easter: New life in the risen Lord

The resurrection of Jesus Christ which the church celebrates every year on Easter Sunday is a 50-day celebration ( Eastertide) of joy, with an abundance of Alleluias, which come to a close on Pentecost Sunday. Besides bringing to a close the earthly life and sufferings of Christ , it proclaims the good news of salvation to all mankind . The good news is the new life which the risen Lord has given to us as the 'New Adam' who re-unites fallen man in the sin of Adam to God , through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The church celebrates this new life by renouncing Satan and all his works, with the lighting of candles , the new fire and incense. Lay- Christians celebrate Easter with Easter eggs which symbolises new life. This new life is given to us at baptism when we are united with Christ. The old self is crucified with Christ and by dying with Christ , we have also risen with Him. Easter is also called the 'church's springtime'

because these celebrations of joy and new life take place when nature around also blooms with new life with the arrival of spring.

Unlike the myths and legends of several other faiths, the resurrection of Christ from the tomb is a historic event which took place in space and time. It is also a faith-experience which cannot be scientifically proved. Nevertheless, the several apparitions of Jesus Christ to his disciples in flesh and blood after his resurrection was sufficient to confirm their faith in the risen Christ. They believed because they saw Jesus alive. It was the risen Lord who brought about a transformation in their lives---- a newly-acquired faith, which they proclaimed through their missionary activities which brought about the growth of the early church , as recoded in the Acts of the Apostles.

Jesus pre-existed with God in whose glory he dwelt before being sent by the Father He returned to the Father in his glorified human existence through his resurrection. St Paul tells us that had Jesus not risen from the dead , our teaching and faith would have been in vain. Jesus would be just like any other great leader who dies, remembered for some time and soon forgotten. The resurrection is therefore the corner stone of Christian faith and the greatest feast which the church celebrates.

The Easter message which the church also wishes to convey is that just as Christ was raised from the dead , we shall also be raised from the dead, when our mortal bodies will become immortal. ( 1 Cor 15: 51-53). This is the mystery of the resurrection of the dead. As an Easter people we need to make Jesus the model of our new given life by taking the Eater message of hope, joy, and salvation to the victims of violence, the poor the hungry, the destitute, the marginalised of society and all those who suffer injustice. Happy Easter

— A. F. Nazareth,  
Alto Porvorim.

# PRAYER IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

## **We come to you today**

dear heavenly and loving Father  
as your children, as one family  
with deep faith and a total surrender to your will

## **We come to you today**

at a time when our world is gripped with the pandemic due to COVID 19  
thousands have died everywhere and many more are affected;  
because of the lack of a scientific cure, fear and uncertainty rule the lives of many

## **We come to you today**

trusting in your loving providence  
fully assured that you care for all of us  
and that you will protect us from every harm

## **We come to you today**

imploring that you heal all those who are affected in any way  
that you comfort all those who have lost a loved one  
and give hope to the faint of heart

## **We come to you today**

praying that you bless all the caregivers and the support staff  
those in authority and those entrusted with our well-being  
all who are giving of their best to address this serious reality

## **We come to you today**

asking for your mercy on the poor and the vulnerable,  
the daily wage earners, the unemployed, the hungry  
those who are lonely and those who are unable to cope with this pandemic

## **We come to you today**

thanking you  
for all the abundant graces and blessings  
you constantly shower upon us even during this time of crisis

## **We come to you today**

seeking your strength  
that in spite of all the difficulties we face  
we may only see your hand at work today  
**Mary our Mother**, Health of the Sick  
intercede for us, to Jesus your loving Son!  
**Amen.**

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*\*(Prayer by Fr Cedric Prakash SJ)*

29 March 2020

# Lest We Forget: 26 March 2003

The 26 March 2003, certainly ranks as one of the most infamous days in the history of Gujarat and perhaps of India! On that day, two seemingly unconnected, but strangely enough, inter-related incidents, took place in quick succession: the murder of Haren Pandya and the passing of the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Bill.

Early morning, on that fateful 26 March, Haren Pandya, a former Home Minister of the Gujarat Government, was found assassinated under very mysterious circumstances in the heart of the upmarket western area of Ahmedabad.

It was common knowledge that Haren Pandya testified before an independent 'Citizen's Tribunal' some months earlier, in which he provided minute details of the Gujarat Carnage of 2002 and the persons responsible for it! The fact that he had testified, was first revealed to the media by Pandya himself. Even as late as 2012, Pandya's wife Jagruti has gone on record saying, *"My husband's assassination was a political murder. For the last 10 years, I have been fighting a legal battle to get him justice but in vain, however, I will continue to fight"*. His father, the late Vitthalbhai Pandya (who died in January 2011) was quite convinced of who was behind the killing of his son and he went from pillar to post (right up to the Supreme Court) hoping that the full truth of Haren's murder would be revealed. Several non-partisan political analysts have also written volumes on this murder.

On 5 July 2019, the Supreme Court upheld a Gujarat trial court's verdict convicting twelve people accused of the murder of Pandya. Whilst this judgement is an 'apparent' closure to one of the most high-profile murders in India's recent history, several unanswered questions in pursuit of the 'whole truth' will continue to rankle and are

certainly never going to disappear.

A little after Pandya's body was discovered, on that very day (26 March 2003), the Gujarat Government unanimously passed the 'Gujarat Freedom of Religion Bill 2003'. The Opposition had staged a walk-out opposing the contents of the bill. This Act will go down as one of the most draconian laws in post-independent India. In violation of Article 25 of the Constitution of India, it necessitates (among other anti-people provisions) that anyone wishing to convert to another religion must first seek 'the permission' of the civil authority in the State.



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH  
SJ

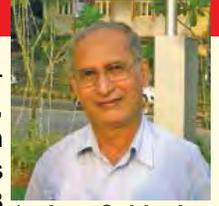
It took full five years (till 2008) for the Gujarat Government to frame the rules necessary for the implementation of law. A group of civil society leaders had challenged the constitutional validity of the law. The Gujarat High Court had sent a notice to the Gujarat Government for its response. The Government never responded to the notice, the petition was withdrawn and the law remains in force.

Pandya's murder and the Freedom of Religion act are clear on two counts: fascists brook no dissent and that a national anti-conversion law based on the Gujarat model is in the offing!

That day 26 March 2003 was no flash-in-the-pan! It is a sign of things to come. It should never be forgotten!

*\*(Fr. Cedric Prakash SJ is a human rights & peace activist/writer.  
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# Mangalore 'lock down' blues and Kasaragod.



by Ivan Saldanha-Shet

With the total shutdown announced by Dakshina Kannada (DK) district administration, specially in Mangalore city all shops including the sale of essential commodities remained closed since March 27, Friday. The Central Market, a hub of activities where vegetables, grocery, flowers are sold, remained disrupted beyond belief. Though district administration had given a concession for milk booths and pharmacy, it all seemed a farce with police chasing ordinary people away - there has been little clarity or consideration for humble and aged peoples needs.

The decision on total shutdown was taken in view of the number of positive cases in Dakshina Kannada, and neighbouring Kasargod district, in Kerala where chaos ruled. To prevent people from venturing out

An order issued by the Kerala government cleared Kasaragod's beaches, shuttered its cinemas, closed down tea shops, malls, temples, mosques and banned all public events. The 13 lakh people of the district were pushed back into their houses and a curfew was declared. But, the infiltration of the Kasargod people in to Mangalore, caused panic and the many roads into Mangalore were closed with piles of mud, by police, on the orders of the authorities. For decades there has been distress that Mangalore does not get it's dues; the rail head is dominated by Kerala, to disturb mangalore International airport, Kerala opened it's own in Kannur which is very near, Kerala has a good lobby in Delhi and has been putting pressure of all kinds on Mangalore. The handing over of Kasargod district to Karnataka is unilaterally withheld too.

DK District in-charge minister Kota Srinivas Poojary on Saturday, March 28, said that the total lockdown in Mangaluru will continue even on Sunday, March 29. Speaking to reporters, nodal officer V Ponnuraj said that Mangaluru-Kasaragod highway has not been opened. The central government has only sought information about it. No entry for even ambulances to the district from Kerala. If anyone infected from corona virus enters the district, the consequences will be bad. All 21 borders between Kerala and Dakshina Kannada have been closed. The peculiar situation in Mangalore is an added worry for all.



and social distancing guidelines not being followed, the district administration had to take a tough decision, said DK Deputy Commissioner Sindhu B Rupesh.

Over the last few weeks, Kerala and particularly Kasargod witnessed a rise in the number of novel corona virus cases. But, it is proved that people from Kasargod, which has a huge Muslim population of original Tulu and Kannada speakers, invariably headed to Mangalore city for all purposes, specially medical aid. But ever since March 17, this northern district of Kerala caused much disquietude as it has risen to become the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak in Kerala, it put Mangalore city to serious risk and proved to be so..



# Exsultet On Palm Sunday To The Passion Of Christ

*This is a short primer on Holy Week for all to know the truth about Christianity.*

PALM SUNDAY is also Passion Sunday believed by all Christians to be the last human journey of Christ's Divine mission to imprint his words: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me." (Jn.14:6). Often, despite our weakness and uncertainty, we believe and trust in Jesus, the Son of God; in his life, ministry and sacrifice for the eternal salvation of humankind.



BY MELVYN BROWN

THE PASSION covers His suffering for our sins, death and Resurrection. It is the pivotal moment in the history of Christianity. It was an explosion of truth which draws man to the presence of God – the proof that God exists!

PASSION SUNDAY begins and ends in Jerusalem, the Holy City. Christ's entrance into the city was the triumph of his mission coming to an end.

The Jews were preparing for the 1480th anniversary of their leaving Egypt. Easter is the Passover of the Lord, and the great celebration of independence. Christ comes to the city as the Messiah. The people, on hearing that Jesus was coming took branches from palm trees to greet him. They shouted in one voice, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the king of Israel!" (Jn.12:13).

Now begins the time when we are made aware of the torture, indignity and torment of Christ's passion and his glorious resurrection. It was to be the part of his foretold ministry and mission to offer his life as a sacrificial ransom, and to rise in glory. And the hour has arrived for Christ to predict His Crucifixion.

Turning to his disciples, he said, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified." (Mat.26:2).

The early fathers of the Church felt that Christ's passion and dying was a ransom paid for our sins.

In the 11th century (1098), Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, created a theory in one of the most powerful theological writings in his book, *Why GOD Became Man*. In his view Christ's dying was indeed a ransom. Humankind owed God the ransom of "satisfaction" (in Anselm's words).

The passion of Jesus was aptly described by the prophet Isaiah. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole and with his stripes we are healed." (Is.53:5).

The scourging of Christ became the stripes to heal us. God's plan was a cosmic design beyond our comprehension. Christ had to die. We can only contemplate on the subject of his death. Jesus entered Jerusalem on the back of a young donkey was to fulfill the prophesy that said, "Don't be afraid of your king, people of Israel, for he will come to you meekly,

sitting on a donkey's colt." (Jn.12:15). This was to be Palm Sunday.

The Last Supper of the Lord commenced his Passion. He took the bread and said, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise he took up the cup after supper, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. But behold the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table." (Lk. 22:19-21).

Behind those words began the fast forward enactment to Christ's all important campaign in our world of humankind.

Images of Christ's agony and physical violence to his body were, for the first time shown on the screen in Mel Gibson's movie, 'The Passion of the Christ'. It was not a film for the faint-hearted. It showed the raw reality of what had been. Pope Saint John Paul II on seeing the movie said, "It was as it was!"

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve betrayed the Lord. "And they paid him thirty pieces of silver." (Mat. 26:15)

What followed was an extremely painful confrontation with Judas, the kiss of betrayal and the cruel attack by Christ's captors. The unruly mob hit Jesus, spat on him and propelled Christ from the Mount of Olives for a crude trial.

Taken from the home of the High Priest, at dawn of the next morning they took Christ to the Supreme Court of the Jewish people. Jesus was brought to the Council, questioned and they debated on his answers. They could not find fault with Jesus – so they took him to Pilate, the Governor. And Pilate found the man innocent of any crime.

The mob took Christ to King Herod because Christ was a Galilean. At the court of Herod, Jesus was mocked and made fun of. Finally, both men, the Governor and King Herod found Jesus innocent, even after scourging and crowning Jesus with thorns.

The people cried out to crucify Christ. (Lk.23:21). And so Pilate sentenced Jesus to be crucified and set free the criminal Barabas in his place.

At a place called "The Skull", and along with two thieves, the soldiers nailed Jesus to the Cross with the words: King of the Jews. One of the thieves turned to Jesus and said, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom". Jesus replied, "Today you will be with me in paradise." (Lk. 23:42-43).

About noon Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me" (Mk.15:33-34). We must remember that Jesus was human. Jesus made another cry and let out his spirit. With the death of Jesus, his passion and mission was over. Amen.

# Night Intruder

**Marriage teaches innumerable lessons. For some, these lessons are bitter and for others it is sweet. A person's married life is ongoing, and I often compare it to the process of preparation of Biryani. A lot of spices go in involving hours of tedious preparation processes which ultimately result in a delicious feast.**

I have not been married for long to give advices or suggestions but definitely there have been many incidents which have changed me, moulded me, made me cry and made me laugh. One such incident which I often reminisce and laugh about is when I see a cockroach. Yes! You heard it right. It's a COCKROACH!

My typical day starts getting up (I always get up late) hastily preparing breakfast, packing my husband's and my lunch and rushing to work. Once I return home in the evening, I rush to the gym, come back finish all the household chores and finally sit down for a little bit of writing when my husband returns from work. That is when we sit and chat, have dinner and hit the bed.

One day as usual after completing all the chores, I was a tired after a long day at work. I waited for my husband to return so that I could chat with him and ease my mind. After waiting for a long time, I was happy to finally see my husband who, after initial greetings settled with his tablet and started to watch a comedy show. As he was laughing and enjoying the show, I was getting really annoyed as every time I sat next to him to draw his attention and make him talk, he was blindly ignoring me. To make things worse he even suggested me to join him and watch the programme which was more of an irritant to me rather than entertainment.

I waited for him to shut the tablet, but he didn't. Dinner was done, we went to bed and still the tablet was with him. I lost my patience and I screamed and



by Sonal Lobo

began to fight with him. I fought, I cried and after loads of drama we slept facing opposite sides. We do bicker like most couples but until that day we had never gone to bed angry. But I knew deep down that on this particular day we wouldn't patch up because my husband was more angry than usual. He normally doesn't get angry, but that day he was. I felt guilty but my ego stopped me from apologizing. I was unable to sleep. I shifted sides. I cried loudly but nothing seemed to help.

After a while, feeling helpless I slowly got up and switched on the light. To my utter dismay there was a huge cockroach on the bed. I leaped out of the bed screaming trying to wake my husband up. My scream frightened the cockroach so much that it immediately tried to hide itself inside my husband's t-shirt. It started moving inside his t-shirt, compelling me to laugh and turned my husband into a frenzy. After lot of jumping and scrambling both of us managed to catch the cockroach and throw it away. Both of us then laughed our heads off! While making sure there were no more intruders, we slept again facing each other. That is when we realized we had just fought.

Well, it was too late to bring it up again as we had already patched up!

I silently thanked the monster cockroach in my heart. Neither of us wanted to sleep angry but we knew not what to do about it. Though the cockroach was a troublesome and unwanted guest, this tiny little fellow had brought us together. Even today the sight of a cockroach terrifies me, but it never fails to remind me of this incident which helped the two of us reconcile.

# TOUGH TIMES NEVER LAST, BUT TOUGH PEOPLE DO

\*COVID-19 : SOCIAL DISTANCING:\* We are advised to remain home by the government authorities, not to go on streets, no shop/market visits, not visiting prayer places, no travelling, work from home, etc.

What is your attitude? Negative Attitude? \*Are you controlling your emotions?\* Your friends, cigarette, drugs, alcohol, etc. OR \*You have Positive Attitude\* to remain at home with your family, society, to save from this Chinese gifted/cursed Pandemic Coronavirus !.

Did you hear the Great Depression of 1929 in America. Most of the companies were locked down, no jobs, worst economy. Then the wheelchair President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed \*All we have to fear is fear itself.\* And now in 2020 another catastrophe. Coronavirus spread world over in America itself, rival superpower to China. Indeed these are tough times even for America. As president of USA rightly announced a moment ago, that even if people are affected by Coronavirus, instead of dying in hunger, it is better to go to office or factories. Even he announced to celebrate Easter by attending masses in churches. Because of which there may be million deaths and suicides as per international media announcements.

Here in India, these 21 days of Social Distancing is an opportunity to make use. At home utilisation of this time in different ways like decluttering of archives, papers, books, etc. reading of dust laden books, playing of sitar, tabla, etc. Turn your milestones into milestones.

What makes a person survive and thrive ? Why are some people tough enough to win over their tough times ? These questions have never before been as important as they are today, because we are going through some of the toughest times that our country has even faced.

We can't merely talk about our strategies for success. We have to get down, to hard core principles that will work. Its impossible to fail totally if you dare to try.

Well, you have problems now. You can win if you carefully follow the plan to safeguard yourself, your family and your your own nation !. These may be worst times you have faced. But chances are, they are not the worst thing that could have possibly happened. No matter how bad it is, it would always be worse. Be glad it's not !. Put your problems in a proper perspective. \*Stop making a mountain out of a mole\* Everybody has problems. No life is problem free !

\*People who win over tough times are the people who never stop believing. They have faith in themselves and their Lord and ideas that God gives them.\*

These times we are going through are tough, but if you are going to get through them, its upto you ! You must begin to act !

—GREGORY MONIS

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# WAS JESUS RELIGIOUS?

(A sequel to “Is Religion Dead?”)



by chhotebhai \*

This query may sound sacrilegious to the pious, religious Christian. It maybe a valid question for those who claim that Jesus did not found any religion. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic that has seen a shutdown of organised religion, the naysayers would have us believe that religion is dead! This is now the brave new world of Spirituality, minus Religion. Various opinions and quotes are proffered to boost either side of the divide.

I do not intend to take sides, but would prefer to study the attitude and actions of Jesus himself, as recorded for posterity in the gospels. While writing this my thoughts went to the rock musical and movie of the 1970s “Jesus Christ Superstar”. I was working in Bombay, as it was then called, at the time, when Alyque Padamsee produced it in India with Sharon Prabhakar (whom he later married) starring as Mary Magdalene.

Some of the lyrics composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber are interesting. They are asking questions, but not waiting for the answers. An odd question was, “Why did you come in 4 BC in a remote place where there was no mass communication to convey your message?” But the theme song was:

“Jesus Christ Superstar, who are you, what have you sacrificed? Who do you think you are? Are you what they say you are? Only wanna know, don't get me wrong?”

These queries are valid in themselves. Modern man seeks answers, and it is our duty to provide them. A friend sent me a video of empty churches in the wake of Covid-19. I was not alarmed. I have seen such things before.

In 1980 I was in Jerusalem for Holy Week. That year

the Eastern Churches' dates were the same as that of the Western Churches, and coincided with the Jewish Passover. So Jerusalem was bursting at the seams. On Good Friday I participated in the official Way of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa, the actual path that Jesus trod. There were just a few hundreds in the procession, with thousands of onlookers taking photographs. In 1994, I attended an international Catholic meeting in Austria. We were taken for a tour of some of the grandiose churches. They were all empty, barring a handful of the elderly. In 2017 my wife and I were in Assisi on Ash Wednesday, as planned. Besides us the lady selling mementoes outside the Basilica were the only lay people at the mass celebrated at the tomb of St. Francis. That emptiness was by choice or circumstance. The present emptiness in churches is by compulsion, hence cannot be used as a realistic yardstick to measure the relevance of religion.

Back to Jesus then. Was he the non-conformist, path breaking, social reformer? Was he the Superstar? His life has the answers.

His parents taught him the first lessons in following the rules of both Jewish society and the Roman occupation. They followed the Governor's diktat for the census (cf Lk 2:1-4). On the 7th day he was circumcised (cf Lk 2:21). On the 40th day he was presented in the Temple (cf Lk 2:22-24). At the age of 12 he stayed back in the Temple to comprehend his mission (cf Lk 2:41-50). He usually visited the synagogue on the Sabbath day (cf Lk 4:16). His familiarity with the Jewish scriptures was evident, from the temptation in the desert to his death on the cross (cf Lk 4:1-12, 18-19, Mt 27:46).

He was clear in his mind that he had not come to

destroy the past laws, but to fulfil them (cf Mt 5:17-19). I see this as a key phrase. He was not jettisoning the past with all its rituals, rules and regulations. He was going beyond it, transcending it. This is a critical point that his disciples need to bear in mind.

Even in his public life, when he was at the height of his popularity, he chose a path of equanimity. Had he called for a revolt; thousands would have followed him. He didn't. Instead he chose to pay the temple tax, with the caveat that as a son he did not need to (cf Mt 17:24-27). In like manner he laid the foundations of secularism when he said "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (cf Mt 22:20-21). He was acknowledging the role of civil society. He was not living in an ethereal vacuum.

Finally, despite his scathing criticism of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees he said to his disciples, "You must therefore do and observe what they tell you; but do not be guided by what they do, since they do not practice what they preach" (Mt 23:3). This again is a defining moment and refining approach to organised religion.

It, in no way means that he blindly submitted to religious practices. His criticism was against the hypocrisy or the superficial nature, ritualistic form of these practices. His best-known act is using the whip against the traders in the Temple, accusing them of converting God's house into a den of thieves (cf Mt 21:12-15). He compared the Pharisees to whitened sepulchres (cf Mt 23:1-12). In his very first Sermon on the Mount too he had condemned the merely external forms of prayer, alms giving or fasting (cf Mt 6:1-18).

In contrast, he set new standards (cf Mt 5:20). He said that the Sabbath was made for man and not the other way around (cf Mk 2:27-28). In his last discourse he gave his final commandment, to love as he had loved (cf Jn 15:12). One could give several more such instances, but this should suffice to make my point.

But there could still be some diehard proponents of spirituality as against religion. To dispel this abstract binary notion, I will give some illustrations. Does the possession of a driving licence mean that I should not abide by traffic rules? Because we obtained freedom from the British, did we not still require the Indian Penal Code and Civil Procedure Code prepared by them? Did we not require a Constitution to deter-

mine and balance out our rights and duties? What about the response to Covid-19? Imagine the chaos and anarchy that would prevail if there were no governments or regulatory mechanisms?

Finally, did not Jesus himself say to Peter, that he would build his community on that rock (cf Mt 16:18)? There is also St. Paul's well-known analogy of the Body of Christ, with different organs having different functions (cf 1Cor 12:12-27).

This does not mean that there is no need for spirituality in the Church. I do not believe in a black or white binary, the either/ or. We need both, just as a body needs both eyes and ears. We need organised religion, but it should not be an end in itself, or merely ritualistic. We also need the freedom of those born of the Spirit (cf Jn 3:5-8). Spirituality is a vast expanse that would merit a separate reflection.

I would conclude with some lessons from history. They are expressed in the 5 R's – Reject, Revolt, Reform. Repair and Renew. We need to Reject all that is superficial in religion, without rejecting religion itself, as Jesus did. We need to Revolt or rebel against what is blatantly wrong. Marxism and the French both revolted against religion. We can take the good lessons from them. Martin Luther found so many things going wrong in the Catholic Church that he moved away through the Reformation. St. Francis of Assisi was especially commissioned to Repair the tottering church of the Dark Ages. Pope John XXIII convened Vatican II for the wished-for Renewal of the Catholic Church. We can take these 5 R's to heart if we truly love Jesus and the community of believers that he founded.

Remember the adages- Don't cut your nose to spite your face, or throw the baby out with the bath water. We need both Religion and Spirituality, for Jesus was both a religious and a spirit filled person.

- (1) dry cough + sneeze = air pollution
- (2) cough + mucus + sneeze + runny nose = common cold
- (3) Cough + mucus + sneeze + runny nose + body ache + weakness + light fever = flu
- (4) Dry cough + sneeze + body pain + weakness + high fever + difficulty breathing = coronavirus

*Pathology department AIIMS, Delhi*

# We together can help each other

# Social distancing

The most valuable real estate in the world is the space that you occupy in other people's heart.

In today's internet powered world, people are hungry and thirsty for a Hello! and the lock down we are experiencing now is the perfect time to revisit and renew all our lost contacts.

It feels nice to connect with you again to exchange new thoughts and ideas so that we can build on the goodwill we have developed over the years.

As we head into tough times ahead given the virus issue and economic situation, more and more of our fellow Christian entrepreneurs would be feeling the heat in their businesses. It is time to join Dimensions where we together can help each other to grow. I see the opportunity and the potential of working through networking.

At the Dimensions Global Christian Chamber of Commerce \*DGCCC\* we have a great platform for building, connecting and growing the spirit of entrepreneurship and we would like you to be a part of our success story in the making.

We are sure you will experience the fruits of our labour and look forward to meet up with you in one of our live or virtual monthly meetings very soon.

Please visit our website [www.dimensionsglobal.in](http://www.dimensionsglobal.in). For more information, kindly send an e-mail to [dimensions.diamond@gmail.com](mailto:dimensions.diamond@gmail.com)

\*The most rewarding things you do in life are often the ones that look like they cannot be done\*." Golfer, Arnold Palmer

**Freddy MENDONCA**  
9324789980/9320152052

These days we hear often the phrase 'social distancing'. People are asked to keep distance from one another and keep away from groups, be isolated.

I am reminded of a little story in the Old Testament. It is the story of Susana. (Daniel 13.41-62). She was falsely accused of adultery by the very elders of the Israelite community. Daniel, the young prophet comes forward to defend her. He isolates the two elders who were playing witness to the alleged sin by Susana. He questioned them separately, "Where did you see her in act?" And the two answered differently; one 'under an Acacia tree' and the other answered, 'under an Aspen tree'. And that's how their lies were exposed. As a result Susana was acquitted and the elders were put to death. In this case the elders were 'distanced' from one another so that the 'lie' may not be communicated and spread among the two. Similarly today people are asked to practice 'social distancing' so that 'Corona' may not be spread. The lesson is that to stop spreading evil we need to distance people from one another; whereas to spread good we need to gather people together and let them share.

Hence the real evil of Corona is that we are training people to distance from one another and practice individualism. Alas, after the days of pandemic people have to relearn to come together as a 'community'. Even shaking hands is a good gesture to share love and concern, which we will have to start all over again! O Corona, what have you done? Unfortunate!

—Father Michael G., Vasai.

# From Lockdown to Open-up!

India is in a "Lockdown" state from 24 March 2020 midnight for 21 days until 14 April; which includes our 'Glorious Easter Solemnity' of 14 April 2020.

On this same day 24 March, Pope Francis warned Christians to avoid living in a "fog" of sadness, sloth and complaining; but instead to rejoice in the spiritual healing of Jesus Christ!

"Sloth is a poisonous fog that surrounds the soul and does not let it live. It behaves like a drug as you taste it often, and you end up as a 'sad-addict' or a 'sloth-addict'! Instead, reflect on the healing water of Baptism through which Christ gives new life, and through which you find salvation!"

Thus, instead of wallowing in a depressive 'lockdown' condition, one needs to 'open-up' towards an optimistic shape. So I have prepared '8 lockdowns' and '6 open-ups' strategies to combat "lockdown", and look forwards for "open-up"! Here are quotations from the New Testament, as an inspiration and guidance!

**L – Listen to God's Voice:** "This is My Son the Beloved; 'listen' to Him!" (Mark 9:7).

**O – Obey God's Voice:** "Having been made perfect, Christ became the Source of eternal salvation for all who 'obey' Him" (Hebrews 6:9).

**C – Call on God's Name:** "Shun youthful passions. Pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who 'call' on the Lord from a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).

**K – Know God's Purpose:** "So that you may 'know' that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins" (Matthew 9:6).

**D – Dwell in God's Presence:** "The words that I say to you, I do not speak on My Own, but the Father Who 'dwells' in Me does His work" (John 14:10).

**O – Offer God a Gift:** Leave your gift before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother or sister, then come and 'offer your gift' (Matthew 5:24).

**W – Walk in God's Light:** "Always 'walk' while you have the light; so that you may become children of light" (John 12:35-36).

**N – Nailing it to God's Cross:** "God erased the record that stood against us with its legal demands, setting it aside and 'nailing' it to the Cross" (Colossians 2:13-14).

**O – Opened to God's Word:** "Jesus 'opened' their minds to understand the Scriptures that the Messiah is to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day ... And that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in His Name to all nations" (Luke 24:45-47).

**P – Persuade towards God's Fear:** "Therefore, having the fear of the Lord, we try to 'persuade' others; not to boast in the outward appearance, but to boast in the heart" (2 Corinthians 5:11-12).

**E – Enrich yourself in God:** "You have been 'enriched' in Christ Jesus; in speech and knowledge of every kind, just as Christ's testimony has been strengthened among you" (1 Corinthians 1:5-6).

**N – Need only one thing in God:** "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. However, there is 'need' of only one thing! Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken from her" (Luke 10:41).

**U – Unbelief in God:** "Jesus was amazed at their 'unbelief', and so He could not do any deed of power there; except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and cured them" (Mark 6:5-6).

**P – Peace of God:** "My 'peace' I leave with you. My 'peace' I give to you, not as the world gives. So do not let your hearts be troubled, and afraid" (John 14:27).

**Conclusion:** Lets imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary who praised God: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God My Savior! For He has 'looked' (opened-up) with favor on the 'lowliness' (lockdown profile) of his servant. Behold, from now on all generations shall call me 'blessed'; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and Holy is His Name. His mercy is for those who fear Him ..." (Luke 1:47-50).

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

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## Some Christian Humor ...

There is the story of a pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."

\*\*\*\*\*

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner of the carriage obviously had a sense of humor, because attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign... "Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust."

\*\*\*\*\*

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy. "Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked. "You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven..."

\*\*\*\*\*

A minister waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. "Reverend," said the young man, "I'm so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip."

The minister chuckled, "I know what you mean. It's the same in my business."

\*\*\*\*\*

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you 'know' what the Bible means?" The son replied, "I do know!" "Okay," said his father. "What does the Bible mean?" "That's easy, Daddy." The young boy replied excitedly, "It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.'"

\*\*\*\*\*



Sunday after church, a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt."

Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the Pastor stopped by for tea and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said "Be not afraid, thy comforter is coming."

\*\*\*\*\*

Give me a sense of humor, Lord,  
Give me the grace to see a joke,  
To get some humor out of life,  
And pass it on to other folk! Amen.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mr and Mrs Wong have a baby boy. The nurse brings out a white baby boy. The confused father says Two Wongs don't make a white and they named him 'Sum ting Wong'.

\*\*\*\*\*

I dreamed I was rocking a baby to sleep. In the morning, my husband who is bald, told me I patted his head for 30 minutes while repeating, "Go to sleep, baby."

\*\*\*\*\*

Dating someone for 4 years and then break up. Congrats, now you have a degree in relationship management and analysis.

\*\*\*\*\*

### The tomato sauce

A husband and a wife sit the table, having dinner. The woman drops a bit of tomato sauce on her white top. "Och, I look like a pig" The man nods, "and you dropped tomato sauce on your top!"

\*\*\*\*\*

Never trust math teaches who use

graph paper. They're always plotting something.

A wife asked legal opinion from her lawyer on husband \_\_ why wives are supposed to cook food for their husbands during the lockdown period.\_

The lawyer replied \_ "According to Geneva Convention all prisoners must be provided with food and water."

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# Protagoras Paradox

Over 2000 years ago, in Greece, there was a lawyer named Protagoras. A young student, Euthalos, requested to apprentice under him, but was unable to pay the fees. The student struck a deal saying, "I will pay your fee the day I win my first case in the court". Teacher agreed. When the training was complete and a few years had elapsed without the student paying up, the teacher decided to sue the student in the court of law.

The teacher thought to himself: 'If I win the case, as per the law, the student will have to pay me, as the case is about non-payment of dues. And if I lose the case, the student will still have to pay me, because he would have won his first case. Either way I will get paid'.

The student's view was, 'If I win the case, I won't have to pay the teacher, as the case is about my non-payment of fees. And if I lose the case, I don't have to pay him since I wouldn't have won my first case yet. Either way I will not pay the teacher.'

This is known as Protagoras Paradox, which ever way you look, both have equally convincing arguments, one can go either way in supporting the teacher or the student and would not be wrong.

Those of us in medical practice often come across such situations, either in making a diagnostic or therapeutic decision. One physician can recommend a course of treatment based on scientific evidence and another can recommend a diametrically opposite course again based on medical evidence. Right or wrong, but some merit would exist on both sides. Often the physician himself is having an internal struggle to make a decision about the most appropriate course of action, Protagoras & Euthalos are arguing in his mind, to do this or to do that. The horns of dilemma are tearing him apart.

But what prompted this essay was a tweet by Donald Trump, 'hope the cure is not worse than the disease'. I hate to say, but I find some merit in this tweet. In our global attempt to flatten the COVID curve, I hope we do not flatten the global economy curve. The question is what's the best way forward. One group recommends 'total lockdown' to break the transmission chain, based on evidence from China, they managed to control the spread of the virus by ruthless lockdown and 3 months later they are showing that dis-

ease is controlled in Wuhan. On the other hand, the other school of thought is graded isolation & protection of elderly and very young and those with co-morbidities, let it spread amongst the young and healthy, after all the disease ultimately will be controlled when we achieve 'herd immunity'. The medical community is divided in these two groups. To enforce complete lockdown or Graded isolation?

To complicate the issue the epidemiologists have joined the bandwagon with cacophony of statistical analysis. From Rosy to Dooms day predictions. If we don't do a complete lockdown then a million people will die in 1 year. No say some more like 90 million will die in 1 year. Whose data analysis is correct. Some suggest do nothing, nature will take over in a few months and all will be well, they quote historical data to justify their recommendations. On whose inputs should we base our disaster management strategy.

Then come the economists with their doomsday predictions. If this continues till May our medical resources will be overwhelmed, Agriculture will suffer, food shortages will occur, production will come to a standstill. There will be an economic crisis of the proportions that world has not seen ever. So, break this lockdown nonsense and let's get back to work as usual.

What will our political masters do. My guess is they will listen to medical experts, epidemiologists & economists. Then they will decide what course of action will ensure their survival, what will get them people's votes and they will run with that. At present 'Lockdown' finds favour with them. Boris in UK had to abandon the recommendations of the medical community about graded response, because the people's perception became that our Government is not doing enough to protect us citizens. That means revolt against him. So, screw it, let's go with total lockdown if that's what the people want. Gradually people will get tired of lockdown and demand- let life go on. Then with equally convincing arguments the governments will say the time has now come to lift the blockade, we have controlled the contagion, we have won. Unfortunately, the costs in either case will be huge, both lives and money!

Incidentally the Protagoras Paradox has not been resolved till date. Students in Law school still hold mock trial and give arguments on both sides. With out any resolution of the dispute.

# Hang the Death Penalty

*By Rev. Fr. F. M. Britto*

It was very motherly of Asha Devi to express happiness when the four convicts, who had gang raped and brutally killed her beloved daughter, were finally hanged to death in Tihar jail in the early hours on March 20, 2020. It was understandable of the emotions of satisfaction of the girl's father Badrinath Singh. Scores of others, especially the women groups and seekers of justice, rejoiced that after waiting for more than seven years, justice was finally granted to Nirbhaya.

No one will justify the gang rape and atrocious murder of that young medical student in a moving bus in Delhi. That's why there were spontaneous protests and demonstrations immediately after the incident. The hard-cored convicts must be absolutely penalized for their heinous crime. That will serve also as a deterrent to other criminals, who dare to commit such atrocious crimes in our society.

But the question is: Is killing the convicts the only justice in this 21st century? Can we ascertain that their hanging will put an end to rape and murder? Though these convicts have committed a deplorable crime, can we not give these youngsters in their 20's to repent and amend their lives after a rigorous punishment with life guidance? Since the convicts had been trying every legal loopholes till the last moment reveal that they had been undergoing all these years a psychological torture. They had been dying all these seven years. That's why before the execution these youngsters had refused to eat, bathe and begged for mercy on the way to the gallows.

A day after the execution, the UN has appealed again all the countries to end death penalty. The UN General Assembly in 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014 had called for a global moratorium on executions. 111 UN member states have supported the resolution of the UN for the removal of the death penalty.

Amnesty International regards death penalty as the "ultimate, irreversible denial of human rights." After the execution the Amnesty International India work-

ing president Avinash Kumar declared, "Death penalty is not the solution. By hanging them, India has made a spot in human rights. Indian courts have used it arbitrarily." Besides the Amnesty International, world-wide organizations like the Human Rights Watch, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) work for the abolition of death penalty.

Since World War II there has been a trend to abolish it. Article 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union affirms its prohibition. Almost all First World countries have abolished it. In many countries capital punishment is a matter of controversy. Today 106 countries have completely abolished it and 32 more have not executed it for the last decade. Seven countries impose this punishment only in exceptional cases. Only one third, i.e. 56 countries, including India, retains it and in these countries it is becoming increasingly restrained.

Human rights activists call the death penalty as a "cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment." It violates the right to life which is the most basic of all human rights. Since life is God's great gift and the divine law forbids killing a human person, the Catholic Church opposes capital punishment. Appealing countries to abolish it, Pope Francis expressed that capital punishment is an offence "against the inviolability of life and the dignity of the human person, which contradicts God's plan for man and society" and "does not render justice to the victims, but rather fosters vengeance."

Though the government imposes death penalty as a deterrent, has the rape and killing of women stopped in India? It has only increased after Nirbhaya case. The National Crime Records Bureau shows that in 2018 police recorded 33,977 rape cases in India, an average of 93 every day, making it the fourth most crime committed against women. Albert Einstein said, "If people are good only because they fear punishment, then we are a sorry lot indeed." There are also more effective ways to prevent such crimes.

Public support for the death penalty is an expression of anger towards that crime as in Nirbhaya's case and the desire to get rid of that crime. It does not mean



killing the criminal is right. Taking away one's life is simply revenge and it cannot be condoned. It encourages a culture of violence. Since the right to life is the most fundamental right, capital punishment is the worst violation of human right.

Reiterating what Jesus had preached 2000 years back, M. Gandhi stated, "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." Death penalty reveals we adhere to the principle of "eye for an eye, rape for rape and death for death." Imposing death is not justice. There is no humanity in killing a human. Death penalty makes of us all murderers. "It is barbaric to hang someone, whatever be the crime. It is cruelty done to another human being," writes Anna Mary Yvonne in a letter to 'The Week'.

Some have condemned the Indian judiciary for taking so long time for executing their verdict and they have also criticized their defending lawyers. Public should remember that taking away one's life is irreversible. History reveals that some innocent persons had been imposed death penalty. In California a man who had been on death row for 25 years for murdering a young girl, was finally freed since it was proved that the testimony given at the trial court was false. According to the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, since 1970 more than 150 people have been exonerated from wrong convictions.

The public anger and the background of the victims also influence the court. Death penalty is often imposed on persons of lower socio-economic background, minorities than against privileged background. While these four convicts hail from lower strata of the society, there are many powerful, wealthy, political and influential persons who escape the noose and even the iron bars. In US 42 percent of those on death row are Black, despite only accounting to less than

13 percent of the population.

History records some persons as great because they have forgiven their assailants. Graham Stuart Staines forgave those who had burned to death her two minor sons along with her husband in Orissa; Kim Phuc pardoned the pilot who had killed her family members and wounded her severely by bombing her house during the Vietnam war; Nelson Mandela forgave the White rulers for imprisoning him for 27 long years and Pope John Paul II went to meet his would be assailant Mohammed Ali Agca in the prison.

Reni George and his three accomplices were sentenced with capital punishment by the Additional Sessions Court at Mavelikkara, Kerala, for theft and murder of an aged and child-less couple, his relation. But considering George's young age, the merciful judge at the Alappuzha Sessions Court reduced their capital punishment to life-imprisonment. When he was released on June 23, 1995, after 15 years, George started serving these very prisoners along with his nurse wife Teena. The couple then began the Prison Fellowship Bengaluru to provide moral, educational and welfare activities for the prisoners. Today it has become a Charter Member of Prison Fellowship International, a consultative member of the UNO. They also started the Precious Children's Home in 1996 for juvenile delinquents and convicts' children. Now the couple, along with their young daughter, cares for 156 such children.

Culprits need to be punished, but made to live a new worthwhile life. Logic for the death penalty is that if we kill him, he will never do it again. Yes, he can never do it again. Though it is considered as a deterrent, it has not proved it to be. So there is an urgent need for moratorium of capital punishment in our country too.  
End

# Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

**7135. U.S.A. :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in June 1990) Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. in Electronics & Telecommunication (EXTC), working as a Senior Software Engineer. Contact email : ryandcunha01@gmail.com

**7133. MUMBAI :** Goan RC Handsome Bachelor, (Born in February 1977) Ht. 5'9", Wt. 78 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., PG, MBA, working as a Sr. Manager in US IT Company. Contact email : trinidadfranco@gmail.com

**7129. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1987 1989), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working in Back Office. Contact email : roshan7687@gmail.com

**7119. KUWAIT :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1989), Ht. 6', Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. F.Y.B.Com. + 2 yrs Hotel Management Diploma. working in Kuwait. Contact email : fernandes.clayton@rocketmail.com

**7114. GOA :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in January 1973), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion,

Edn. 12th + Dip. in Technical Field, working as a Projectionst in KUWAIT. Contact email : hilarylobo48@gmail.com

**7079. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1962), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 67 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Inter MBA, working as a Manager. Contact email : archielewis.al@gmail.com

**7061. MUMBAI :** East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1989), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 90 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 12th, working for Central Railway Mec. Ftr II, Contact email : pkevindsouza@gmail.com

**7032. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1977), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 72 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Degree in Electronics and Telecommunications, working as Telecom Engineer. Contact email : franky54@rediffmail.com

**7018. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1969), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. SSC, Self employed. Contact Email : fredrick.dsouza0110@gmail.com

**7011. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1983), Ht. 6', Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA Electronics and Finance, working as Research Electronics. Contact email : canute.serrao@gmail.com

**7017. MUMBAI :** Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1981), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 67 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA working as a Administrator. Contact email : matheanil@gmail.com

**6986. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1990), Ht. 160 cms, Wt. 66 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate, working for MNC. Contact email

:alwyn90lewis@yahoo.com

**7007. AUSTRALIA :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1977), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 72 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., MBA in Aviation. working as a Froud Analyst Banking in Australia. Contact email : gerald-white@hotmail.com

**6980. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1987), Ht. 182 cms, Wt. 79 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. PGDBM, working as a Manager. Contcat email : roystonpereira2007@gmail.com

**6973. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1989), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., Nautical Science, working as 2nd Officer in Merchant Ships. Contact email : meltondsouza@gmail.com

**6966. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1965), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 45 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. SSC., working as a Field Executive. Contact email : sameer\_bhagwatt777@rediffmail.com

**6949. MUMBAI :** Proposals are invited from parents of a Roman Catholic God fearing educated homely girl for a Mangalorean Roman Catholic boy, finance professional, (Born in March 1983), Ht. 5' 10", Church marriage annulled, no issues presently working overseas on PR. Please email the profile and photo to benedict83319@gmail.com

**6963. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1981), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, Well settled. Contact email : freshflwr@gmail.com

**7034. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.C.A., Software Engineer, working as an Software Engineer, Asst. Manager (IT), Only Sonm seeks alliance from Mangalorean RC Spinster, educated, working in Mumbai. Reply with full details & photofraph to email : ID : vivian1548@gmail.com  
Mobile : 9096141335

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Fort, Mumbai - 400 001.**

# Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - BRIDES

## MATRIMONIAL

**7066. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1987), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E., (EXTC) M.S. (International Business Management), working as a Consulting Manager. Contact email : l2018anselm@yahoo.com

**7124. CANADA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1993), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.M.S., M.B.A. Operation, working as a Co-ordinator in Shipping Company. Contact email :

carrel.dsouza@gmail.com

**7149 GUJRAT :** Anglo Indian Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1991), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, PGDM., working. Contact email :

barnes.rufina@yahoo.com

**7111. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1993), Ht. 5', Wt. 47 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS., working with an MNC. Contact email : owena.dsouza@gmail.com

**7115. MUMBAI :** Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1989), Ht. 5', Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, smart and good lookingt, Edn. Vth Std., Non working, homely. Contact Mob: 7021135272

**7103. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee (Separated), (Born in October 1989), Ht. 5', Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a HR. Contact email :

mail2tinafernandes@gmail.com

**7095. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1992), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish

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**7126. U.S.A. :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1992) from Mumbai, Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. (Computers) from Mumbai, M.S. (Information Systems) from US. Possesses H1B visa and is working as a Technical Analyst with a MNC in USA. Contact email : wilfyjoy1315@gmail.com or call +91 98603 02527 / + 91 9970172527

Complexion, Edn. M.Com + Import Export Certificate Course, working as a Billing Assistant in Well known Hospital. Contact email :

perpetualdias7@gmail.com

**7094. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1991), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 52 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, M.Com., working as a Business Analyst. Contact email : roschelle256@gmail.com

**7137. MUMBAI :** Karnataka Protestant Spinster, (Born in January 1996), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 54 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as an Accountant. Contact email : sujatareddy209@gmail.com

**7090. QATAR :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1988), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 54 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., worked for Bank in Mumbai, currently working as a H.R. in International School in Qatar. Contact email :

loretta6479@gmail.com

**7089. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1978), Ht. 5', Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.A., Government employee. Contact email :

celinefernandes2014@gmail.com

**7075. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in

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**7128. MUMBAI :** Affluent business family R.C. East Indian Spinster, (Born in April 1988), Ht. 5' 2", very beautiful and pretty. Edn. MS General Surgeon, Doctor by profession. Contact email : drvd2019@gmail.com

December 1989), 5' 4", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters in Life Sciences, working as Gyneacology. Contact email :

tyron.noronha@yahoo.com

**7087. DUBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1983), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 64 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Customer Support in Dubai. Contact : escatravasso@gmail.com

**7085. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1989), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 47 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MCA. working as a Banking service professional in private sector. Contact email : dorinbaretto27@gmail.com

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**6741 Mumbai :** Mangalorean RC Spinster 26 years, 5' 3", Doctor, Qualification : MD. Very fair and beautiful. Belongs to an affluent business family. Email : sona68500@gmail.com

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# SHOULD GOVERNMENT OF INDIA BE MORE GENEROUS THEN THEY HAVE DECIDED TO DO UNTILL NOW?

by Eric D'Sa

**T**he burden of the current lockdown is borne disproportionately by the large unorganised workforce, comprising hundreds of millions of casual daily wage-workers and self-employed workers. India already holds the record for the largest number of malnourished persons in the world. As their ability to purchase food diminishes, a growing population of poor working people and their families will soon enter a phase of hunger and undernourishment. The answer to this looming and very real scenario of food insecurity lies in a massive programme of food rationing, far greater than what the Finance Minister has promised.

A few days ago, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a ₹1.7-lakh crore package of social security measures to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in the period of the 21-day nation wide lockdown. In respect of food security, the package falls far short of what is needed as there is sufficient food which in any case available in government owned Food Corporation godowns. The need is for the government to immediately ensure universal rationing with an expanded food basket to be provided. This is beside the special measures for supply of cooked food in urban areas for the vulnerable population supplied by the state governments.

To ensure that all people have access to adequate food in the midst of this unprecedented health and economic crisis with potentially high levels of mortality, we must immediately expand our food security system. Fortunately some of the states have quickly acted on their own though their financial capacity to do so is limited. The central government must first release the money they owe the state governments and allow them to increase if re-

quired their own state fiscal limit of 3% by another 1% by borrowing.

Kerala was the first State in India to announce a package with income support measures and in-kind measures including free rations of 15 kg (grain) and provision of cheap meals. The government of Tamil Nadu announced free rations of rice, sugar, cooking oil and dal to all ration card holders. The supply of rations for unorganised workers is to be through Amma canteens. The Delhi government will give 1.5 times existing entitlements at no

**YOU THE CITIZENS  
DECIDE:**

cost to all ration card holders.

In India a system of expanded rations must have the following components: First, for all rural households, free rations of rice and wheat at double the normal entitlement must be distributed. The current entitlement is about half the quantity of daily cereal intake recommended by the Indian Council of Medical Research: the new quantities should be the actual minimum requirement per person per day. The government of India has now doubled rations (rice or wheat) to all priority households, from 5 kg to 10 kg per person per month. However, this falls short, as the rations are not to all households but only priority households; the rations are not free (only the additional 5 kg is free).

The provision of rations must be universal: this is not the time to demarcate households by type of ration card or whether they have a ration card or by any form of biometrics. The system of identification of priority households is not error-proof, and no household wrongly excluded should be outside the ambit of rationing today. This up-

scaling is feasible as the country has stocks of 58 million tonnes of rice and wheat; and the wheat harvest is currently underway in north India.

Second, for all rural households, additional rations of cooking oil, sugar, salt and lentils should be provided on a regular basis. Soap must also be included in this list. As supplies have to be arranged, the distribution could be weekly or fortnightly in order to ensure smooth availability. It is good to see that the government of India has announced one kg of dal per household, but it needs to provide more commodities quickly.

Third, if milk, eggs and vegetables (or one or more of them) can be supplied, we can not only ensure basic food security at the time of a major health crisis, but actually address our burden of malnutrition which is one of the worst in the world.

For the vast numbers of workers and migrants in towns and cities, however, we must set up arrangements for preparation and delivery of cooked food. The large numbers of closed community kitchens (schools and colleges, company and office canteens, for example) and restaurant workers now sitting idle or laid off can be brought together to undertake a massive programme of provision of cooked meals at subsidised rates. This will require careful planning and technology to distribute food while ensuring physical distancing.

All the measures proposed must continue for at least three months, and be reviewed afterwards. An imaginative massive exercise of expanded rations could not only provide succour in this pandemic but also bring in a policy shift that will help sustain a nourished and healthy population. This is what we citizens should demand of our governments.

- The flood lasted 40 days
- The Exodus lasted 40 years
- Jesus was tempted after 40 days of fasting in the desert.
- 40 days lasted the apparitions of Jesus
- It seems the isolation /quarantine might last 40 days.

The number 40 in the Bible attracts a lot of attention.

40 days of rest is advised for woman after childbirth.

40 weeks of gestation.

Some theologians think that the number 40 represents "change"; it is the global preparation for a fundamental change. Something will happen after these 40 days.

The rivers are clearer, the air is cleaner, pollution is decreasing, the starry sky in the evening is visible, less thefts, less murders, less drugs, less outings, less waste and less money but Mother Earth breathes and rests after many years.

In the Bible, every time the number 40 appears there is a "change" so if we are in "forced" quarantine, let's enjoy it with our family; it will be a blessing and we will witness the changes that God will make in our lives.

If we add that 2020 is  
 $20 + 20 = 40$

Is it what God wants?

His desire for a change of mankind shall be done.

Amen

Today, in the morning, our DHOBHI rang our home bell to ask for clothes, inspite of knowing about the lockdown, he had come to ask for work so that he could earn and provide for his family.

In reality he had come to ask for money but was a little hesitant and mildly embarrassed to ask directly, so i myself offerer the money which he instantly accepted.

This made me realise that we need to help our supporting staff and all those people who depend upon us.

- \* Our Direct Employees
- \* Home Maids
- \* Divers
- \* Dhobhis
- \* Cleaners
- \* Security Guard
- \* Gardener
- \* Religious Sewadaar
- \* Etc near to me always

Before donating to various Relief Funds or NGOs.

Kindly take all those people who directly depend upon us or are associated with us, into consideration (in terms of providing any kind of possible assistance ) for the entire period of the lockdown.

Once you insure this help will be continue till next three months, then go for giving donations to anyone.

Otherwise your donations are waste. In fact these, our associates will not create further burden on govt agencies and our purpose to serve the humanity will be full fill.

Rest up to you friends

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