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# THE SECULAR CITIZEN

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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

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# Crack The Vaccine

To date, there is no evidence or information to suggest that the COVID-19 virus transmitted through houseflies. The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads primarily through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. You can also become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands. To protect yourself, keep at least 1-metre distance from others and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces. Clean your hands thoroughly and often and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose. This we have to follow strictly till the time the vaccine is found out. After getting a vaccine and a medicine to cure Coronavirus cases we can rest assured that the pandemic will not spread as it did during late in the year 2019 and an early 2020.

The first country to have full immunity to the coronavirus will enjoy a tremendous economic and geopolitical advantage, a once-in-a-century window of opportunity till other countries catch up. As much as the covid-19 pandemic is accepted as a challenge for all humanity, realism—that dismal but unfortunately accurate way of

**The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is currently testing a "repurposed" vaccine, Sepsivac by Zydus Cadila, which is in Phase 2 of the coronavirus drug trial. It is looking to seek approval from the drug controller for wider use of the antidote.**

reading international relations—suggests that countries which acquire the vaccine first will be tempted to use this relative advantage to promote their national interests.

A country that acquires an effective

**Pune-based SII is one of the leading contenders in the search for a corona vaccine. The largest vaccine producer is working with the University of Oxford to find a safe and affordable COVID-19 vaccine. Oxford is conducting clinical trials and SII is speeding up work to ensure that doses of the same are available as early as October. ICMR and Bharat Biotech are working with the Thomas Jefferson University of Philadelphia for a COVID-19 vaccine.**

vaccine has options. It could freely license the technology and win the world's distributing rights. This will give countries with vaccine manufacturing bases a strong hand. It could take a purely commercial route, with non-discriminatory differential pricing to make it affordable to lower-income countries. It also could use pricing, quotas and queueing as instruments of foreign policy, extracting concessions from both allies and adversaries. Lastly it could deny the vaccine to its adversaries to the extent possible and exploit the advantages of being the sole coronavirus-immune country, though at great cost to its reputation.

It's early days but there are promising signs about vaccines to tackle covid-19. India with its learned, proficient professionals can crack the vaccine first. Already, there is one from Hyderabad on the pipeline. Again, Bangladesh doctors could experiment with getting a medicine that can save the life of a coronavirus patient. Further, we come across immunity building medicines from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which regularly reduce the number of cases within the states and the mortality rate is very less and more and more patients recover from coronavirus cases in these two states. India has supplied paracetamol and

hydroxychloroquine to over 120 countries in the last two months while ensuring the domestic supply, as these two medicines are in huge demand due to COVID-19, Thus we are anticipating a vaccine from Great Britain, US, India or China in the near future.

The crucial missing information right now is how many antibodies that stop the virus are needed to get a pretty good immune response. There are reports that people who have mild infections don't generate many antibodies naturally. The other really good news is that recovering patients generate T cells: these cells can be thought of as the conductors of the immune response orchestra. Immunity booster is available in deluxe packing in India. Some of them are available in powder form also. But the search is on for finding the vaccine which can prevent coronavirus so

**Coronavirus vaccine update: Over 100 experimental COVID-19 vaccines are in various stages of development; from US-based Moderna Inc to China's CanSino Pharmaceuticals -- some of the world's biggest companies are in race to develop coronavirus vaccine**

that the people can lead a normal life by the end of this year or at least by early next year. We are searching for light at the end of the tunnel.

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Jayanthi Subramaniam

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## Kerala grapples dilemma over opening religious places

*Thiruvananthapuram, June 1, 2020: Father Ronal M. Varghese, a Latin Catholic priest and educator in Kollam in Kerala, has had an epiphany.*

*“A Mass without community participation is like a man without a soul,” he says, describing the ritual he has been celebrating in private in a chapel as “mechanical and monotonous.” “It’s better to open up places of worship to ease stress during these hard times. Of course, with social distancing rules in place,” he says.*

He’s not the only one.

On May 15, Cardinal George Alencherry, head of the Syro-Malabar Church, wrote to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan seeking permission to open the community’s churches—with the requisite social distancing norms—for Mass. In fact, he wanted all places of worship in the state to be opened.

The CM responded on May 18 saying it was inadvisable while the state was still battling the coronavirus. Besides, there was a directive from the federal government to keep places of worship closed during the lockdown.

Covid has killed thousands regardless of their faith in India. Kerala has so far recorded only 11 of the 5,608 COVID-19 casualties in India (as on June 1) but is watchful after a renewed surge and warnings from the Indian Council of Medical Research against more aggressive strains of the virus. The state has seen 642 cases in the past 10 days alone.

The Centre’s ‘do not open till infection levels drop’ list includes places of worship and educational institutions. An advisory has been issued to start online classes for the education sector.

At least two religious congregations the Tablighi Jamaat’s markaz in Nizamuddin, Delhi, and at a gurudwara in Nanded, Maharashtra—have been Covid-19 hotspots. But Kerala’s religious lead-

ers fear their grip on the faithful is slipping after two months of the lockdown. Some Christian priests have gone online and uploaded the Mass and sermons but the number of hits has been underwhelming.

The state has 28,000 Hindu temples which include popular shrines like Sabarimala, Guruvayur and the Padmanabhaswami temple in Thiruvananthapuram. Some 1,800 of these are governed by the state Devaswom boards. Among the other communities, the Christians run 4,951 churches and the Muslims 6,520 mosques in the state. The state demographic profile lists 18.3 million Hindus, 8.87 million Muslims and 6.14 million Christians (Census 2011).

Kerala had ordered the closing of all places of worship to devotees on March 23 (there are 24 cases registered against those who violated the ban). Religious leaders cutting across faiths feel the restrictions must now be eased in a phased manner.

The state government reopened liquor outlets on May 28 and has introduced a virtual queue system (through the BevQ app) to limit crowds. Some religious activists are incensed by what they say are the government’s double standards.

“The state government must remember that spirituality is more important than spirits,” says Rahul Easwar, right-wing activist and president of the Ayyappa Dharma Sena which led the Sabarimala protests (against the entry of women between the ages of 10 and 50), questioning the logic behind keeping places of worship closed. Thousands of families—including those of priests and musicians—who depend on the temples for their livelihood are now out of a job, he says.

Theologian and former spokesperson of the Syro-Malabar Church Father Paul Thelakkat supports the idea but with reservations. “I’m for opening churches and other places of worship for services but not for festivals. And it must be with

sufficient health protocols in place. The churches were very cooperative in the fight against the pandemic. Now they should act responsibly when they offer religious services. I believe in common prayer and spiritual gatherings but I do not want fundamentalist, foolhardy pietism to destroy the gains we have made against COVID-19,” the priest said.

Renowned Hindu priest Brahmasree Kalidasa Bhattathirpad has a more anger-of-the-gods line to his argument. According to him, keeping religious places locked up may generate “negative energy and the anger of holy spirits.” “Never in our history have places of worship remained locked for so long. We must open our doors to reduce the tension and fear. I think if we perform rituals and poojas, it may help fight the pandemic better,” Bhattathirpad says. But he also insists that social distancing norms must be followed.

State government officials say the opening of religious places is “out of the question,” especially when some 125,000 people are under quarantine and surveillance. “In fact, we are planning more restrictions on community gatherings and may order a complete lockdown again in hotspots,” says a senior government official.

Bishop emeritus Mathew Arackal of Kanjirapally Syro-Malabar diocese, and a member of the Covid expert committee, says the chief minister is right in continuing the restrictions. “We are still in the danger zone and infections are spreading to more areas. Considering the situation, it’s better to keep religious places shut for a few more days,” the bishop says.

He adds that the opening of religious places will attract crowds and fears that enforcing social distancing will be a problem.

Meanwhile, Muslim clerics like Husain Madavoor say they are waiting for the government to take an “appropriate decision” over the opening of religious places.

*Matters India*



## Misinformation in the age of coronavirus

Today, coronavirus has gripped the entire world in fear. Most countries are engaged in fighting against this deadly virus. There are many myths doing the rounds on social media claiming to have insights into fighting against the virus. One post suggests that by eating allium you will be cured from the virus. Another says Covid-19 will not attack people in a hot atmosphere. Yet another claim suggests that this virus attacks only children who are less than five years of age and people who are over fifty years of age. There are many posts that claim that one can boost one's immune system and lower one's risk of getting Covid-19 by eating sweet potatoes and taking certain vitamins, supplements, colloidal silver, or by drinking warm water or tea every 15 minutes. These myths are creating a huge problem for people who do not have access to the right information. I hope that people will not start treating themselves by following these wrong prescriptions and as a result they end up in hot water. The government must take stern action against those who spread such myths on Whatsapp and other social media sites.

—Jubel D'Cruz,  
Mumbai

## A Lockdown that proved ineffective

After four successive lockdowns spanning over 2 months, the situation in our country appears to be no better than what it was at the start of the lock-

down, probably worse, with the number of Covid-19 positive cases rising exponentially to alarming numbers of around 7000 daily and expected to peak in June. Hot spots and containment zones have not made any difference. India now ranks 10th in the list of positive cases in the world. Experts are at a loss to figure out the trajectory the killer virus is presently pursuing on its destructive trail, unlike the pattern followed by viruses of earlier epidemics which peaked and then flattened in stages, till it finally went out. In India we have yet to see something similar happening with a rising graph of positive cases surging upward in parabolic style, and no evidence of flattening. Iran is one country which opened up its economy after the number of positive cases dropped to an abysmal level, but witnessed a second wave of infections and deaths after opening up. In India we have done just the opposite by opening up the economy and easing restrictions, even after a continuous daily record spike of positive cases. So, where have we failed in our efforts and what is the solution to this unending uncertainty and discouraging results.

— A. F. Nazareth,  
Alto Porvorim

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## SAD DEMISE



Fr. BYRON D'SILVA SDB

The Salesian Province of Bombay regrets to inform you that Fr Byron Anthony D'Silva passed away (around 14:15 hrs) on 27 May 2020, at Holy Spirit Hospital, Andheri, Mumbai. He was 77 years old and a Salesian for 56 years.

We commend our dear confrere to the Lord and pray that he has eternal rest. We pray for the members of his bereaved family and ask the Lord to be their consolation.

Vinod Mascarenhas SDB,  
Provincial Secretary  
Rons Bantwal

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# Ursuline Angels bring joy in lockdown

- Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

**E**stablished in 1887, oldest indigenous order of nuns in Mangalore, as most of us know, Ursuline Franciscan Sisters (UFS), are dynamic in reaching out to needy since early times of their foundation. From their hundreds of institutions throughout India, through many provinces, these nuns have waged war against serious sufferings always and now the Corona Pandemic and lock downs - specially among the hungry.

The UFS Headquarters, or Generalate in Derlakatte here under the inspiring leadership of Rev Sr Susheela Sequeira the Superior General of the Congregation, guiding and monitoring the multi level efforts to sustain the marginalized, the stranded, the migrants and needy in these times of crises, when misery is ruling all over the world. The serious efforts of various catholic religious and others is note worthy.

Contributing in it's traditional manner the UFS Generalate and it's many convents, has been conducting various charitable programmes supported by donors and well wishers which have been noted and appreciated by all concerned; On 22nd May, 2020, Friday forenoon, to name one current example and immediate effort as space would not allow more.

Essential Food Provision kits/packages worth a good value were given to 140 fishermen families at Hoige Bazar, Bolar,

Mangalore. This impoverished fishing residential colony of local and migrant labour along the Nethravathi

River leading to the old Port here, the prime historic area where the Ursuline pioneers from earliest times commenced the UFS mission of mercy and up-liftment of the area which lead

nance. Since lockdown these people are unable to venture into the sea and make any alternate living.

With deep concern for their dire need



on to the formation and development of the Ursuline Franciscan sisters 133 years ago and where their first foundation house now a historic community museum, beside a social action center exists.

This generous distribution of essential Food Provision kits/packages, was by Ursuline Franciscan Sisters of Generalate 'Somarpann' Derlekatte in collaboration with the "Resource and Development Centre on Child Rights"- a Social Action Center of the Ursuline

and suffering the Ursuline Franciscan Sisters (UFS) took this step to provide for the families essential Food and Provisions Kits. It was indeed a touching sight to see the gratitude, eagerness and satisfied smiling faces on receiving concern and support. They expressed great joy and gratitude to the concerned sisters and stressed this will be a life line.

In the forefront of this UFS effort can name : Sr Milly Fernandes the Asst Superior General, Sr Lilly Pinto, Sr Juliana Pinto and Sr Lydia Serrao the Councillors General and Sr Pramila D'Cunha the Procurator General. Also, Resource and Development Center on Child Rights, was Sr Dulcine Crasta the Director and Sr Celine D'Sa the Asst. Director of the Resource Centre and their staff members.



Sisters at Bolar; reached the 140 plus poor families of Hoige Bazar whose profession is fishing and boat mainte-



(Contd.. from p. 6)

All these took an active role in this merciful gesture to arrange and distribute the food Kits to the people without discrimination, in the impoverished cluster of makeshift dwellings at Hoige Bazar area, off the main fishing jetty. Youth of this area helped the Sisters to collect the data of the families who are in dire need of food provision and the Sisters of St Ursula Convent, Bolar in preparing the Provision kits. The packages contained generously - Rice, Green gram, dried peas, sugar, beaten rice, Sooji/rava, cooking oil, masala ingredients, tea powder, onion, garlic, salt in needed quantity for a family. The recipients, mostly the ladies of the house was called by name and presented the food kit to their great satisfaction and visible joy.



Such catholic and other organisations have pooled in to mitigate the suffering of the marginalized who are unable to earn daily wages due to the lock down and support large families, which caused a whole brood of worry and trouble specially more for women and children. It is appreciated by public and authorities that such efforts have gone a long way to reassure and help lakhs of people all over India in this crises situation. The UFS congregation has been in the forefront of relief work all over the land and their continued support is a great blessing to all..



## Indo-China Bhai Bhai

It was a win-win situation for both India and China. Great diplomatic win for India. China backs down in a triangular move. Nepal ultimately calmed down on seeing China's activities. PM led a strategic pursuit with Jai Shankar and Ajit Doval thus master minded a winning diplomacy. Everything came India's way. It was a highly strategic victory. China and India should never let their differences shadow the overall bilateral ties and must enhance mutual trust. After an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation between armies of the two countries in several sensitive areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh peace prevailed in the end. In the end both adhere to the basic premise that they pose no threat to each other. It was a matter of great strategic skill to corner China and the dictum of Indo-China bhai bhai will continue for the time being.

India and China are capable of resolving their differences among themselves and should resolve mutually for their own development and prosperity. It is of utmost importance that leaders and people in responsible positions should make public utterances carefully and should not make any provoking statements. In fact, every attempt has to be made to defuse any adverse situations and people at the ground level should be put in the proper place. At the end of the day, people want peace, harmony, development, growth and prosperity. Media and Press have a larger responsibility to ensure balanced reporting rather than complicating the matter.

China could not force India into submission and were surprised at the

quick mobilization of troops at the LAC. They may now be willing to allow India to complete building all border roads. It is the parallel diplomacy that proved swift in action in breaking the stalemate. Both countries need each other. None of them can afford friction. No one wants modern wars where digital power is important. In that case India can match China very well though China is superior in military strength. So the current time is different from the previous time. A small war can destroy both countries. Better council should prevail in this sensitive issue on border conflict.

These tranquility country's between Republic of India, Nepal and Communist China, the international border disputes should be resolved peacefully with full cooperation within United Nations Convention Laws on land, sea and airspace given the history and legacy these are useful for coming generations of mankind to maintain security, peace stability, prosperity in the region, given post-19 virus pandemic the world communities are hurtful with these pandemic which has destroyed so many lives and livelihood all over the world. The mass migrant transit and global economic structure that are required for human's social economic development, its benefits not the word of war as these countries are making a disrespectful behaviour which are shameful and disgusting to the human societies. Hope these countries will show more maturity and responsibility towards each other's laws of land, sea and airspace given the circumstances these can be done peacefully other than a shameful war.

—C.K. SUBRAMANIAM

# The Virus of Satan

Before the world began with Time  
It dwelt in the mind of God,  
Glorious in Heaven with all His angels  
The Alpha and the Omega (Rev.22:13)

He had us all in mind though  
From the beginning to the end,  
To be His image on the earth  
And claim them for His own.

Mary was the one chosen  
To be the mother of His Son, (Rev. 12:5)  
The sun and moon at her feet  
Crown of twelve stars on her head (Rev.12:1)

When Michael and his angels  
Had to battle against the dragon (Rev. 12:7)  
The dragon and his angels  
Lost their place in Heaven. (Rev.12:8)

Down to earth they come in fury,  
To accuse us all before our God (Rev.12:10)  
The Blood of the Lamb is our salvation  
Death is chosen, rather than life (Rev. 12:11)

The virus of sin is instant death  
As happened to Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:10)  
All because they told a lie  
Their human life was lost.

But God in His love and mercy  
Pardons every sin,  
When we repent and believe  
To give Him all our sins.

When Satan comes to tempt us  
As he always does,  
The Bread we eat which is His Body  
Gives us strength to Knock him down.

So before you leave this Time and entering Eternity  
Please make your peace with a living God,  
Who can drown all your sins  
In the ocean of His love.

Using your free will is the choice  
To enter Hell or Heaven,  
God is waiting to take you Home  
Freed from the virus of Satan.

*By Sr. Maureen Fonseca fhic*

# The Ripple Effect

By Sister (Dr) Mudita Menona Sodder, RSCJ

There is a lot of goodness going on out there in the world by way of donations, acts of kindness and much more! Let us profit from this Corona virus pandemic by using it to build goodwill, thus strengthening humanity. Human beings are basically good and we need to capitalize on this goodness and create a ripple effect, so that the new normalcy is inundated by acts of kindness and other centredness for future generations, for our children to emulate. When money or goodwill is hoarded, it only results in inequality. When shared, it touches hearts, changes lives and will eventually create a new culture, a new normalcy, a society of love.

## **Angels in disguise!**

I am an evacuee, a repatriate who flew into Mumbai from Chicago on 13 May 2020. I have a few such Angel narratives or stories to share. The Indian Consulate at Atlanta was one such space, where a lot of such goodness was teeming over. The staff there worked for thirty-six hours at a stretch, in order to help evacuate stranded Indians from the US back to India. Service beyond the call of duty seemed to be the new normal. Ms Mini Nair called me at 9.30 pm on 7 May 2020 on a friend's mobile, as I did not have a personal phone number in America. She even left me a recorded message asking me to call back immediately. She gave me her mobile number and very generously went out of her way to help me, a total stranger. When under duress unable to fulfil the requirements within the given timeframe, I called her at 11.00 o'clock at night when she was fast asleep. She answered my call without a murmur or grumble. Mr Devendra Singh too answered my desperate call to him on a Sunday, his only holiday after a strenuous week. Mr

Prasad sent food to a stranded Indian student at Miami for two whole months totally free! This inspired many of us to chip in and do our tiny bit of kindness wherever possible.

Again, Mr Hector, an officer, and a wheelchair attendant [of American Airlines] whose name I unfortunately don't know, showed extraordinary care, concern and understanding when my baggage was reported lost by the airline and spared no effort to trace it, and reach me to the Chicago International airport on a wheelchair. Mr Bharat Patel a wheelchair attendant at the Mumbai International Airport was another godsent who wheeled me through the thermal test, Arogya Setu, Immigration, Customs, Government Quarantine etc. He considered himself privileged to serve in a crisis. I also saw many Muslims helping tirelessly at the Mumbai International airport, despite observing Roza. What was heartening was to observe the enthusiasm and joy with which they did it. As though they were doing namaaz to Allah!

## **Surprises don't cease!**

In the government-organized special AC BEST bus to transport us to our hotel for quarantine, Mr Monish Ambavle, a skinny young guy, helped me and three other women put our heavy suitcases into the bus, while Mr Aniket Kulkarni volunteered to lend us money for the bus fare as we did not have Indian currency with us. When we suddenly had to pay Rs 4500/- for the COVID test, Mr Chirag Sethi, just an acquaintance whom we met at the hotel, willingly lent me and another student the money on the spot. **This for me is the new normalcy I would like to hope for, and see after the Corona pandemic.**

While being quarantined at King's International Hotel at Juhu, despite the many inconveniences and difficulties, I experienced the zenith of humanity.

**Sister [Dr] Muditha Sodder, RSCJ** has for the last nine years been Co-ordinator of "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation" [JPIC] of the Indian Province of the Religious of the Sacred



Heart of Jesus [RSCJ] that runs Sophia College. Her completion of the full-time course in Eco-Spirituality and Ecology at the South Carolina-Springbank Retreat Centre for Eco-Spirituality and the Performing Arts, USA, coincided with the peak of COVID-19 and the subsequent global lockdown.

Sister Muditha, who is President of the Fellowship of Indian Missiologists [FOIM], on the Editorial Team of CNUA and Special Advisor to the Goan Union Educational Trust, will be giving Eco-Spirituality Retreats and sessions in Eco-Spirituality and Ecology on a full time basis. Firmly of the opinion that, with most people seemingly pessimistic and obviously in a hurry for the return of normalcy in their lives, it would be a pity if we all simply continued doing the same things we did before, she feels that every suffering or new experience must bring about a transformation in us. And so it is that having learnt firsthand some very valuable lessons both on foreign soil and on home ground, she shares with readers her hope for a 'new normalcy' that can only come by focusing on the good inherent in every human being. - Editor

The men who served us, Mr Bhim, Mr Ram, Mr Uday, Mr Prakash all worked with a smile and gave of their best. The BMC staff usually labelled as corrupt and lazy also sparkled. One Mr Anil Wankhede, who, I later realized, was a Director with MCGM, went out of his way to help stranded and helpless evacuees. He answered phone calls very politely, sent messages and boosted the morale of those in trouble especially the sick, the elderly and the young. He even visited my hotel to help me, as I am a cancer survivor. He also introduced me to Mr Babu Madane, the RTO Officer, who requested Mr Surti the Manager of the Santacruz

(Contd.. on p. 10)

(Contd.. from p. 9)

BEST bus depot to do the needful. I came to Sophia's in a BEST jeep free of cost. Mr Wankhede also assured and promised to see that I am refunded the extra money charged for my COVID test. Mr Santosh Noronha from BEST also called to find out if I needed help to return to my home at Sophia College.

**Let the effect ripple on, and on, and on....!**

If the goodness of human beings radiates all around in a crisis situation, why can't we make the Ripple Effect last even in ordinary times? One act of kindness can inspire an incredible amount of goodwill. It can snowball into many more generous acts of goodness in return. Every big or small act of kindness counts. True kindness always returns positivity to our lives and to the lives of others. When we give ourselves wholly with love, we experience happiness and so does the other. One small step, one small act can create a ripple. We may not always see its effect at that moment but it is there. Slowly many small acts accumulate to bring about a huge difference.

A word of caution - crooks and cheats abound as well, in such crisis situations. "Light makes the darkness invisible", said Desert Father Anthony Bloom. May the light of our good deeds make the darkness of crooks and cheaters invisible. Let us make COVID 19 a memorable time – a period when Mother Earth healed and heartless human beings found their humanity again. Into this state of a new normalcy may the Holy Spirit help us to enter during Pentecost 2020!

**A Happy Pentecost to all!**

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**#Avinash Noronha**

This cyclone appeared on the West Coast, near the Arabian Sea, at Alibag in Raigad district of Maharashtra. The word Cyclone here is actually a corruption of Cycle On, which is what Sumit Patil (34) did on 20th May.

Sumit is an endurance cyclist who has scaled many summits. He has participated in numerous cycling events at home and abroad, including the prestigious Race Across America and the Paris-Brest-Paris brevet. He is the Limca Book record holder for riding from Manali (Himachal) to Khardung La (Ladakh), a distance of 511 km on treacherous mountain roads in just 72 hours. Indeed, Sumit has summited the highest snow laden passes at 18000 ft altitude.

This time Sumit was cycling for money. No, not for himself. He was cycling to raise money to help the struggling migrant workers who were in a mass exodus from Mumbai, close to his hometown. Yes, they were trudging or cycling thousands of kilometres to the 'safety' of their homes in U.P. and Bihar. Sumit knew he had to do something, so he did what he does best – cycle! Because of the lockdown he couldn't hit the road, but he could still hit the pedals on a training simulator on the terrace of his house, facing a hot and humid breeze. How could he cycle in an air conditioned chamber when his people were on the hot, parched and dusty road.

The idea was to 'cycle' 600 kms in 24 hours that would be live telecast on Face book and with a special app, Zwift. There was total transparency. He hoped to raise Rs 100/- per km, totalling Rs 60000/- that would be donated online, as he cycled, to Prabodhan Trust in Dhule that is located on the National Highway connecting Mumbai to central and eastern India. There was a wind in his sails, because he raked in Rs 1,80,000/-, thrice his target; from known and unknown supporters. Prabodhan used the money for food, water and other necessities of the hapless and helpless migrants.

Today's youth are often accused of being social media and technology addicts. Sumit turned the accusation on its head, proving that both could be used for a noble cause.

At the beginning of his ride he had said, "To my country and my people, I pledge my devotion. In their wellbeing and prosperity alone lies my happiness. My people are out there on the road ... just to survive. How can I not empathise?"

24 hours, 600 kms and Rs 1,80,000/- later Sumit can rest on his saddle. He is no longer saddled with guilt. He has done more than his bit for his people and his country. He is a true role model for young people today. Sumit cycled on and scaled the greatest summit of all 'Service above Self'.

*\*The writer is the founder of Cycling Monks, a website for everything cycling.*

## Lockdown Pe Lockdown

One is reminded of the famous Bollywood dialogue – “Tareek pe Tareek pe Tareek”, by Sunny Deol who seeks expeditious justice, is frustrated on account of the repeated adjournments of the ongoing court proceedings on flimsy grounds. We, in India, in general and Maharashtra [Mumbai] in particular are in a similar situation. Here we are not seeking justice but freedom to go about our business. Mind you, even if the lockdown is lifted, most people will not choose to step out while others who dare will find that things have changed. You may have to take the help of GPS to move around. Movie houses and public transport will remain closed for public. So even in a free regime, one will have limited options. Maybe one can take a short drive [if he has a vehicle] and enjoy the limited freedom but the fear factor will not disappear and will come to haunt. Who knows if lockdown is officially unlocked, people will opt for self-lockdown like self quarantine but will resist if forced to do. That is human nature.

The lockdown seems to be a continuous process at least till June end for sure. For the city that never sleeps, this type of virtual incarceration, is something that no one bargained for. The only saving grace is that one day it has to end – no matter what. With everything gradually being gradually liberalized, the only thing that will remain will be a mask, sanitizing and social distancing. Everybody will have to adapt to the new protocol which will be at variance from the pre-Covid days. Enough hints have been thrown that tell us that this virus is no ordinary guest. It is not going back anytime soon and therefore we must readjust our lives to keep some space for this unwelcome visitor who has the nasty habit of coming again and again, uninvited. This will keep the world on their toes.

Working from home will be a new normal. With the real estate rates being what they are, acquiring additional space to meet social distancing norms is not possible. It will be economical for companies to run remote controlled offices with only a skeleton staff sitting in there. Travelling in local trains will be a challenging exercise. Even share taxis / autos will be a thing of the past. Movie houses will have to provide for social distancing while restaurants will

## VIEWS on NEWS



by Marshall Sequeira

have to survive on home deliveries. Not many people will be comfortable sitting in crowded joints without face masks. Wonder how they will have public meetings during elections. Big bang marriages will be reserved for politicians and the super rich only. Schools are already crowded with 70 / 80 students being accommodated in one class. Where is the place for traditional class rooms? People will learn to live a life of aloofness – no handshakes and no embraces to wish their near and dear ones. It will be a formal way of greeting. With face masks the expensive wardrobes will get out of fashion. The ‘Trikini’ [bikini plus a matching face mask] will be the new beachwear. Make-up industry, like many others, will be redundant.

The last two millenniums were separated from the earlier millenniums, by the terms B.C and A.D. While B.C stands for English phrase Before Christ, A.D which, confusingly, is a Latin phrase - Anno Domini [in the year of the Lord]. These two periods in history were separated by the life of Jesus Christ to signal the advent of a new era – the era of love and forgiveness. The period before that was guided by the principle of eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. The Corona Virus [Covid-19] will drastically change the life style of people in the post pandemic era. Things will change radically and people will be referring to life – Before Covid-19 [B.C.] and - After Covid-19 [A.C.]. These two new terms may perhaps replace the age old terms of B.C. and A.D. for which they stood thus far. If this change [ B.C. and A.C] happens, posterity will remember this Corona pandemic as ‘historic and life shattering’ else there will only be a passing reference to it history like the earlier pandemics.

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## Disasters amid Pandemic

In the midst of the pandemic which the world is trying to grapple with, come a series of disasters. First the deadly cyclone [Amphan] in West Bengal caused untold damage to life and property at a time when the poor people were trying to survive the Covid. Despite advance knowledge of the impending disaster, except for evacuation of the residents in coastal areas, precious little could be done to prevent widespread damage to

life and property in the face of deadly winds. It was horrifying to see huge trees being uprooted and fallen on vehicles, houses, electric cables plunging the cities into darkness and causing widespread damage. Roads were littered with all sorts of obstacles but the ever efficient National Disaster Relief teams did a commendable job trying to do what it could under trying circumstances. The damage in Bengal was far too severe while the adjoining state of Odisha [where the cyclone moved later] saw relatively low damage to property. There were deaths in Bengal.

The cyclone then moved to Bangladesh where also it created havoc. That country has seen many such disasters but they too suffered huge losses. The cyclone then moved to Australia but did not have much of an impact since it had lost its severity. As if this was not enough came the unfortunate air crash of a civilian aircraft in Pakistan killing all but a couple of them. The collateral damage was huge as the crash occurred in the middle class residential area. There are unconfirmed reports about the airworthiness of the aircraft. If this is true, the airline must be held accountable for this tragedy. The airline belongs to the State of Pakistan and therefore it will be interesting to see what action is taken.

Finally, we have the invasion by locusts. It started in the Hindi belt and is slowing moving south. On a lighter note [forced under the circumstances] China has banned consumption of wild animals in the aftermath of the Covid19. Locusts [being a delicacy in that country] there must be a huge demand for them and everybody must be trying to catch them. Frightened for their lives, perhaps all the locusts in China decided to ‘migrate’ to save their lives. Every effort is being made to eliminate the unwanted guests by importing special equipment from abroad. India has never seen anything like this in the past. Local locusts have attacked certain areas in the past but this time, it was like another pandemic.

# Are We Living with a Hypocrite Government and Society?

by Don Aguiar.

**O**ne of the most fundamental things to be remembered is that we are living with a hypocrite Government and society.

Once, a great philosopher was asked: 'What do you think of civilization?' The philosopher said, 'It is a good idea, but somebody has to change the idea into a reality. Civilization has not happened yet. It is a dream of the future.'

But the people who are in power – politically, religiously, socially – are in power because civilization has not happened. A civilized world, a mature man, needs not be a hypocrite. The people who have been for thousands of years in power – the priests, the politicians, the super-rich, they have all the powers to prevent human evolution - By convincing man, 'You are already civilized', 'You are already a human being. You need not go through a transformation, it is unnecessary.'

And man's weakness is that knowing perfectly well there exists no such thing as civilization, or as human sensitivity, still starts believing in all the lies that the politicians have been speaking, the educationists have been teaching – because it seems simpler to just believe, you don't have to do anything for it. To recognize the fact that you are not yet a man creates fear. The very ground underneath your feet disappears.

**Truth makes you utterly naked – naked of all lies, naked of all hypocrisies. That's why nobody wants truth; everybody believes that he has got it.**



spread across for their livelihood, common sense was to ensure at least majority of them were made to reach their hometown safely before calling for a lockdown. The tricky government knew that the lockdown was here to stay. Governments aren't stupid, an immediate lockdown

Do you see the psychological strategy? If you don't want to give something to someone, or wanting fake news to be believed convince him, hypnotize him, repeat again and again, 'You have got it / It is the truth'. And when thousands of people around you – your parents, your teachers, your countrymen, your leaders – are all believing it, it seems almost impossible for new arrivals in the world, small children, not to be convinced of this thousands-of-years-old idea. Millions of people have lived and died believing this thousands-of-years old idea. And presently our Prime Minister and his cabinet colleagues are using the same idea.

They have blinded the whole country in it. Corona's entry revealed - Half the country was hungry and half the country was naked. Truth has been revealed in a dramatic way. Religion had become business but business itself is destroyed this time. And clearly that business had not become religion.

Indians may have lit candles, banged thalis and watched awe-struck as jets streaked overhead, bands played and naval ships lit up in tribute to those on the frontlines, but it was hard to find the substance behind the style. **The feel-good, choreographed events around the coronavirus increasingly appear to be a cover for poor planning, apathy and an opportunistic exacerbation of Islamophobia and reduction of civil liberties.**

With millions of Migrant workers

would mean all the daily wage migrant workers will get stranded and that is enough to sentimentally drive hearts to donate generously to PM/CM Relief Funds, which I guess to a large extent they succeeded. Then, as deceptive as always, they knew, there are people who will generously come forward to extend a helping hand to sever the needy. We witnessed so many across the country cutting across all lines and extending help. This is a double bonanza for the government. **On one hand they collected relief funds and on the other hand they had generous citizens stepping up. They lost nothing in the bargain. How does it matter if the poor migrants walk for miles or get crushed under the rails, or die on the way or die of hunger. For them it is mission fulfilled and for those who are desperate to reach their homes is a saga they will remember for a lifetime.**

A virus may not provide advance notice before striking. In this case, India did get early warning but did not do enough. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was being sparse with the truth on April 14, when he said India started checking passengers for the virus before its first known case on January 21. By that day, as Factchecker. in reported, only three airports had begun screening passengers (four more started on that day), and then only travellers from Hong Kong and



(Contd.. from p. 12)

China, although 20 countries had reported infections.

It is apparent that Modi's government discarded any suggestion of meticulous planning and execution, settling on a scrambled, knee-jerk response that caused economic and social chaos. To understand what good planning, communication and execution can achieve, Modi needs look no further than Kerala, which reported the highest number of cases when the pandemic began. It has now destroyed the curve, with only four dead, a mortality rate of 0.79%, compared to India's 3.4%: up to 93% of Kerala's Covid-19 patients have recovered, compared to India's 23%.

Instead, India currently struggles to comprehend a flurry of, often contradictory, orders and directives from Delhi, the confusion increasingly evident, as India tries to balance the imperatives of reviving a declining economy and holding down infection and death. The government's current struggle to achieve that balance is a consequence of previous blunders, which began with a four-hour notice for a national lockdown, stranding migrant workers nationwide without jobs, money and eventually food. **Despite claims made to the Supreme Court that a couple of million workers were being cared for, Modi outsourced moral responsibility, asking India's people to "look after" those in need.**

Many companies, including those run by the government, say they cannot or will not obey government orders to pay workers during the lockdown. Unemployment has risen to record levels. Modi has urged employers "to be kind", but his government has done nothing – as many countries have – to reimburse or in some way assist companies in keeping employees paid, even if partially. Nothing has been heard from a special economic task force since Modi announced it on March 19. **There was silence, too, on an economic stimulus package,**

**except from the government's chief economic advisor who said that "there is no free lunch".**

Meanwhile, Modi's government is pushing ahead with a grandiose Rs 20,000-crore project to build a new parliament building and redesign New Delhi's Central Vista (instead, the Rajya Sabha announced spending cuts – of Rs 80 crore). **In easier times, emotion and grand political statements may distract voters and pay handsome electoral dividends. In a crisis, they are noticeably poor substitutes for governance, subject as they are to diminishing returns and administrative anarchy.**

The first thing you must understand is that we have moved on to a hypocrite society and government of the day. Only hypocrites can do these things – not human beings. In the last six years, administrative anarchy ...and you call them civilized? In the twenty first century – exactly at the start – produced Narendra Modi, and people still believe in his hypocrisy....

**No, you have been deceived and this recent declaration of rescue financial package for the poor, migrants, labourers, middle class, etc. is nothing but the same hypocrisy....**

These politicians are articulate, clever, cunning... They are saying there should be no discrimination between races, religions, political ideologies, etc. And who is making the discrimination? These are the same people who are making the discrimination.

This is a deception; what they are saying they don't mean. It is just to give you an idea that you are equal to everybody, you are a brother to everybody, that you have all the human rights. **But all these human rights are just hypocrisies.**

Humanity is way too exaggerated. And human greed, dishonesty, hypocrisy and insensitivity grossly understated.

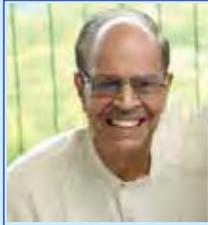
## 4 Take-Ups On The Ascension!

The Feast of the Ascension this year on 24 May 2020, also celebrates the 54th World Day of Communication. The Theme: "That you may tell your children and grandchildren (Exodus 10:2). The Ascension is Lord Jesus' au revoir – see you again! Here are 4 take-ups:

1. "This Jesus Who had been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way ..." (Acts 1:11). The Ascension is thus inextricably linked with the Second Coming! We have the responsibility where we stand in relationship to a "God Who so loved the world" (John 3:16).
2. "I go to prepare a place for you in My Father's house where there are many dwellings" (John 14:2). Jesus invites us to the "banquet feast in heaven", which is our final destiny (Revelation 19:9).
3. "Go and teach all nations ... to the ends of the earth" (Matthew 28:19-20). Those ends include homes, schools, offices, farms ... wherever life is treasured. Stop starrng at the sky; roll up those sleeves and get to work. The Church is missionary, and you just got your mission!
4. "For in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). The nine days between the Ascension and the Pentecost were the Church's first Novena, which was attended with Mary (Acts 1:14). We can't do it alone. We require spiritual support! Jesus assures us, "Anyone who is thirsty, let them come to Me and drink; for out of the believer's heart will flow rivers of living water-The Holy Spirit" (John 7:37-39).

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

# Pitiful Spectacle



C.K. Subramaniam

It all started from toys. When you go to the market and look for a birthday present then you get a cheap China product for the offer. The whole set of balloons, decorative items, birthday caps, return gifts, and fancy masks for birthday celebrations are all made in China. It is an extremely pitiful spectacle that despite having so much of proven manufacturing capability, India doesn't have even a single Mobile Handset Manufacturing company that can compete with global ones. There has been too much talk from 40,000 feet altitude, but literally nothing on the ground. Every time, the thunder comes out as though we are going to change the very world. Reality! Needs to change. It is important to recognize our weakness and not assert again and again that we have the potential to outsmart the whole world, without doing anything constructively.

There is no meaning in exhortations to buy Swadeshi, when the Government can't show a real genuine initiative in ushering a local design and development of a Mobile Handset Development Centre. Even if \$ 50-60 billion is allocated for this purpose of just bringing up a few indigenous handsets, it can create a path-breaking effect. An indigenous handset has a game-changing character, positioning India in the world in a much better positively appealing way in the world.

Huawei literally brought down CISCO's big dominance in the Network Products. On the Mobile Phone Handsets market, it is China which is ruling the roost still, after they de-

throned Samsung from No.1 position. The whole of America buys Pet Food from China. Chinese products are flooded across USA Supermarket Chains. Chinese are able to sell their products exported to the US cheaper than the ones manufactured in the US itself. But the US has stopped manufacturing many consumer goods, as China has become the No.1 market leader for most consumer articles.

Best of the available product in the price bracket compared to its international products, even the best of the International production is either with Chinese parts in it or worst manufactured there in China. This is a big challenge. It is a big social upheaval that only can change the trend. Slowly and steadily we are now manufacturing Covid-19 masks, gloves and other equipment. With the COVID-19 pandemic forcing a high demand for respiratory masks and shields, companies that typically make vastly different products are dropping everything and switching to one common cause: produce as many masks or shields to help fight the pandemic as possible. It is time to turn to top gear and make India move with great impact and manufacture various other items used for

daily use in China model and usurp the market in a time lag of one decade and go up in the ladder.

At one time, the competition in the handsets market became so skewed that it was one Chinese Handset Manufacturer, who started the eye-ball to eye-ball kind of battle with another Chinese Handset Manufacturer. It took a good deal of time for Samsung to pick up momentum and start fighting. Price and innovation have been Chinese USP. Every other country lags much behind.

Do you think you would still buy a Chinese product, because it is cheaper or, maybe it is the best of the available lot? We need to have some intrinsic strength to own up our challenges and work for mitigating them. Ultimately, it is the question, "What do you mean by being Indian, as opposed to being a Chinese or American or Somalian?". Some deep-down thought processes and converting that into ethos have meaning in patriotism. I also believe that there should be people, in our midst, who think that patriotism has nothing to do with buying and selling.



# Glimpses On Devotion To The Most Sacred Heart

Our pulverized earth is in dire need of a miracle. Global warming, deforestation, Covid-19, a wave of evil seeping into the fabric of society, the abuse of migrants, immigrants, child abuse, abortion, and now retribution from heaven for a new world order. Today, Pope Francis with the bishops of the Church in authority of the Magisterium, are waiting for a miracle through prayer.

I remember reading: "If an invisible virus can shake the world, then the invisible Supreme Power can save the world, too".

Across the annals of Church history we learn that God loves humanity having forgiven us several times over, and through his saints, prophets and teachers He has shown us the way to touch His Most Sacred Heart at moments of fear, sickness and despair. Devotion to the Sacred Heart is the need of our times, once again.

For many generations the Sacred Heart has been looked upon as a symbol of "God's boundless and passionate love for mankind." Devotion to His Sacred Heart is predominantly connected to the Latin Roman Church.

One of the earliest promoter of the devotion, according to Thomas Merton was a Cistercian mystic, Saint Lutgarde of Belgium, who died in 1266. It is interesting to know that she was a contemporary of Saint Francis. The vision of St. Lutgarde was to have a mystical life dedicated to the pierced Heart of the Savior.

Saint Bonaventure who lived at this period had the single-minded will to champion the cause of the Sacred

Heart. He was a dedicated Franciscan monk who wrote several books and preached the word of God. In one of his works he wrote: "Who is those who would not love in return Him, who loves so much?" Saint Bonaventure died in 1274.

Almost forty years later Saint Mechtilde of Helfta had a similar mission to propagate the solemn and divine devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and to advocate His infinite glory. She was an ardent devotee in the early church, lived a pious life and died in 1298.



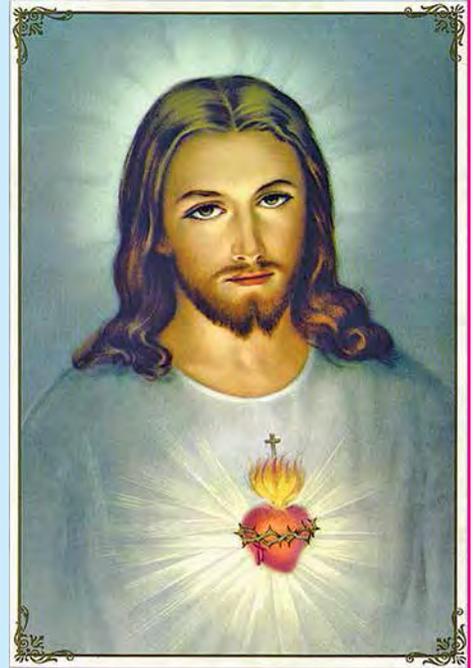
BY MELVYN BROWN

Gertrude the Great was a German Benedictine nun and like most of the servants of the Sacred Heart she was also a mystic, respected as a theologian and a devotee of His Sacred Heart. Gertrude was born on 6 January 1256 at Eisleben.

It is said that Saint John, Apostle of Christ had visited Gertrude in spirit and took her to the side of the dying Christ and let her hear the heartbeats of the Sacred Heart. Gertrude worked hard to spread the word and devotion to His Sacred Heart. One day Jesus showed her his Divine Heart and said, "I give it to thee, and like a faithful zealous servant, this Heart will be ready, at any moment, to repair thy defeats and negligence.... make use of it and thy works will charm the eye and ear of the Divinity."

Saint Gertrude died on 17 November 1302 at Kloster Helften, Eisleben, Germany. Her Feast is on 16 November.

One of the most notable among devotees of the Sacred Heart was a French Roman Catholic Visitation nun, Marguerite Marie Alacoque, who was born on 22 July 1647. In her lifetime she



won many souls to the devotion of the Sacred Heart across France and the European world.

Alacoque was blessed with the grace to have several visions of Jesus. The first apparition of Jesus was in the Burgundian village on the 27 December 1673. Eighteen months later the nun revealed the form of devotion which is still in vogue around the world. The first rule of the devotion was the reception of Holy Communion on the First Friday of each month. Then, Eucharistic adoration during a "Holy Hour" on Thursdays was essential when praying for succor from the Most Sacred Heart.

Marguerite Alacoque was beatified by Pope Pius IX on 18 September 1864. Fifty years later she was canonized a saint on 13 May 1930 by His Holiness Pope Benedict XV in the Major Shrine Monastery of the Visitation. Her Feast is 16 October. She is known as the patroness of the sick, suffering, and to devotees of the Sacred Heart. She died at the age of 43 on 17 October 1690.

Let us pray to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus to vanquish the virus Covid-19 in his triumphant Heart.

## Mum and Timmy

Mum: Why don't you Czech the fridge?  
Timmy: Ok, I'm Russian to the kitchen.  
Mum: Hmm...Maybe you'll find some Turkey.  
Timmy: Yeah, but it's all covered in Greece. Yuck!  
Mum: There is Norway you can eat that.  
Timmy: I know, I guess I'll just have a can of Chile.  
Mum: Denmark your name on the can.  
Timmy: Kenya do it for me?  
Mum: Ok, I'm Ghana do it.  
Timmy: Thanks, I'm so tired Iran for an hour today.  
Mum: It Tokyo long enough.  
Timmy: Yeah, Israelly hard some-times.

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## Two Donkeys

Two donkeys were strolling in Jerusalem one day when one of them said, "Just yesterday I was passing here carrying Jesus, and everyone was singing and dancing and clapping their hands and I was even stepping on their clothes. And today not even one of them recognises me".

The second donkey looked at him for a while and then responded, "My friend in this world without Jesus you are nothing!!"

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## What's my fault?

The other day, my mixer was out of order so I went to my neighbour's house to borrow her mixi.

She asked me to use it in her house.

A few days later, she came to me asking for my broom.

I asked her to use it in my house.

She got annoyed and went away angrily.

Now what is my fault???

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## Marriage Proposal

A boy and his parents returned home after meeting a girl for a marriage proposal.

Immediately, they received a call from the girl's side informing them



that the girl is not interested in the proposal.

The father of boy asked his son, "What happened? During the function, both of you said you liked each other and afterwards you had a private conversation with her. What happened there?"

The boy replied, "Nothing papa. There was an old man's photo framed and hanging on the wall. I asked whether it is her grandfather. She left the room without answering."

Meanwhile, in the girl's house her father asked her, "Why have you said no after agreeing initially?"

The girl said, "That idiot could not even recognise even Mahatma Gandhi's picture. He thought it was my grandfather."

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## Riddles

1. What did the elephant carry on her journey to the Andamans?

A. A trunk

2. Why did the animals not invite the bee out for dinner?

A. Because he was stingy!

3. What style of dance did the fox prefer?

A. The Foxtrot!

4. Why was the giraffe called a day dreamer?

A. Because his head was always in the air.

—Jubel D'Cruz,  
Mumbai

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## Some Anecdotes about Albert Einstein

(A) Albert Einstein's wife often suggested that he dress more professionally when he headed off to work. "Why should I?" he would invariably argue. "Everyone knows me there."

(B) When the time came for Einstein to attend his first major conference, she begged him to dress up a bit. "Why should I?" said Einstein. "No one knows me there!"

(C) Albert Einstein was often asked to explain the general theory of relativity. "Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute, and it seems like an hour," he once declared. "Sit with a pretty girl for an hour, and it seems like a minute. That's relativity!"

(D) When Albert Einstein was working in Princeton university, one day he was going back home he forgot his home address. The driver of the cab did not recognize him. Einstein asked the driver if he knows Einstein's home. The driver said "Who does not know Einstein's address? Everyone in Princeton knows. Do you want to meet him?. Einstein replied "I am Einstein. I forgot my home address, can you take me there? "The driver reached him to his home and did not even collect his fare from him.

(E) Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of every passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there, so he looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still couldn't find it.

The conductor said, 'Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it.' Einstein nodded appreciatively. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket.

The conductor rushed back and said, 'Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry, I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one.' Einstein looked at him and said, 'Young man, I too, know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going.'

# A Catholic Pentecostal

**A**bsurd! This is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. How can one be both a Catholic and a Pentecostal? When we use caps to denote Proper Nouns then it may seem contradictory. But if we use small letters to denote adjectives, then the apparent contradiction is removed.

Catholic, as we know, means universal. It was initially used as an adjective to describe the church and to distinguish it from some divergent groups in the second century, by bishop and martyr St Ignatius of Antioch. It is only centuries later that it assumed the form of a Proper Noun to denote the church headed by the pope, who now resides in Rome. In like manner, pentecostal is also an adjective to describe the events of the first Pentecost. It is only about a century ago that certain evangelical churches began to call themselves Pentecostal, apparently after one Agnes Ozman began to speak in tongues on 1st January 1901 in Kansas, USA. Be that as it may, my choice of these words is as adjectives, describing something, and not as Proper Nouns denoting something.

In Kashmir, the chinnar leaves fall in autumn, before the onset of winter, making a brilliantly hued carpet of brown, yellow and red. It is precisely because of this natural phenomenon that this season is called the Fall in many countries in the north western hemisphere. However, where I live in north central India, this fall occurs after, not before, winter. It is a herald of spring. In my garden I have several Ashoka and Neem trees. Just after winter, they start shedding their copious canopy of leaves, forming a thick yellow and brown carpet on the ground. This season also has another natural phenomenon – strong

gusts of wind. It is nature's way, because without a powerful wind the dead leaves won't fall, and the tender new shoots will not be able to emerge. This is the same phenomenon that we see in the life and mission of Jesus, and thereby of his church.

Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth was very close to nature. Hence he could talk in an idiom that resonated with fisherman, shepherds and farmers. That is why he said to his listeners, "You know how to read the face of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times. It is an evil and unfaithful generation" (Mat 16:3). He was reprimanding them because they could not see the obvious. In a post Covid 19



by chhotebhai \*

scenario many writers have talked about a new way of being church. Others have felt that if these Houses of God could not protect them from the virus, then how efficacious could they be in healing society? Perhaps the Holy Spirit is using the virus as a strong breeze to remove the deadwood, or rather the dead leaves

form organized religion. Christianity, and the Catholic Church in particular, require this periodic shaking up.

When Nicodemus had approached Jesus, he was told that "You must be born anew. The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes from, or whither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:7-8). I have always been moved by this interaction. In the present context it assumes greater significance, because we don't know how Covid began, or how it will end. We can only see its effects.

As we approach the feast of Pentecost, perhaps we should pray for a fresh out pouring of the Holy Spirit, to lead us in ways that we many not yet know. Is the Spirit knocking at the



doors and saying "He who has ears let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev 3:22).

Sixty years ago Pope John XXIII heard the Spirit speaking to him, to renew the Church, as in a new Pentecost. He convened Vatican II, to radically change the thinking of the church. It was a watershed moment in the life of the church. Unfortunately, insecure humans are afraid of change. They don't want to move out of their comfort zones. They resist deeper attitudinal changes, while readily embracing cosmetic changes like replacing genuflection with bowing, incense with agarbattis, and habits with saris.

The church in India has never really been challenged nor systematically persecuted. So it remains in its comfort zone of institutions, novenas, holy hours, processions and pilgrimages. Even within the church community, it has not been challenged to implement the deeper attitudinal teachings of Vatican II. This is because of an awe inspiring hierarchy, a yawning lay leadership, fawning feminists, and pawning youth. With a few exceptions, lay leaders are simply too lazy to study scripture, church teachings and claim their rightful place in the church. They are quite happy just being elected to some august body without asserting

(Contd.. on p. 18)

# Salute to fathers making sacrifices every day

**F**ather's Day is a celebration to honour all fathers and celebrate the fatherhood, paternal bonds and the influence of fathers in the society. It is celebrated on the third Sunday in June.

Father's Day complements Mother's Day, a celebration that honours mothers and motherhood, which is celebrated on the second Sunday in May every year. On Father's Day, people buy gifts for their dads or take

them out to dinner or for a movie.

Father's Day was first observed on July 5, 1908, by Dr. Robert Webb of West Virginia at the Central Methodist Church of Fairmont in the USA. Later, one Mrs Sonora Smart Dodd thought of having a similar celebration for her dad in 1909, while listening to a Mother's Day sermon in church. Her dad, Henry Jackson Smart had raised her up after her mother's death when she was still



by Jubel D'Cruz

young.

Father's Day is a celebration of only one day, but what about the other 364 days of the year? Do we just sit around and not love our dads? Father's Day should be celebrated every day of the year because fathers give and do a lot to help their kids.

Father's Day means a lot to me because I can spend the entire day with my dad. My dad and I might go to the movies, might play cricket, go out for dinner, or might even go swimming or stay at home to watch TV. I am happy because I can spend as much time as possible with my dad on this special day.

(Contd.. from p. 17)

their autonomy. The same goes for women's leadership. Both Mao and the Mahatma believed that no revolution was possible without the involvement of women. But our womenfolk seem to lack the fire in the belly that brings about change. Our youth have pawned their revolutionary idealism. Earlier they were sent to Taize in France, which was a great attraction, to make them fall in line. Now leading the choir or a procession is as far as their leadership aspiration goes. Idealism has been replaced by pragmatism, a desire for jobs and careers.

Even the present pandemic has not really tested the church. We read of a bishop in Telengana building a poor man's house with his own hands, of St Xavier's College, Mumbai converting its dormitory into a respite centre, the bishop of Darjeeling and the Salesian novitiate there making their premises available, some distributing dry rations or cooked food and water to the migrants. All noble efforts indeed; not to be discounted. However there was no concerted response from the Catholic Church. Had there been a planned and co-ordinated effort it would have been far more effective. Our response was the dispensing model, just like that of the Governments'; the buns and bandaid

type.

Mother Teresa had said to give from what hurts, not from our abundance. I don't think that the church felt the pinch. The only pinch it is now feeling is the risk of becoming redundant or infructuous. If the "faithful" could manage for three months without communion and confession, then what need of such rituals?

So maybe the Catholic Church in India needs a new Pentecost "like a rush of mighty wind" (Acts 2:2), to fulfil the prophecy of Joel "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophecy" (Acts 2:17). Earlier God had said to Jeremiah "I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer1:10).

As in spring, unless the old leaves are removed the new shoots cannot appear. For that the role of the strong wind is crucial. Is it already upon us? Time alone will tell. Till then, let us all be catholic pentecostals, universal and open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

*\* The writer is a staunch advocate of Vatican II reforms*

# Cartoon And Caricatures Creates Glory

As cartoons, like all other images, are constantly subject to fresh interpretation, there is a need to set boundaries within which dissent must be tolerated; or else we run the risk of damaging the task of knowledge building. Though, cartooning is not limited to drawing. It requires a person to have ideas that can be translated visually. It is important to be well-versed with current events and read on a variety of things. The idea being that the cartoonist should be able to write captions, besides conceiving the idea. It is also imperative for aspirants to follow the works of cartoonists. There are a number of cartoonists who have carved a niche for themselves in different spheres of cartooning.

Art in some form or other has existed from the Palaeolithic period, and as long as humans have existed, we have been attracted by and fascinated by it. Art affects society by its power to change opinions and translate human experiences. It is a repository of our collective memory. But it is the effects that art has on the mind and brain that truly deserve admiration. Art has been shown to have an impact on the brain by causing an actual increase in the levels of 'feel-good' neurotransmitters.

Humans have two types of skills — physical and cognitive. Neuroscience show that even the simple act of drawing can improve our cognitive and higher cerebral functions. The essence of art is its perceptibly imaginary nature, which reflects actual experiences, feelings and sentiments. The mind being the target behind the idea of art as therapy, the same art can purify our sensual world through artistic catharsis-on-canvas, which could even 'correct' some psycho-

logical dispositions.

The art of cartooning is alive and kicking. Political and social cartoon-



ists have often been pressurized and threatened by entrenched political leaders or religious groups -- and some have even been assassinated. The cartoons and paintings cut across barriers of language and culture, and the galleries did not need captions to explain their powerful messages of change and justice in the face of discrimination. The spirit of creativity and empowerment promoted by these artists, which should be celebrated not just on a particular event but throughout the year.

It is futile to cry hoarse about the need to understand the larger text of which the cartoon is an illustration: not only

is the text unexceptionably fair in its assessment of the Constituent Assembly's achievements, it has anticipated many possible critiques of the constitution making process as well. Let it be said that what the textbook achieves is not only a way of reading Indian politics, but encourages a politics of reading, anticipating opposition, criticism and building defences. These are all experiences and challenges that our young people deserve. But representations have many lives, and are subject to fresh interpretation and critique. The possibility that an image offends in the present day, and becomes a call to political action, where it might not have had the same impact at the time of its production, needs to be fully recognised.

This is what has been achieved by those who have raised their voices against the cartoon. Far from being another affirmation of public unreasoned, the protests have brought the politics of reading to the fore. Filmi actors and cricketers gets Lion's share of cartoons in the media. As a freelancer I got the opportunity to draw a cartoon on Gandhiji as a cricketer. My cartoon sent to Late Madhavrao Scindia got his appreciation letter filed to my scarp book. Drawing cartoon is a art no doubt.

Precisely for this reason, it is impossible to anticipate at which point or in which location a particular representation will cause offence. Today the right to be offended has become among the most frequently asserted of all rights. This places an intolerable burden on the production of knowledge itself. A career in cartooning is a demanding one.

—C.K. SUBRAMANIAM

# Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

**7152. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1989) Ht. 6', Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., having business. Contact email : emi\_dalmeida@yahoo.com

**7150. POONA :** East Indian RC Divorcee, (Born in November 1960) Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 69 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate Engineer from CWIT University of Pune, working as an Engineer. Contact email : joeskf@gmail.com

**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

**6434. MUMBAI :** East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1978), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MD, MS., Doctor by profession. Contact email : rayanvincent@rediffmail.com

**6573. VALSAD :** Goan / Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in

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ian.roshan.dsouza@gmail.com

**6664 MUMBAI :** Mangalorean R.C. Bachelor (Born in December 1982) Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 68 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., A.C.A., LLB., C.A. by Profession. Contact email: saldanha\_ryan@yahoo.com OR 9820670158.

**6713 MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Bachelor, (Born in September 1989), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 67 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. (Extc) working as a Sales Engineer. Contact email : coelho.helen@yahoo.co.in

**6841 MUMBAI :** Anglo Indian / Keralite Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1991), Ht. 170 cms, Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as a Sales Executive. Contact email : mrsannieroy@yahoo.co.in

**6507. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor (Hearing Impaired) (Born in September 1989), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 62 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. HSC., Dip. in Computer Hardware. Working as a Cashier. Contact email : clifford9948@gmail.com OR 9920331773

**6797 MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1987), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working for Five Star Hotel in Mumbai. Contact email : johnserrao14@yahoo.com

**6585. MUMBAI :** Mumbai born and broughtup Roman Catholic Bachelor, Handsome, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 78 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. EXTC Engineering, working as a Networking Engineer. Having own

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**6856. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1973), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 67 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as a HR. Contact email : clifforddsilva@yahoo.co.in

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**6250. MUMBAI :** East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in January 1974), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 76 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., working as a Manager. **Contact email : cardoz.clint@gmail.com OR 9833563182**

**6862. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1983), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 72 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., well settled working in Mumbai. Contact email : keith\_peter1983@yahoo.co.in

**7150. POONA :** East Indian RC Divorcee, (Born in November 1960) Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 69 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate Engineer from CWIT University of Pune, working as an Engineer. Contact email : joeskf@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 Son. seeks alliance from Mangalorean RC Spinster, educated, working in Mumbai. Reply with full details & photograph to email : ID : vivian1548@gmail.com Mobile : 9096141335

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**7127. MUMBAI :** Goan R.C. Spinster, (Born in December 1992), Ht. 5' 5", Edn. Ph.D., Student. Contact email : exmi2019@gmail.com

**7109. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in June 1986), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as a Associate Consulant. Contact email : helendsz27@gmail.com

**6690 MUMBAI :** East Indian RC Spinster, (Born in December 1986), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 54 kgs, Fair Complexion, good looking, smart, intelligent, Edn. CS., LL.B., working as a Asst. Company Secretary. Seeks a suitable educated and well settled bachelor. Caste no bar. Contact email : joylinafaroz@gmail.com.

**7105. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in November 1991), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., Microbiology, (Pursuing Ph.D., ) Assistant Professor. Contact email : 1991divine@gmail.com

**6868 CANADA :** Goan RC Spinster, (Born in January 1992), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. Medium, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A., HR Toronto and International Business Management Toronto. Only U.S. and Candian Citizens from good

family background apply. Contact email : sugarlog2009@hotmail.com

**7103. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC 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

**6970 MUMBAI :** Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1987), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 48 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. CS & LLB., working as a Company Secretary. Contact email : mendonsajacinta@gmail.com

**7092. MANGALORE :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1990), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 56 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as a Talent Acquisition. Contact email : vinishadesouza@gmail.com

**7117. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1991), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A. in English Literature, Teacher by profession. Contact email : examiner2019@gmail.com

**7091. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1990), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 44 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA PGDM, working as an Assistant Manager Presales for a multinational firm. Contact email : priyaquadras@gmail.com

**7098. MIRAJ :** Protestant Spinster, (Born in November 1983), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 52 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters in Dental Science, Doctor by

profession. Contact email : dprebentisch@yahoo.com

**6998. CANADA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1998), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA Marketing & Advertising Professional. Contact email : richard.dsouza17@gmail.com

**6983. MUMBAI :** East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1991), Ht. 160 cms, Wt. 52 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Educated, working. Contact email : joaquimbalbina17@gmail.com

**6972. M.P. :** Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1986), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A., working as a Manager. Contact email : anitabilung@gmail.com

**6976. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in February 1992), Ht. 160 cms, Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.M.S., working as a Officer. Contact Mob: 9967192950 / 8850927660

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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

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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

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**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

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## Catholic women demand impartial probe into novice's death

New Delhi, June 1, 2020: A group of Catholic women in India on June 1 urged the head of the Syro-Malankara Church to start an impartial enquiry into the mysterious death of a novice nun in a convent in Kerala, southern India.

"In these times of growing mistrust, it becomes extremely important that the Church authorities seize the moment and initiate an impartial enquiry which will bring out the true facts in a transparent and ethical manner," says the letter the Sisters in Solidarity wrote to Cardinal Baselios Mar Cleemis.

Such an enquiry has become "more urgent" since the head of the Crime Branch of the Kerala police on May 21 rejected his department's report that ruled out foul play in the death of Divya P John, the novice nun.

The body of 21-year-old John was found on May 7 in the well of the Baselian Convent of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at Paliyekkara near Thiruvalla in the Pathanamthitta district, some 120 km north of the state capital of Thiruvananthapuram.

The SiS member say they write to the cardinal since they are "in solidarity with the suffering of women who experience different forms of violence and abuse in the Church, who are at times abetted to suicide or even murdered in certain circumstances."

The group also voices its deep concern about the increasing number of "unnatural deaths taking place in convents." In the past 30 plus years, 20 such deaths have been recorded "which is an alarming statistics indeed," the letter points out.

The group also explains women join convent because of their desire to serve society and cut their relations from their natal family to dedicate fully to serve the Church and its mission. "Consequently the religious congregation/Church becomes their family.

It therefore becomes an onerous duty of the Church authorities to ensure the safety and emotional wellbeing of these women under their care," the Catholic women's group asserts.

According to them, John's death "has brought to surface the irresponsible way the Church leadership handle such situations."

They point out that John had spent five years as a trainee in the convent after joining it "at a very vulnerable age" of 16.

"It is very perplexing as to what could have gone wrong as she was in the novitiate, a stage in religious formation that is meant to be closely accompanied and personal growth monitored by the nuns in charge," the letter explains.

The group, comprising religious and lay women, also expresses its confusion over the total silence" of the members of the congregation on John's death.

"The male hierarchy has intervened immediately to cover up the issue. That raises the question as to whether the nuns are not empowered even to manage their own affairs," the letter says.

The group also finds as "deeply disturbing" the way the leaders of the congregation and Church authorities acted on discovering John's body. "The entire reporting of Divya's death seems to have been done in a manner intending to hide the real facts," the Catholic women allege.

The group wonders why John's body was taken to a Church hospital when there was a government hospital near the convent.

"The rather quick dismissal of the death as a "normal" death without following the essential procedures has led to the belief that there is something

deeper behind the unnatural death of (John)," the letter says.

It says the Church authorities should not brush under "the carpet of spiritualization and secrecy" the "many valid questions" raised by concerned member of the Church and civil society.

"Addressing these questions openly will only add to the credibility of ecclesiastical life when such unfortunate incidents occur within the Church," says letter signed by 15 women leaders representing various organizations and two women groups.

The group has also sent copies of the letter to Cardinal George Alencherry, president of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council, and its secretary general Bishop Joseph Mar Thomas of Bathery and Father Sebastian Thundathilkunnel, president of the Kerala Conference of Major Superiors and eight others.

"Keeping aside the various speculations which are swirling around, one needs to flag the fact of Divya's emotional distress and investigate its cause. The question then arises as to why the authorities were unable to address this effectively as her only source of support was the Church family," the group points out.

The Church authorities, the Catholic women point out, are being increasingly seen as agents intending to cover the faults of their members rather than supporting the victim. "It reveals an absence of mechanisms which foster trust in the victims of any kind of abuse," the letter says.

The group ends the letter with a plea to Church authorities to introduce mechanisms "to make it comfortable for a complainant to raise her issues in a way she can be free from fear or coercion."

*By Matters India*

# Desertification and Drought!

by Dr. Trevor Colaso

**O**n the 25th anniversary of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought on 17 June 2020, we look back also to celebrate the 25 years of progress made by countries on Sustainable Land Management!

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal 15 – States our resolve to halt and to reverse land degradation. The 25th anniversary slogan thus is: “Let Us Grow the Future Together!”

Introduction: Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climate variations. It occurs because dry land ecosystems which cover over one-third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use. Besides poverty, political instability, deforestation and improper irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land.

Drought accounted for 5% of natural disasters, affecting 1.1 billion people, killing nearly 22,000 and causing nearly \$100 billion in damages over a 20-year period!

Key Land Issues: \*Land & Drought: By 2025, 1.8 billion people would experience severe water scarcity, and 2/3 of the world would be living under water-stressed conditions. This complex natural hazard with significant and pervasive socio-economic and environmental impacts cause more deaths and displace more people than any other natural disaster.

\*Land & Human Security: By 2045 some 135 million people could be displaced as a result of desertification. However, achieving land degradation neutrality, scaling up sustainable

land management, and accelerating restoration initiatives, are pathways to greater resilience and security for all.

\*Land & Climate: Restoring the soils of degraded ecosystems has the potential to store up to 3 billion tons of carbon annually. This land use sector represents almost 25% of total global emissions. Its rehabilitation and sustainability is critical to combating climate change!

Food, Feed, Fiber (FFF): As populations become wealthier and more urban, there is greater demand to provide human food, animal feed and fiber for clothing. To have enough productive land to meet the demands of 10 billion people by 2050, lifestyles need to change. FFF seeks to educate individuals on how to reduce their personal impacts!

FFF must also compete with expanding cities and the food industry resulting in land being converted and degraded at unsustainable rates, thus damaging frail ecosystems and depleted biodiversity.

FFF is also contributing to climate change, covering 25% of greenhouse gas emissions emanating from agriculture, forestry and cattle rearing. In contrast, clothing and footwear production cause only 8% of global greenhouse gases!

FFF is no doubt essential in our daily life. However in this digital world, one can easily buy in stores and malls. Yet, we disregard the benefits from trees and nature. Reforestation is the need of the hour!

Remember that the water footprint from sheep and goat (8,763 liters) is larger than that of pork (5,988 liters), or chicken (4,325 liters). But the production of one kilogram of vegetables requires just 322 liters of water. The textile and garment industry however consumes over 2,500 liters of water to produce one t-shirt!

Indian Drought Scenario! Nearly 50% of our country is currently facing drought, with at least 16% falling in the ‘exceptional’ or extreme category, according to the Indian Institute of Technology. Continuing drought will further burden the already ground water resources. Drought is making us to extract more and more water; which if not recharged could render wells defunct. Conserving water in urban homes is just a drop in the bucket compared to irrigation in the agriculture sector!

Greet Green Wall: It is a symbol of hope in the face of one of the biggest challenges of our time – deforestation! Launched in 2007 by the African Union, it aims to restore Africa's degraded landscapes, and thereby transform millions of lives in one of the poorest regions – the Sahel.

Once complete, the Wall will be a 8,000 km natural wonder stretching across the entire width of the continent. The Great Green Wall is being executed in more than 20 countries across Africa, with more than \$8 billion being mobilized.

By 2030, the ambition is to restore 100 million hectares of currently degraded land, sequester 250 million tons of carbon and create 10 million green jobs! Major progress has been made in restoring the fertility of Sahel lands. Examples include Ethiopia – 15 million hectares of degraded land restored. And Nigeria – 5 million hectares of degraded land restored, and 20,000 jobs created.

Lord Jesus' Consolation! “Why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field? They neither toil nor spin. Yet even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. If God so clothed the grass which is alive today and tomorrow thrown into the oven, will He not clothe you? (Matthew 6:28-30).

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