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# THE SECULAR CITIZEN

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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

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# Fiscal & Leadership Follies in Today's India

by Don Aguiar.

**P**M Modi evokes a deep adulation in his supporters. But it should be clear by now that whatever that adulation is, it is not on account of his leadership. His leadership has been totally missing. Covid-19 cases are rising steeply. China is occupying our territory. Relations with Nepal are in shambles. Economy is in ICU with 14 crore families without jobs and destitute. Parliament, Judiciary, all institutions are in Lockdown. The Government is paralysed. India is adrift. AND from PM Modi there is a politics of illusion and evasive silence from Covid-19 to China, economy to society.

The economic hardship faced by millions of Indians is severe. Hard won gains in poverty reduction are at risk. The Covid-19 pandemic has not peaked. If the evidence of the last few weeks is anything to go by, we are nowhere near the state of readiness which was within our capacity to achieve.

The capacities of our health care system are being severely tested now. The immediate military environment is turning adverse. No one is quite sure where the Chinese logic of showing India its true place will end. They are clearly testing India's resolve, and at the moment, the sum total of our objective is to avoid a domestic public embarrassment. Nepal's ability to dare India is a sign of our diminished power and diplomatic hubris. **China may be losing international credibility very fast. But India is also, in its own way, becoming a less attractive power because its growth story is stalling and its democracy is becoming less exemplary.**

These crises are challenging. But they are made more intractable by the fact that India has a leadership deficit at the top. India's political trag-

edy is that even the depth of the crisis cannot be acknowledged. The government fully understands that to even acknowledge any elements of the crisis would be to puncture its legitimising myth, that India is in the hands of a powerful leadership that was going to be the sole vehicle for its manifest destiny. Whereas the blunt truth is that there has almost never been a time in India's recent history when it was so bereft of leadership.

**The surest sign of this is the fact that the entire energy of government is geared towards the preservation of the legitimising myth of the leader by propaganda, diversion, repression.**

Leaders require the dissemination of ideas and achievements. But it is probably a wise maxim in any democracy that the scale of propaganda required to sustain a regime is in inverse proportion to the capacities of its leaders. This government dismisses Nehru as an elitist. But Nehru was a democrat in the respect that mattered the most. He did not doubt the intelligence of the people and the need to explain himself, and the logic of his actions, right or wrong, to them. **Modi, the man of the people, talks at people, not to them. It is always in formats where he cannot be questioned; where he is above a democratic conversation, above public reason, not part of it.** Speaking a lot is not the same thing as saying a lot. The deliberate and cumulatively evasive silences of this prime minister now far outweigh the silence of any other prime minister.

**We have an unprecedented crises in leadership. What has PM Modi reduced leadership to? Instead of confronting reality, deny it. Instead of encouraging criticism, suppress it. Instead of socially mediating differences, exacerbate them. Instead of preparing us for challenges, trap**

**it in diversions.**

In introductory macroeconomics courses the paradox of thrift popularised by John Maynard Keynes, states that if households decide to save more and consume less during a slowdown or recession (because of uncertainty about future income), then the resulting reduction in aggregate demand will aggravate the economic decline.

**Given this counterproductive behaviour by both households and private firms, the correct policy response in a slump is to increase government spending. Unfortunately, PM Modi's government is doing the opposite during the current pandemic-induced downturn – with potentially disastrous consequences.**

Such a reaction is unsurprising: the sheer stupidity of pursuing fiscal austerity during a pandemic-induced recession should be obvious. But even today, it is not apparent to PM Modi's governments.

**This denial of the paradox of thrift betrays a basic lack of understanding of macroeconomic processes.** And Modi's government is exhibit A, providing, providing an almost textbook example of how the paradox applies to public expenditure in a context of insufficient aggregate demand.

**Even before the pandemic struck, the Indian economy had been slowing significantly for several years under Modi's leadership. Falling employment and decelerating household consumption were clear evidence of weak aggregate demand.**

This inevitably affected tax revenues

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(Contd.. from p. 2)

in the fiscal year ending in March 2020. Indirect tax receipts were significantly below budget estimates, while a big corporate-tax cut midway through the year reduced revenue from direct taxes, even as private investment declined.

Modi's government responded to the persistent revenue shortfall during the year by cutting essential public expenditure. Significant real expenditure cuts in health, education, and other social services and welfare resulted in the government spending Rs 878bn less than the original budget.

Not surprisingly, this effort to contain the fiscal deficit failed. The negative multiplier effects of lower government spending added to the recessionary tendencies in the economy, further reducing indirect tax receipts and widening the budget gap further. Moreover, GDP was also lower than anticipated because of the expenditure cuts. The net result was a full-year fiscal deficit of at least 4.6% of GDP, well above the government's target of 3.4%.

India's experience is further evidence – that attempting fiscal consolidation in a downturn by reducing public expenditure is likely to backfire and produce the opposite result, because the spending cuts intensify the recession. In India's case, the rating agencies and investors whom the government was trying to placate have become

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even more critical.

**Sadly, and despite scoring this own self goal, Modi's government is now repeating its mistake in the midst of the pandemic. It is stubbornly refusing to provide much-needed fiscal stimulus, relying instead on inflated claims that are unsupported by actual spending.**

Worse, Modi's administration is passing all responsibility for dealing with the pandemic and its consequences to the respective state governments, but providing them with no additional resources to do this. And it has already declared that it will make wide-ranging expenditure cuts to compensate for the small amounts it has allocated to tackle the pandemic, so its fiscal-policy stance over the course of the year is likely to remain counterproductive.

**Such an unnecessary and avoidable approach is a recipe for multiple health and economic disasters. Governments such as Modi's remain "slaves to some defunct economist," to borrow Keynes's phrase, clinging to macroeconomic policies that will intensify economic ruin as surely as they always have.**

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## St. Camillus: Patron of Hospitals!

St. Camillus de Lellis, turned from a life of a soldier and a gambler, to a priest and founder dedicated for the caring for the sick. He is the patron saint of hospitals, physicians, nurses and sick – through the 'Order of the Ministries of the Infirm'! His feast day is celebrated on 18 July.



Members of the Order wear a red cross on their black cassocks, which Camillus said was to "frighten the devil"! In addition to the traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, members take a fourth vow of unfailing service to the sick and dying. The priests and brothers are known as "Camillians"! Their motto: "This is not our work but Jesus'!"

Two congregations were created for women, and secular institutes were established in the 20th century. St. Camillus was born in 1550 in Naples, Italy, was ordained a priest in 1584, and died on 14 July 1614. He met St. Philip Neri who would become his confessor. Through persistent hard work, Camillus became the superintendent of the hospital. Pope Pius XI named him, along with St. John of God, as one of the main co-patrons of nurses and nursing associations in 1930.

Upon receiving the Most Holy Eucharist one last time he said: "O Lord, I confess that I am the most wretched of sinners, and most undeserving of Thy favor. But save me in Thy infinite goodness. I place my hope in Thy Divine Mercy through Thy most precious blood!"

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



## Funerals during the pandemic and after

The pandemic has affected the living and the dead. There are several restrictions on funerals including the number of people who may attend the burial or cremation. As it will not be possible to attend most funerals, we need to come up with some out-of-the-box ideas of expressing our love for the departed loved ones.

A few days before the lockdown was announced, a friend in Andheri passed away. As the virus was already in the air and because of health issues I thought it would not be prudent to travel to Andheri to attend the funeral. Nevertheless, I felt bad about not attending the funeral. And then I remembered that I had a friend in Malad who was connected with St Paul's Publications Bandra. I contacted him and on making a small offering of Rs 100, he gave me a printed glossy certificate card, issued by St Paul's Perpetual Mass Association. The certificate had two blank spaces in which I entered the name of the deceased friend and my own name respectively. The certificate stated that as a sign of gratitude for the offering made to the Society of State Paul's in support of its Apostolate of the Mass Media, the Society was enlisting..... as a member.

The certificate then mentioned the spiritual benefits accruing to the enrolled member including six daily masses in perpetuity and also a plenary indulgence, with the usual conditions. I dispatched the certificate by courier to the bereaved family and felt much the better for it.

I request St Paul's Society to make available these cards in all parishes either through their associates or through parish book stalls. Alterna-

tively, bigger parishes may print their own cards and arrange for the masses to be celebrated in the mission stations.

This mode of offering a spiritual bouquet of masses will be suitable not only during the pandemic but even thereafter as it will serve as an alternative to tedious condolences after burials, which is taxing to the bereaved family as also to the mourners. This spiritual bouquet may be given even by persons who attend a funeral, in lieu of a bouquet of real flowers. In case the bereaved family is quarantined, one can simply take a picture of the card duly filled in, and send it by Whatsapp.

This spiritual bouquet is not just restricted to the dead. The bouquet of perpetual masses can be offered for the living too, for any occasion like Christenings, First Holy Communion, Confirmations, anniversaries, jubilees, special intentions, retirement, for the good health of someone and any other intention. Hopefully, this mode of offering a spiritual bouquet will be accepted as the new normal for funerals.

—Prof Robert Castellino  
Orlem Malad

## Gradual reopening of Churches

The archbishop of Goa has issued a circular permitting 'gradual reopening' of churches. However, he has exhorted the parishes to exercise utmost caution before taking any decision. The archbishop has laid down several conditions like extensive sanitisation, use of infrared thermometers, and strict adherence to state Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)an

guidelines issued by church. Permission will only be granted after an inspection by a duly constituted archdiocesan committee.

Personally, I believe that while churches may reopen, it must be only for private prayer, initially. I am convinced that if the Holy mass is celebrated, the church authorities will not be able to maintain social distancing. Our parishes in Goa have large and devout members. Moreover, it will be virtually impossible to keep out the 65+ yrs senior citizens as they are the most devout. Hence, for the time being, churches may reopen only for private prayer. If this exercise is successful, the chapel may then be moved to the church, not physically but spiritually. I mean that the Blessed Sacrament may be exposed in the church. I am not in favour of the chapel being opened, as the area is small and contained. It will be very difficult to control the spread of infection if an infected person unknowingly enters the chapel. Only thereafter, should regular services commence.

— Prof Robert Castellino  
Calangute / Mumbai

## Defer church services till the situation normalises

With Covid-19 cases accelerating in the country and spreading across states due to 'community transmission', the re-opening of churches for Eucharistic celebrations and public worship will only aggravate matters and jeopardise the lives of the faithful. Life is sacred and we cannot play with the lives of people. It also makes little sense to conduct church services by excluding those above the age of 65, those below the age of 10 and those with cough, cold and fever, as these comprise more than 75% of the parish congregation. It is also learnt that a few parish priests are diffident to shoulder additional responsibilities of conducting church services in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) mandated by

(Contd.. on p. 6)

# Health Is Wealth And Laughter Is The Best Medicine

## LAUGH OUT LOUD IN LOCKDOWN

While you are stuck at home during the lockdown you tend to cut jokes to relieve tension. As even in times of darkness, one should not forget to laugh. So, sit back, enjoy the lockdown period releasing the stress in a most sensible way.

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

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

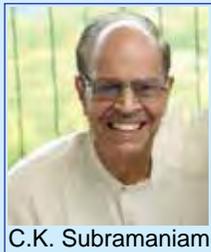
So friends, this lockout has gener-

ated fresh options for us. I would have missed them but for the bottled genie. Life is undefinable and coping is the only option we have. Who doesn't want to travel to a hill station in summer? Who doesn't want International flights to be operational soon? We are all waiting for the D-Day with baited breath when the nation will announce-Genie will be out of the bottle and Corona will take its place. Once bottled, it will be thrown in the deep sea never to be found again.

Laughter Yoga is like an aerobic exercise (cardio workout) which brings more oxygen to the body and brain which makes one feel more healthy and energetic. Laughter Yoga strengthens the immune system which not only prevents you from falling sick, but also helps to heal a variety of illnesses like hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, depression, arthritis, allergies, asthma, bronchitis, backache, fibromyalgia, migraine headaches, menstrual disorders, cancer and many others. Yoga has a special role to play in health matters and if we practice the art of yoga on a regular basis we can feel fit and fettle all the time.

Beaten with the Corona stick, we have become totally expressionless. It is in our nature to sprout and blossom; to reveal, revel and rejoice. Our gregarious instinct induces us to group together in fests and parties. All these instincts are in indefinite sabbatical. The creative spark fails to emerge from its captivity. The therapeutic value of laughter and jokes as stress management techniques may do wonders. Now, we are reduced to a single homogeneous kind of living by the rules.

Mankind will surely emerge triumphant and Science will not fail us. As of now, all we can do is a bit of sharing.



C.K. Subramaniam

(Contd.. from p. 5)

the Archdiocese and the govt. Some have even developed cold feet after a few priests tested Covid + ve. The faithful on their part, are happy to participate in the daily live-streaming of on-line masses which have gained popularity during the lockdown and are proving to be more spiritually uplifting and edifying, though not sacramentally. The bottom line should therefore read 'Defer church services till the situation normalises.

—A. F. Nazareth,  
Alto Porvorim

## National Doctor's Day

National Doctor's Day in India is celebrated on July 1 every year. The day honours doctors across the country for their relentless service throughout the year. In India, Doctor's Day is celebrated to honour the legendary Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who was also the second Chief Minister of West Bengal.

This day serves to show gratitude to all those who have selflessly aided us in our time of need and tirelessly worked for the health of their patients by commemorating the greatest representative of these ideals.

With the number of infected people on the rise every day and hospitals teeming with hundreds of people, it has never been more important to appreciate the efforts that doctors make to ensure that we sufficiently recover from whatever may be ailing us and continue to remain healthy.

Doctors are special, and this year is one where we have seen them as our real-life heroes. Doctor's Day is an opportunity to thank all the heroes in the medical fraternity for their selfless contributions. They are pulling long hours and working round the clock as the world is gripped with this pandemic.

—Jubel D'Cruz,  
Mumbai

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# Wanted Now: A John The Baptist!

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

– who brings hope. For many, these past months have been a period of hopelessness, of despair, of despondency and of dejection. There is a listlessness and a cloud of unknowing that have gripped the lives of millions over during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. John's birth was announced to a barren, aged woman Elizabeth. No one would have expected that; but with God nothing is impossible: John is the new hope!

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

– who leaps in the womb of his mother Elizabeth when she lovingly embraces her kinswoman Mary. He is the one who listens intently to the 'Magnificat' being sung: it is a prayer of praise, petition and accompaniment. He is the one who will operationalise the words, "He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty".



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

– who will bring joy and gladness to all. Many will rejoice at his birth because he will be great before the Lord. He will be fortified with the values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. He will not be divisive or exclusive but treat everyone with dignity and equity irrespective of their religion, beliefs, nationality, colour, caste, gender, ethnicity, language, customs. He will walk with the migrant workers, uplift the Dalits and take a stand for the Adivasis when their forests are being taken away from them! He will be bound and thrown into prison – on trumped up charges (like those who speak against the CAA). Totally locked down! But he does not care! The Lord's Spirit and the truth will set him free!

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

– whose name is not a stereo-type; the one who is not ensconced in a comfort zone. He is unlike those who does not want to rock the boat; the 'haji'(Yes Sir!)man who always tries to please the 'boss' – after all there will be the privileges, the powers, the positions, the perks, the promotions that will surely come if one does so. We see it happening everywhere (even with past Chief Justices!) and all the time. Here it is different: "His name is John!" wrote Zechariah! He is a rebel, a revolutionary – one who is the change, he wants to bring about!

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

– who is a voice crying in the wilderness. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, ... And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken" Words which Rev Martin Luther King Jr. reminded the world on 28 August 1963 in his memorable speech. "I have a dream...!" A great speech which we need to internalise today and make it a reality for all!

– who is a witness: a true disciple! "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light". His life was one of commitment, frugality and humility. He who is mightier than I am coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He has zeal and therefore is able to set this world on fire! A fire which enkindles other fires. One will never be able to do so if there is no fire within: the flame of love and of service!

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

– who has the transparency to demand that systemic issues are first addressed particularly the exploitation of the poor, injustice, corruption, calumny, selfishness, greed and much more! Who is able to say: "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." To the tax collectors "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." To the soldiers "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.". These are no theories but concrete, substantial acts which are geared to change the system!

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

– who can take on headlong those who peddle religion: those who weigh down ordinary people with heavy burdens -rituals and superstitions, of practices which have nothing to do with real faith. Who is able to say to the Pharisees and Sadducees (the priestly class) "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire". We need to put our own house in order first!

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

– who has the courage to take on the Herods of our time; to speak truth to power! Who is ready to stick his neck out and face the consequences! To get beheaded and that head is served on a platter to satisfy the whims and fancies, the vile tastes of a sinful generation. For him, only one thing matters: to stand up for the truth and for what is right. To work for the Constitutional and democratic rights of all – even as

(Contd.. on p. 9)

# WHETHER OUR NATION CAN AVERT A HUMANITARIAN DISASTER DUE TO RETURN OF THE POOR MIGRANT WORKERS TO THEIR VILLAGES?

by Eric D'Sa

**A**lmost all State Governments across the political spectrum have asked the Central Government to expand the scope of the national rural jobs programme as they are struggling to accommodate the millions of impoverished migrant workers who are returning to their villages from distant cities they were working in. The abominable plight of these migrant workers in recent weeks has invaded television screens and stirred the nation's conscience. A number of people have even died on the roads and railways. Alas, this is just the tip of the wave of hardships that is sweeping through the country. The demands of States include increasing the number of working days under MGNREGS and expanding its scope by including several type of labour.

The situation looks increasingly alarming in the light of a series of surveys conducted by Azim Premji University (APU) and other institutions. The APU survey, for instance, found that 74% of the respondents (thousands of poor households scattered over many States) were "consuming less food" today than before the lockdown. Another survey, conducted by Farzana Afridi and her colleagues in low-income neighbourhoods of Delhi, found that 80% of the respondents had not earned any income during the lockdown, 90% reported "financial stress", and about half were too anxious to sleep at night due to the fear that has been put into their subconscious minds by the sudden total country wide lockdown that was imposed with just 4 hours notice.

Thankfully, the Public Distribution System (PDS) is preventing the worst. The same surveys show that an overwhelming majority of poor households (86% according to the APU survey) are currently receiving food rations. The doubling of food rations for three months was a good move on the part of the central government — there is every reason to extend it beyond the end of June. The PDS, however, leaves out 500 million people, including many who live in poverty. Further, even for those who are covered, the PDS is little more than a protection against hunger. It cannot ensure adequate nutrition, let alone a decent stan-

dard of living.

To cope with the crisis, poor households urgently need a chance to earn cash beyond small mercies. Unconditional cash transfers are not easy to use for this purpose, because there is no simple way of identifying those in need, and covering everyone would amount to spreading the money very thin. Universal basic income is a nice idea, but when you do the maths, anything practical tends to reduce the "basic income" to a pittance. India as a country is not yet ready to implement even a limited basic income scheme for the poor at the bottom of the pyramid. India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

**YOU THE CITIZENS  
DECIDE:**

Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) offers an obvious alternative, at least for rural areas: employment on demand at basic wages.

The demand for MGNREGA work is stronger than ever now after the lockdown was imposed. This is not surprising as most people would prefer to do some work and earn a little money than to sit idle with empty pockets. This huge demand that has risen after the lockout was announced contrasts with the resilient indifference of rural workers towards MGNREGA in recent years, due to low wages and erratic payments. Wages are still low, and payments are still far from timely and reliable; what has changed is that for most workers today, there is nothing better on the cards. However the idea of work on demand is still alien to most rural workers, so few of them take the initiative of applying for MGNREGA work.

They fact that many in the village are illiterate and semiliterate also creates a problem for them to fill the forms. But whenever they are helped, people are eager to work. Without assistance, however, most workers would find it difficult to submit work applications. The sad truth is that except in areas where rural workers are relatively empowered, work applications (reflected in "e-muster rolls") are not generally initi-

ated by the workers themselves. Instead, they are initiated on their behalf by others, who have a stake in activating MGNREGA works. Local government officials will have to be motivated to do the needful.

This is one reason why the scale of MGNREGA works remains very low in many States in spite of a huge demand for employment. This situation calls for large-scale opening of MGNREGA works on a proactive basis. Every village needs at least one major worksite, where a good number of people can work at short notice (with adequate distancing precautions). Ideally, workers should be allowed to enrol at the worksite. Further, large-scale employment generation should continue throughout the monsoon, the hardest period of the year for poor people in large parts of rural India.

Averting a humanitarian disaster in the next few months calls for a veritable explosion of MGNREGA work. Much can be done to facilitate this: expanding the list of permissible works, hiring more gram rozgar sevaks (employment assistants), simplifying the implementation process, mobilising para-teachers for work application drives, and so on. And of course, top-down orders to expand the scale of works could work wonders. Village infrastructure could be improved during this period.

Funds are not an immediate concern since the MGNREGA budget for 2020-21 has been raised to ₹1-lakh crore or so. But more money is likely to be required to meet the tremendous demand for MGNREGA work. It is important to ensure that funds never dry up: this happened every year in the last few years, leading to huge wage arrears. MGNREGA is supposed to be a demand-driven programme with an open-ended budget; nothing in the Act authorises the government to impose a budget cap. These are some of the issues that arise in activating NREGA for crisis relief. The main thing is to provide work aplenty and pay wages at speed. This is a matter of life and death to millions in villages who have shifted from cities. The least we Citizens can do is to help the migrant worker leave the city with the required food and drinking water for the journey.

# Call for probe into hundreds of Filipino deaths in Saudi Arabia

(Contd.. from p. 7)

Bishop Ruperto Santos, head of the Philippine bishops' Commission on Migrants and Itinerant People, has called on the government to investigate the deaths of more than 350 overseas Filipino workers in Saudi Arabia who allegedly died of natural causes.

Adnan Alonto, the Philippine ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said on June 22 that there were at least 353 corpses of Filipino workers, 200 of which needed to be brought back to the Philippines.

"They died of natural causes mostly. There were only a few deaths related to coronavirus. There were a few-crime related deaths. But most of the non-Covid-related deaths are due to natural causes," the ambassador said in an interview.

Bishop Santos, however, was not convinced that most deaths were due to natural causes.

"There should be an investigation for the specific causes of death to prevent and avoid future loss of life," Bishop Santos said in a statement.

He also believed there was "something wrong with the whole picture" that deserved immediate attention by the government to safeguard Filipino workers' rights in the Middle East.

"It [the investigation] is also to correct what is wrong, to amend some mistakes and to improve the working conditions of our OFWs [overseas Filipino workers]," added the prelate.

Ambassador Alonto earlier said that Saudi Arabia had ordered that Covid-related victims be buried within 72 hours from the time the embassy or consulate was informed about the death.

Labor group MIGRANTE also called

for more transparent reporting and data gathering from the Philippine embassy in Saudi Arabia.

"The relatives of our deceased Filipino workers deserve to know the cause of death of their loved ones. The government cannot simply say they died due to natural causes. There must be medical records to support the claim," labor group spokesman Francisco Buenaventura told UCA News.

Buenaventura also spoke out against alleged discrimination suffered by Filipino medical workers in hospitals or health facilities in the Middle East.

He said he had received reports that Filipinos who tested positive for Covid-19 were not prioritized because of their religious affiliation.

"I also appeal to the government to exercise its good relations with Saudi Arabia. Please inform them that Christians and Muslims must receive the medical attention needed for our workers to recover from the virus. Our nurses are taking care of Muslim patients. May they also get the kind of medical attention they deserve," Buenaventura said.

—UCANEWS

one struggles against fascist, fundamentalist and fanatic forces!

## Wanted Now: A John the Baptist!

- who is able to understand what it is to play a prophetic role in our world today! It was said of him "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways". Later when asked "Are you the Prophet?" He has the humility to say, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" Fully aware of the role he has to play he says, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." Understanding one's prophetic role today means one has to take an unequivocal stand-one cannot indulge in the false niceties and hypocritical diplomacies of the world. The odds will be against you; one will have to struggle against the stream: hounded and harassed, not accepted even by one's own. No prophet is accepted in his own home! Yet only when one is visible and vocal one can truly be the voice crying out in the wilderness!

## Wanted NOW: A John the Baptist!

\*(Fr Cedric Prakash SJ is a human rights and peace activist/writer. Contact: cedricprakash@gmail.com)

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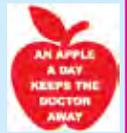


Mumbai is rich,  
Mumbai is poor,  
Mumbai is fast,  
Mumbai is slow.  
Mumbai is a little bit sweet,  
And little bit sour.  
Sometimes it is hot,  
But not too cold.  
Mornings are energetic,  
And evenings are electric.  
Afternoons are lazy,  
But nights are crazy.  
And any one you ask,  
He always says "M busy".  
Dude, life in Mumbai,  
Is not so easy...!  
There is lot of masti with  
A little bit of Maska...  
Welcome to the city that  
Can't live, without Bollywood Chaska!  
Sev Puri, Vada Pav and Bhel Puri,  
Are all Mumbai chaat.  
Relishing it with spicy chutney,  
Is no easy art.  
From popcorn to ice-cream,  
All sold on cart,  
Mumbai O Mumbai,  
You're always close to my heart!  
Where local trains usually run on time,  
And violently rushing for a seat is not a crime.  
Here 3 pm for lunch,  
And 12 am to dine,  
People face hardships,  
But still say, "it's fine!"  
From Siddhivinayak in Dadar,  
To Woodhouse Cathedral in town,  
And Iskcon in Juhu,  
To Haji Ali in Mumbai's Crown.  
Marathi, Malayalee, Christian to Gujarati,  
Everyone together celebrates Christmas and  
Diwali,  
Holi is colourful,  
And Diwali is cheerful.  
Spend some time here,  
And your life will be unforgettable.  
Billionaires to beggars,  
Are all found in this city,  
Be careful dude,  
For this place is a bit witty.  
Overall, this dream world,  
Is huge but pretty,  
Mumbai Mumbai,  
You're a wonderful city.



by Jubel D'Cruz

## An Apple A Day, Keeps The Doctor Away



An apple a day, keeps the doctor away'. This proverb means that eating an apple each day keeps you healthy --- apples are so full of vitamins and nutrients that if you eat one every day, you will not become sick and you will therefore not have to visit the doctor.

It has long been established that the apple is one of the best fruits. In fact, it is a mine of vitamins, carbohydrates, minerals and fibre.

It is estimated that a medium-sized apple has 81 calories of energy, including 21 grams of complex carbohydrates.

No doubt, apples do not contain as much vitamin C as some other fruits like guava and oranges, but they have other anti-oxidants known as phyto-chemicals. It is for this reason that it is said, "An apple a day, keeps the doctor away". One should eat at least one apple daily.

There are three main useful parts of an apple. They are its food value, fibre and flavonoids. Apples can act as a preventive object against heart diseases, strokes and cancer, since its phytonutrients prevent oxidation of the LDL that is 'bad' cholesterol. Moreover, the abundant magnesium and potassium which the apple contains are enough to ensure a healthy heart to the eater. Potassium in particular, lowers blood pressure and regulates heartbeat. Moreover, an apple contains zero fat and cholesterol.

Flavonoids present aplenty in the apple act as anti-oxidant agents. The apple must be eaten along with the skin. The largest amount of minerals and vitamins in the apple is present in the skin and it goes on decreasing as one move in the flesh towards the centre. For instance, the skin contains five times more vitamin A than the flesh (or pulp) of the apple.

According to reports, apple-eaters have better lung function than non-apple eaters. Then the pectin present in the apple aids in detoxification by supplying the galacturonic acid. This acid is required by the body to eliminate some harmful substances.

The apple is also regarded as a brain tonic. It is said that apples control age-related deterioration in mental processes. The malice acid which the apple contains helps not only the brain but also the liver and the bowels in their efficient functioning.

The apple is useful in another way too. The acid present in it acts as an antiseptic which prevents tooth decay. Hence, the apple should be chewed slowly and thoroughly in the mouth at the time of eating.

— Jubel D'Cruz

## Bodybag-gate In BMC?

After the famous coffin-gate scandal during the Kargil war, we have another in the purchase of body-bags [to wrap the bodies of Covid victims] by the BMC and suddenly there is a hue and cry over the rate at which the bags are procured. It was left to an activist to 'tell' the BMC that the same are being bought at exorbitant rates. Nobody in the civic body realized this or was it a case of looking the other way till it came to the fore? If it goes through, all concerned stand to benefit. After the matter came into the public domain, the BMC chief said S.O.P was followed. What does that really mean? Is he talking of the elaborate paper work or due diligence? How come all the suppliers quoted very high [higher than what was finalized] when they otherwise sell the same bags at half the rates. Why on earth ALL who filled the tenders quoted double or more than double the rates unless they knew the way how the BMC works. Was it a case of a cartel under BMC patronage? There are fixed rates [of bribes] and everybody who deals with the BMC, is aware of this arrangement – unwritten document. Even when it comes to corruption there is a S.O.P. No Mumbaikar will be shocked by this because we have accepted this as "that's how it is" be it road repairs or construction of flyovers or other purchases etc. Considering the budget for these types of projects one can only imagine the level of corruption in this civic body.

My personal experience can only add credence to this. In our society one vintage water meter got spoilt and had to be replaced. The old one had to be surrendered to BMC but due to oversight it was discarded and we were made to pay a fine of Rs 80,000/-. No arguments no review – their word is final. I began wondering how a small meter could cost as much. A few years later, another meter became obsolete and someone in BMC said replacement could be 'arranged' for approx Rs 38/40,000. Out of curiosity I went through Google, got the details of the dealer who supplied that brand of meters through BMC. First I spoke to the sales guy and he quoted almost similar amount. Posing as a new customer I spoke to the owner and gave him the specifications [same as BMC guy quoted] and was shocked to get the quote of Rs 16,000 plus Rs 6,000/ for testing and other formalities – total Rs 22,000/-. I made him immediately send me the quote on WhatsApp before he

## VIEWS on NEWS

changed his mind. He sent the confirmation. When I told him his man had quoted around 38K, he said it was 'BMC rate'. "You know how it is" he said and I told him that I do understand. I got the work done for Rs 22,000/- and the meter is still good.

It is therefore not surprising that the rates which were quoted in the tenders for body-bags were all in the same price band of around 6,800 or so when the same are available for half the price. The pattern is the same. Water meter costing 22K is supplied at 40K. Body-bags costing around 3k are quoted around 6,800 – double. The formula is predetermined. This gives an idea how the BMC functions and the loss the exchequer suffers – your money and my money. It means that when budgets are fixed for different types of work like road construction/repairs, flyovers, procurements etc, it gives an impression that the amounts are doubled for obvious reasons. Then they say BMC if facing cash crunch so increase property and water taxes. Doubling the cost appears to be the standard operating procedure [S.O.P.] in the BMC. To that extent the BMC Chief is right when he says that tenders were floated for procurement of body-bags and S.O.P was followed. Does the BMC Commissioner really know what is happening around him? One Commissioner had found that a particular road which was in perfect condition [on which he has driving] was identified for repairs. He ordered total review. That possibly sums up the state of affairs in the richest civic body in the country.

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### A friendless India?

A message on the social media said that India is left with only three good neighbours – Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. The message was clear. India no longer has good relations with any of its immediate neighbouring countries – Pakistan, Nepal, China and to some extent Sri Lanka whose new leadership is pro China. While ties with Pakistan have never been cordial since 1947, things got out of hand after 1971 and the subsequent infiltration of terrorists into the J and K region which continues till today almost on daily basis. While Bangladesh was very friendly, the proposed move to throw out all illegal immigrants [mostly Bangladeshis] has soured relations. Fortunately, with the change in Maldives regime, you have some support



by Marshall Sequeira

but they are not immediate neighbours yet strategically important. Nepal was very close to India till the Communists took over. Their claim over three areas appears to have been conveyed to India some time back which possibly was ignored by India and thought being a small country it cannot do anything unilaterally. Now they have done what they thought was right – signed and sealed. What will India do? The already soured ties will only become worse in the months ahead. Do we expect them to revert to the original position even if India makes a big noise? They have the backing of China and it is fair to believe they did this at China's behest. Sri Lanka with the present leadership can be expected to open a new front with some dispute over fishing rights etc.

India's ties with China have never been friendly post 1962. With increased leaning towards America and the latest formation of 'Gang of Four' – America, Japan, India and Australia [QUAD], China is furious but it is not showing. It knows the combined power of QUAD and is making every effort to destabilize India from all fronts – China, Nepal and Pakistan in a calibrated way. They can go any length including cyber warfare. The border dispute is age old and every time China stakes claim over fresh areas [justified or otherwise] which it can use as a bargaining chip later. Claim as much as possible and then in a 'conciliatory' move reduce the claim over areas which has not much strategic importance. India cannot match China's military prowess and will have to depend on QUAD support. America with its own interest in mind may not be able to do much except offer unsolicited mediation. America moving a few troops means nothing. For whatever it is worth, India with a loose QUAD strategic forum behind it, can afford to flex its muscles a bit. By the way where is Ajit Doyal the NSA? Has his role been diluted following the appointment of Bipin Rawat as Chief of Defence Staff?

# Today Super Undeclared Emergency!

**F**ew will forget that infamous night of 25/26 June 1975, when emergency was declared in India. No right-thinking Indian will 'celebrate' that event, as one marks its 45th anniversary. There will be some muted voices perhaps, who will attempt to justify its imposition. There will certainly be no lover of 'Democracy' who will count among them. Abrogating, denying or even suspending the Constitutional rights and freedoms guaranteed to the citizens of a country is a non-negotiable and not acceptable. The emergency lasted for twenty-one months up to 21 March 1977, when thankfully it was withdrawn and the rights and freedoms of citizens were restored. The period of emergency was certainly a dark chapter in the history of India. A Chapter which will never be forgotten; and of course, the country saying in unison, since that time "Never Again!"

Fast forward to **25/26 June 2020**: that's today! There is no emergency 'officially'

but the sad and tragic reality is that today India is being systematically throttled by a **Super Undeclared Emergency** – which on every parameter, far worse than the emergency of forty-five years ago! There is no doubt about that. Adding insult to injury is that an influential group in the country feels that "all is well" (provided their interests are not harmed) and the vast majority are too frightened even to open their mouths!!!

One needs to have only a cursory glance to understand the abysmal depths the country has fallen into! The grim reality is no rocket science study nor does the average, objective citizen need any artificial intelligence to comprehend it! The tragedy is compounded with the ruling regime in tandem with their cohorts (which include crony capitalists and fanatic, communal 'bhakts') are doing everything to subvert democracy, to destroy all that is precious in the Constitution and to shred the rich pluralistic fabric of the country.

Economically, the country is in shambles: the GDP is an all-time low; unem-

ployment is on an all-time high; the few rich continue to become scandalously richer whilst the poor are pushed into dehumanizing poverty; the gap between the rich and poor is widening at a criminal pace. The Government has been increasing the price of fuel (diesel, petrol and gas) almost every single day, even as the global prices of fuel have touched an all-time low. A few weeks ago, the respected US rating agency Moody's downgraded India's sovereign rating to 'Baa3', the lowest grade. It thereby joined Standard and Poor and Fitch, which had already relegated India to the bottom rung in this regard. Explaining their decision, Moody's said: "*While today's action is taken in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, it was not driven by the impact of the pandemic. Rather, the pandemic amplifies vulnerabilities in India's credit profile that were present and building prior to the shock, and which motivated the assignment of a negative outlook last year.*"



**BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH** Inflation has touched unbearable heights! Important

public sector companies (like the LIC and Air India) are on the verge of being sold out and several banks have either collapsed or about to do so! The ordinary citizen has lost faith in a banking system which they once trusted totally! The Government has thrown all caution to the winds, and immorally been utilizing the precious monetary reserves of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Demonetization brought in the 'moolah' for the ruling regime but destroyed livelihood and lives of millions. Financial scams and scandals are the order of the day! Crony capitalism rules the roost! Corruption is mainstreamed and blatant. The way the party in power tries to buy up legitimately elected lawmakers from other parties and destroy mandated State Governments is a matter of shame for the country. The Government has amassed huge amounts of money in the 'PMCare Fund' but refuses to divulge any information on the fund and be transparent about it

The social sector is in the doldrums. The education system is gradually being eroded. There is a definite pattern emerging towards the nationalisation of educa-

tion. On 5 August 2019, Articles 370 and 35A, with regard to Kashmir, were unconstitutionally abrogated; inspite of protests from all sections of society, most Kashmiris continue to live in one big prison, several months after that abrogation! 26 June marks 327 days of #KashmirCaged! The recent 'conflicts' and 'tensions' with China, Nepal and Pakistan clearly demonstrate that the country is also bereft of leadership!

Those in power and their goons, spew venom on others, through their hate speeches. Most so-called mainstream media (both print and electronic) is sold out, crawling before their political masters; freedom of speech and expression is virtually a thing of the past! Several journalists, writers and authors who have taken a stand for truth and justice (especially those who write for online portals and in social media) are at the receiving end of a vengeful system. A few days ago, well-known journalist Supriya Sharma from 'Scroll.in' was booked in connection with an article she published on 8 June, entitled 'In Varanasi village adopted by Prime Minister Modi, people went hungry during the lockdown'. Apparently one of those who were interviewed from village Domari has now changed her statement. On the other hand, those 'so-called journalists' who spew venom and spread hate, divisiveness and falsehood (the 'godi media' brigade), can literally get away with murder.

Minorities (particularly Muslims and Christians) are consistently targeted and denigrated and often even attacked. Lynching has become the 'new normal' -the victim always belongs to someone from the minority community. A 14-year old Christian boy was lynched to death in Odisha a few days ago. Churches are regularly attacked. Recently, there was a tragic death of an elephant in Kerala; a Minister of the ruling regime stoked the communal flames by mischievously and falsely situating the death in a Muslim dominated district of the State. On 24 June, the online portal 'The Print' had a telling article "Indians who made Covid 'Muslim virus' after Tablighi Jamaat are cheering Odisha's Rath Yatra", re-



(Contd.. from p. 12)

vealing how double-standards are legitimised by the ruling regime and how minorities are conveniently demonised. Recent official US Reports highlight lack of 'Freedom of Religion' in India.

Those who take a stand for human rights, justice, peace and pluralism, have false cases foisted on them, they are harassed, attacked and even killed! A recently published report by Citizen Lab and Amnesty International has evidenced how several Indian human Rights defenders were targeted in an official and coordinated malware campaign. Several human rights defenders, particularly in the Bhima- Koregaon case are languishing in over-crowded jails. Young students who have had the courage to take on the Government with regard to the anti-Constitutional 'Citizenship Amendment Act'(CAA) have been booked and sent to jail. Stalwarts of Democracy like Harsh Mander and Yogendra Yadav have false cases foisted on them and are even charge-sheeted. NGOs are systematically throttled through legislation which stifle their effective functioning.

Major independent and Constitutional authorities (like the Election Commission) of the country have been rendered impotent; they behave like caged parrots or have to bow to the whims and fancies of their political bosses. The judiciary, even the highest court of the land, has become pliant. The fact that a former Chief Justice of India could accept membership in the Rajya Sabha speaks volumes of the new low to which the judiciary has reached. Some of the recent judgements that have come out even from the apex court make one shudder at the blatant partiality and obvious miscarriage of justice. When the topmost bodies are co-opted and compromised it certainly does not augur well for the country!

Every effort is being made to change the essence and spirit of our Constitution! India has touched rock bottom, on every international evaluation/index on various economic, social and political parameters. The 'Global Hunger Index' report for 2019 places India to 102 out 117 countries surveyed. Earlier this week, a UNICEF Report which was released, has predicted a terrible future for millions of

Indian children, particularly the children of migrant workers; the report pointed out that, *"a large number of children, who previously relied on state-run lunch programmes — such as the mid-day meal scheme in India — are no longer benefiting from these government schemes. For many children in South Asia, these were the only meals they received in a day"*

A new report, prepared by a top Swedish institute studying liberal democracy, has observed that there has been a sharp *"dive in press freedom along with increasing repression of civil society in India associated with the current Hindu-nationalist regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi."* The report places India among the top 10 countries that *"have autocratized the most"*. Other countries that have been identified for rolling towards autocracy are -- Hungary, Turkey, Poland, Serbia, Brazil, Mali, Thailand, Nicaragua and Zambia. Titled 'Autocratization Surges – Resistance Grows: Democracy Report 2020', produced by the Produced by the V-Dem Institute at the University of Gothenburg, it ranks India 90th in Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) among 179 countries.

In spite of what the country is going through in every sphere, the Government in December 2019 had the insensitivity to introduce the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the National Population Register (NPR) at an all-India level and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). All three are patently discriminatory, divisive and draconian and which most believe, go against the grain and spirit of India's Constitution and democratic framework. The CAA, the NPR and the NRC are bound to have a serious and detrimental impact on the poor, the excluded, the minorities and other vulnerable groups like the Adivasis and Dalits. The exercise is also a very clear strategy toward the establishment of a 'Hindutva Rashtra'.

Because of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown, there is some respite to the nationwide protests; however, till 24 March, millions of citizens, from every walk of life, were out on the streets, in every corner of the country. They were protesting and demanding that this anti-people law and related measures, be withdrawn unconditionally and immediately. Young and old, students and their professors, social activists and other eminent citizens, the rural folk and the suave

urbans, are all protesting in an unprecedented show of strength and solidarity, never seen before in post independent India! Several powerful statements and excellent articles by leading global thinkers are already in the public domain.

Ever since the nationwide lockdown was announced three months ago, a humanitarian crisis unprecedented in India's modern history, has severely disrupted the lives of India's migrant workers. Millions of migrants have found themselves stranded without food, cash, and shelter, trying to get home. They have been subjected to violation of their fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 and often to severe police harassment on interstate borders. Many have reportedly died as a result of the lockdown, due to exhaustion en route home, starvation, suicides, police excesses, illnesses, and rail and road accidents. As per reliable sources, as many as 667 non-COVID deaths have occurred across the country. 205 of these have occurred among migrant workers en route on foot, and 114 due to starvation and financial distress. As of this moment, the government of India does not seem to have any estimates on the total number of people stranded and/or en route home across the country nationally as revealed in a recent RTI.

The working class has suffered enough during this pandemic. Besides, the Government denying them public transportation for almost two months to return home, they were also denied wages when their establishments were closed during the lockdown. The Government seemed to desperately have wanted to keep them back at their 'workplace' so that they could be available as soon as the lockdown to work once again at the mercy of their employer. What the Government did not visualize was that they would have the grit and determination to walk back home. There are the terrible pictures and footage of them walking miles back to their native place, in spite of the Government's denial of the same in the Supreme Court more than a month earlier.

In the midst of the pandemic, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has apparently given a green signal to more than forty projects without the mandatory envi-

(Contd.. on p. 14)

(Contd.. from p. 13)

ronmental clearances. Most of these projects favour their rich crony capitalist friends literally giving them a license to loot, plunder and rape the environment and much more! Our precious biodiversity and our fragile ecosystems are being destroyed.

The Government today has clearly gone on a downward spiral: doing everything they can to destroy the environment: The Western Ghats and the Aravalli Hills; the building of a dam in Dibang; the selling of coal mines to private companies and much more.

The draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2020 condemns everything that it is supposed to represent and dilutes existing environmental regulations that help protect & safeguard our environment. Once it passes (the deadline is 30 June) it will lead to irreparable damages to our vital landscapes & biodiversity and particularly on the lives and livelihood of our Adivasis, indigenous people and other forest dwellers. The draft EIA notification 2020 proposes to:

- legitimise violations by those who start projects without environment clearance,
- weaken the democratic public consultation process
- reduce the compliance requirements on the part of project proponents/promoters,
- increase the number of projects that do not require an EIA process

Thus, opening up new escape routes for environmental violators & enabling "development" at the cost of the very source of our lives.

It is clear that we live in a state of 'Super Undeclared Emergency'; in the veil of democracy, there is an obvious dictatorship ingrained in the Hindutva ideology; there is the destruction of the social fabric which is pluralistic and enshrined in the values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity; and above all, the brutal subjugation of several groups which include the minorities and the marginalised, the Dalits and the Adivasis, the excluded and other vulnerable sections of society.

A group of concerned citizens have come together under the banner of '**Indian Democracy Matters**' (email: defendtheindianconstitution@gmail.com); they stand for the revitalization of the

country's democracy and defense of the Indian Constitution. In a lengthy appeal to all citizens of the country, they say among another things:

*"25 June 2020 will mark the 45th anniversary of the infamous **Emergency** imposed on India. On this day, we call upon all Indian citizens to launch a peaceful, non-violent nationwide movement to fight against the **Super Emergency** the country is being subjected to today.*

*This can only be done through upholding the Indian Constitution, contributions to nation building, organizing resistance to all violations of fundamental rights and ensuring the dignity of poor and marginalized citizens.*

*For the last five years India, under the regime of Narendra Modi, has been going through, what many have called the **Silent or Undeclared Emergency**. However, the situation in reality is much worse than what happened almost half a century ago.*

*The Indian state is today far more powerful and dehumanized than it has ever been, fascist ideology looms large over all facets of our lives while intolerance, violence and intimidation have completely replaced national discourse. The centralization of all power in the hands of the 'Supreme Leader', and a small coterie of people around him, has become a grave threat to Indian democracy itself.*

*The total subversion of democratic institutions like judiciary and media, the persecution of political opponents and policies favouring the very rich have become the norm. The routine violation of Constitutionally guaranteed rights and autonomy of state governments pose an existential threat to the federal structure of the Indian Republic today. The dismal fate of Kashmir, following the abrogation of Article 370, is a portend of what is in store for all Indian states in the days ahead.*

*The routine violence against Muslims and Christians, Dalits and Adivasis, often through the use of brutal lynch mobs and torture by police has risen dramatically under the current government. The policies of 'one culture, one language, one country' as part of the Hindutva agenda and denial of the right of people to eat or wear what they want, have undermined the great diversity and very soul of India. If the Emergency of 1975 was bad, what Indian citizens are going through now in 2020 is a thousand times worse. And if the historic resistance to dictatorship then, resulted in a great transformation, it is the task of Indians today to take inspi-*

*ration and launch a vigorous campaign to oppose the **Super Emergency** imposed on the nation.*

*All this will call for great sacrifices and effort of course but then, no form of dictatorship is acceptable to the people of India. There is no future for the Republic of India except on the path of a truly federal, socially just and secular democracy. This is the time for all of us to pledge that **'Democracy Matters!'**. However, there is also an urgent need to go beyond merely rhetorical challenges to build organisations of the Indian people, solve immediate problems directly where possible – no matter how small the intervention. The resistance to the **Super Emergency**, if it is to succeed, has to provide constructive solutions that are in the best interests of the vast majority of our citizens. Keeping this in mind, here are some of the actions (add your own ideas to this list) that individuals and organisations can take on 25th June 2020 and beyond, as part of the great struggle to restore Indian Democracy*

- Observe a day of protest against the Super Emergency on 25 June 2020
- Demand your elected representatives to convene the Indian parliament immediately to restore democratic functioning in the country
- Call for the immediate release of all political dissidents and those locked up on false charges in Indian prisons
- Join the #YaadKaroSamvidhan campaign against the arrests of students and activists peacefully protesting the CAA, NPR and NRC policies and educate the public about these policies
- Demand minimum income guarantees for workers, farmers, the urban and rural poor
- Demand implementation of completely free healthcare for all COVID-19 patients in both public and private hospitals
- Volunteer for public health work to help overcome the COVID-19 epidemic
- Use all forms of art and media, including social media, to express your resistance
- Start Food Banks to fight hunger
- Organise or take part in blood donation camps
- Organise film festivals on the theme of democracy
- Learn about and promote India's pluralist culture and traditions of communal harmony

(Contd.. on p. 15)

(Contd.. from p. 14)

- *Begin a business and create jobs. Contribute to the creation of jobs in this period of growing unemployment.*
- *Start a movement for the ecological revival of your area*
- *Make Self Help Groups involving all communities*
- *Translate the works of Ambedkar, Periyar, Gandhi, Tagore and Bhagat Singh as also any materials on the above issues related to the **Super Emergency** and circulate them widely”*

An important statement with significant directives for immediate implementation. The statement also highlights the ‘dark times’, we are currently living in. At this juncture, one cannot help but revisit the incisive poem ‘**Pity the Nation**’, written more than twelve years ago, by the well-known American poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti (based on a similar work written earlier by the Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran):

*"Pity the nation whose people are sheep  
And whose shepherds mislead them  
Pity the nation whose leaders are liars  
Whose sages are silenced  
And whose bigots haunt the airwaves  
Pity the nation that raises not its voice  
Except to praise conquerors  
And acclaim the bully as hero  
And aims to rule the world  
With force and by torture  
Pity the nation that knows  
No other language but its own  
And no other culture but its own  
Pity the nation whose breath is money  
And sleeps the sleep of the too well fed  
Pity the nation oh pity the people  
Who allow their rights to erode  
and their freedoms to be washed away  
my country, tears of thee  
Sweet land of liberty!"*

In these times of the ‘Super Undeclared Emergency’ in India, these words ring tragically true! But will we awake?

*\*(Fr Cedric Prakash SJ is a human rights and peace activist/writer.  
Contact: cedricprakash@gmail.com)*

## Michael Angelo: Divine Sculptor And Artist

The Spirit of God gives us much to be proud of through the marvels of man's human creations imbibed by the Holy Spirit with wisdom and courage, in medicine, physics, astronomy, music, art, sculpture, poetry, inventions etc. One of the fruitful works of humanity had been created by the world famous sculptor, painter and poet, Michael Angelo. He was called Il Divino (The Divine One).

Michael had created the paintings on the walls of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, the marble sculptor of the Pieta, the Creation of man, and the statue of Moses among other well-known works.

He was the first Western artist whose biography was published during his lifetime. Michael was given the honor of being, “Supreme in not one art alone but in all three.”

Michael Angelo was born in Italy, republic of Florence on 6th March 1475. His full name at the time of birth was, Michael de Iodovic Buonarrati Simoni. From young he was a devout Catholic and grew deeper in the faith when he turned older. He once said, “Neither painting or sculpture will be able any longer to calm my soul..”

His unique gifts and inspirational ideas were discovered by Pope Julius II when he saw Michael's sculpture of David. The Holy Father, who was known as the “Warrior Pope” took the solitary and melancholy Michael under his patronage and protection.

Michael Angelo was abstemious in his private life. Once in a quiet moment, he told his young apprentice, Ascanio Condivi, “However rich I may have been I have always lived like a poor man.” He was indifferent to food and drink. He ate more out of necessity than for pleasure.

Angelo's biographer, Paolo Giovio wrote, “His nature was so rough and uncouth that his domestic habits were

incredibly squalid and deprived posterity of any pupils, who might have followed him.” A further nature of Michael was his withdrawal from the company of men.

Yet, his strength was derived from the creative work of his imagination, followed a path that led to conceptions of truth and the visions of power which seemed to explode in his sketches, paintings and sculptures. The people of his time always knew him as a divine draftsman and designer. His first outstanding work was the sculpture of David.

Pope Julius II eventually commissioned Michael to plan a tomb for him before his death. It would have to be a tomb of unprecedented scale with 47 over life size figures in a multi-storied structure free standing. The tomb took a long time to build since the Pope wanted Michael to do paintings on the walls of the Sistine Chapel.

The building of the tomb took many months, and went on and on. The people labeled it “The tragedy of the tomb”. Pope Julius was a very ambitious person, between his military campaigns to reclaim lands that once belonged to the church. Pope Julius II built Saint Peter's basilica in Rome.

The Pope was both patron and benefactor of the arts, which helped Michael Angelo receive whatever materials he needed for his on-going works. He used his sketches and drawings as an art language to form mental visuals for his projects. ‘St. Peter in chains’ and ‘the Pieta’ are strong examples of his masterpieces.

When Michael Angelo turned old he had created a treasure of immortal art works which would test the storms of time. His ‘Pietas’ reflected upon the theme of mortality. The tomb of Pope Julius II lay unfinished.



BY MELVYN BROWN

Our building security guard called me up on the intercom and said, "Sir, amma jaan ne parcel bheja hai".

Myself: Kaun amma jaan?

Security guard: Wohi amma jaan jo sabko parcel bhejtee hai.

I went down and it turned out to be a parcel from Amazon.

\*\*\*\*\*

A priest whose sermons were very long and boring announced in the church one Sunday morning that he had been transferred to another church and that it was Jesus' wish that he leave that week.

The congregation in the church got up and sang: "What a friend we have in Jesus".

— Jubel D'Cruz,  
Mumbai

\*\*\*\*\*

Son: Daddy our teacher asked me to bring kulfi to her tomorrow, without fail!!!

Father: what! ☐ kulfi...

Son: Yes Dad

Father: ☐OK.

But by the time you travel to school tomorrow it will melt. Her house is not far. I will go and give it to your teacher now.

At teacher's house:

Father: Ma'am kulfi

Teacher: Kulfi!! Why?  
What for Kulfi?!!!!

Father: My son said that you asked him to bring you kulfi tomorrow without fail.

Teacher: Oh.  
Your son can't pronounce the letter "s".

Father: What do you mean ma'am?

Teacher: I asked him to bring schoolfee.



Father: !!!

\*\*\*\*\*

### The Two Options

Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew said there were two options for me :

"Either..... I get corrupted and I put my family in the Forbes list of the richest people in the world and leave my people with nothing."

"Or.... I serve my country, my people and let my country be in the list of the best ten economies in the world."

"I chose the second option."

Indian politicians said, "there were two options for us too, but the second option was already taken by the Singapore Prime Minister". ....  
"We had No other Choice"

\*\*\*\*\*

### History & Geography Lesson

● Why did Henry VIII put skittles on his lawn? Because he had to take Anne Boleyn.

● I like Geography. You know where you are with Geography.

● A Roman walks into a bar. He holds up two fingers and says, "Five beers, please!"

● Why were the early days of history called the dark ages?

Because there were so many knights.

● Who invented fractions?

Henry the 1/4th.

● What did they do at the Boston Tea Party?

I don't know, I wasn't invited!

● What did Mason say to Dixon?

We've got to draw the line here!

● Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?

At the bottom.

● How was the Roman Empire cut in half?

With a pair of Caesars!

● Why was WW1 so quick? Because they were Russian.

● Why was WW2 so slow? Because they were Stalin.

\*\*\*\*\*

Who's the King of the classroom?

The ruler.

I'm close friends with 25 letters of the alphabet... I don't know Y.

\*\*\*\*\*

### The Helpful Wife

A male driver is pulled over by a cop and the following conversation takes place:

Man: What's the problem officer?

Cop: You were going at least 75 in a 55 zone.

Man: No sir, I was going 65.

Wife: Oh Harry. You were going 80.

(Man gives his wife a dirty look.)

Cop: I'm also going to give you a ticket for your broken tail light.

Man: Broken tail light? I didn't know about a broken tail light!

Wife: Oh Harry, you've known about that tail light for weeks.

(Man gives his wife a dirty look.)

Cop: I'm also going to give you a citation for not wearing your seat belt.

Man: Oh, I just took it off when you were walking up to the car.

Wife: Oh Harry, you never wear your seat belt.

Man: Shut your mouth, woman!

Cop: Ma'am, does your husband always talk to you this way?

Wife: No, only when he's drunk.

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COVID-19 - Crisis is always said to be a good teacher.

## The New Normal- Crisis is always said to be a good teacher

As mankind is in the thick of this Corona war, some analytical minds visualize the state of affairs after the crisis passes off, as it is bound to happen. Despite the tolls and taxes on human life and wealth, life will return to normal; or a new normal. Normalcy is assumed to be what it was before the crisis despite the imperfections and problems. We consider anything to be normal to which we are conditioned, much like the elephant chain syndrome. What could be a New Normal, if at all?

Will internationalism return? With the structural presence of UNO, plethora of multilateral and bilateral treaties in place, there is no place for a naysayer. But mere presence of a structure does not guarantee its functions. Will the nations be more protective? Will the volume of trade diminish? Will the tourist flow decline? Will international trust suffer? The answer to the above questions belongs to the future which again depends on the variables the crisis is likely to throw up. The variables could be too many and any guesstimate would invite a countervailing proposition. Nevertheless, everyone is entitled to a guess.

Within a nation, the crisis has almost standardized a living pattern. Fierce competition for rank, glory, money, or knowledge seemed to have ebbed for a while. The threat to survival has induced a feeling of live and let live; for destruction somewhere is a danger everywhere. Will it engender deeper human bonding after we have won the war? Simply stated, will it spark nobility in human spirit so that society at large will not be corrupt? Will politics be sane? Will the bureaucracy shun boredom and acquire a service culture? Will corporate governance improve? Will the regulators perform a neat job? Will the citizenry not fall prey to temptations? Is there anyone to vouch that Society, Economy, and Politics wait for better days? Internationally, will the mighty nations shed their humanistic preventions and treat other nations as equals?

Nationally and internationally, humanity is in the cusp of a challenge. It is all about readjustment of relations. Will the debate on disarmament return to table? Will there be a comprehensive dialogue on world peace? Those of us who survive the crisis have to lend their collective wisdom to achieve oneness, for it is only oneness that can endure. Leaders among the nations and messiahs of the world will hopefully answer these tough questions. Corporates across the world may just care to re-read the Trusteeship concept of Mahatma Gandhi. New normal is waiting to be defined. If inertia is allowed to prevail, history has a ruthless property of repeating itself. Crisis is always said to be a good teacher.

C.K. SUBRAMANIAM

## 'Open Window'... Free psychological support.



To cope with stress and pressures at this time of global transformation - 'Open Window' provides a safe corner for those in need of psychological support, in the current Corona pandemic scenario. Share your concerns for earliest help : WhatsApp 8692829771 or email - openwindow@yahoo.com.... The service is in public interest and is free of cost and voluntary.

The Corona Pandemic has a lot of problems. Distancing from loved ones, loneliness, job losses, uncertain futures, and many social concerns have led to psychological ramifications in the form of anxiety, depression, alcoholism and nervous breakdowns. Concerned citizens and professionals in the area of "Psychological health and Hygiene" seek to render services to those in need. Please feel free to communicate through the two contacts given above with your issues; all effort to render best help will be made. Note that your communication will be kept confidential. See poster here.

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# Aloysius College M'lore marks feast

- Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

The Feast of St Aloysius Gonzaga, Jesuit Saint and patron of the historic St. Aloysius College (SAC) of Mangaluru, was celebrated by the Jesuits with a simple, solemn mass at the antique St Aloysius College Chapel, on Sunday, 21 June. Fr Dionysius Vaz SJ, Rector of St Aloysius Institutions was the



main celebrant. Fr. Praveen Martis SJ, Principal of St Aloysius College (Autonomous) Mangaluru shared the word of God with an inspiring homily. Fr Vinod Paul SJ, Finance Officer, St Aloysius PUC; and Fr Pradeep Crasta SJ, Director of Loyola Pre-Noviciate, were concelebrants.

The Rector, Fr. Dionysius Vaz S.J gave an insightful and moving message. Extending his prayerful wishes he called for an inner and outer journey just like St Aloysius Gonzaga. The corona protocol for the gathering was followed strictly.

About St. Aloysius de Gonzaga - ( 9 March 1568 – 21 June 1591) :

An Italian aristocrat who became

a member of the Society of Jesus. While still a student at the Roman College, he died as a result of caring for the victims of a serious epidemic. In 1591, a plague broke out in Rome. The Jesuits opened a hospital for the stricken, and Aloysius volunteered to work there. After begging alms for the victims, Aloysius began working with the sick, carrying the dying from the streets into a hospital founded by the Jesuits. There he washed and fed the plague victims, preparing them as best he could to receive the sacraments.

But though he threw himself into his tasks, he privately confessed to his spiritual director, Fr. Robert Bellarmine, that his constitution was revolted by the sights and smells of the work; he had to work hard to overcome his physical repulsion. He was beatified in 1605 and canonized in 1726. Significant for our times of the Corona Pandemic.

## Historic College :

Presently one of the premier colleges of Mangaluru and India, founded in 1880 and still run by Jesuits, the college's name reflects its early history as a liberal arts college and preparatory school (now St. Aloysius College High School) in the same campus. It was affiliated to the University of Madras in 1880. Today it boasts of many disciplines and institutions imparting education from KG to PG in wide and holistic

manner. In 1955, the college was affiliated to the newly established Karnataka University and then the Mangalore University.

In 1999, the college launched its first full-fledged master's program, Master of Computer Application (MCA), followed by Master of Business Administration (MBA) in 2004. This led to the inauguration of a new campus on the outskirts of Mangaluru known as Aloysius Institute of Management and Information Technology (AIMIT) in 2008.

In 2007, the college was granted autonomous status and has been conducting its day-to-day activities under the autonomous system ever since. Current Principal of St. Aloysius College is Praveen Martis.

The motto of this college is "Lucet et Ardet" - latin for "Shine to Enkindle". The motto mainly refers to the qualities of the mind and the heart. It is the deep desire of the Alma Mater to present to the world, men and women with knowledge and creativity and hearts burning with genuine love and concern for others. thousands of students hailing from many places in India and over seas, irrespective of caste or creed, now found all over the world, have passed through the portals of this multi faceted educational institution.



## Fear Not!

# Fear Not

I recently read this account of Vijay Raturi, a hospital attendant at AIIMS, Rishikesh, who last went to his home on 2nd March. Ever since then the 28-year-old's life has been confined to his six-hour shift at the hospital's Covid-19 ward, and the isolation apartment AIIMS has put him up 3 km away. Here, he spends his time playing games on his mobile phone and checking up on current affairs. "My mother is 65 and I can't risk her health by returning home from the hospital. I'd rather not meet her as long as I work with Covid-19 patients," says Raturi. He makes daily calls with his mother who lives with his brother, who works as a driver. He admits that she does get a bit anxious and worried about his absence. "Then I tell her to fear not and explain that if I leave the hospital now, there will be a staff crunch at such a critical time. It is my duty to stay and help patients." Truly we salute all Covid -19 warriors who continuously work to keep the hospital's engine running.

As a matter of fact there is no one Raturi wants to meet right now and risk a spread of the virus. In the midst of this medical crisis, he could be exposed to a high viral load; fixing patients' beds, assisting them with medicines, accompanying them for procedures like X-rays and blood checks, wheeling patients in and out etc. With cases streaming in daily his duty hours, round the clock could be morning, day or night and seven days a week. Duty bound he fears not for his life, but for the life of others.

There is much widespread fear of the deadly Covid-19 virus. Neither priest/prophet nor politician can control or curb the underlying fear. There is a hide and seek game of a Lockdown followed by Unlock and again a Re-

lock. This Fear has turned out to be a mind-killer. We all know that sanitise, mask and social distancing has become the new SMS, and 'Stay home, stay safe' is the new mantra. Fear seems to be constantly in the air with TV channels screaming out large numbers of cases. Return from shopping the essentials, to the task of scrubbing, washing, disinfecting and wiping fruits vegetables and packets et al followed by a shower to wash off the sticky virus. Everyone is going crazy. One convinces oneself that - I must fear not, but it's overhanging.

Fear is such a basic human emotion that people today are constantly living in the grip of fear, worry, anxiety and paranoia. In scripture, God told us "fear not" because He knew that we would all wrestle with fear sooner or later. There must be a reason that the Bible tells us in various ways and in very many places to "fear not" hundreds of times. Do you know that "Fear not!" is the most repeated command in the Bible. In fact, it's been said that there are 365 "Fear nots" in the Bible - one "Fear not" for every day of the year! Amazing! Isn't it? Only the King James Version says "Fear not" or "Be not afraid" 103 times, not 365 times.

Initially everybody was overwhelmed by this global intruder, but gradually the crisis ballooned and people have got into constant frenzy, not knowing what the future holds. Screenings, quarantine, containment, hospitalisation etc has become the regular parlance. Conversations on phone indicate how fearful people are, added to their own ailments and bodily weaknesses. We have to stop getting frightened or scared; consider those who are in poverty, hunger, extremism, illiteracy the migrants and the like. Focus more on love, joy, peace positivity, trust and



by:  
**Dr Jeanette  
Pinto**

hope rather than take a doomsday approach to life. Take each moment as it comes, live the new experience, however trying it may be. Pray and invoke God's help through sacrifice, prayer, repentance and fasting.

In every crisis, there is an opportunity for spiritual growth which serves as palliative care. For Christians it is Faith, the believer's humility and readiness to receive what God has ordained for each, person, it helps relieve anxiety and stress. Hum or sing the song 'one day at a time', it can calm the spirit. Nobody can fathom the mind of God. Suffering is woven together into the holy plan of the Father and a sense of relief comes by offering it up to Jesus.

In Luke 12 :4-5 the Lord tell us "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but after that can do no more. I shall show you whom to fear. Be afraid of the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna, yes I tell you, be afraid of that one." So here and now is the time given to us to be spirit filled and grow in wisdom. We are blessed to get this time to prepare ourselves for entry into our everlasting kingdom. "Do not be afraid little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32. So let's fear not!

What we are really fearful of, is Death. Strange, deep down we all know that someday we have to die, but nobody wants to die. Rather than allowing such thoughts to grip our mind, let us learn to live in the moment and NOW, for the now is what we have and are alive to. We do not know what tomorrow holds for us but we do know WHO holds our tomorrow?

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# Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

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

**7110. MUMBAI :** Goan + East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1984), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 85 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. IT, working as a Server Engineer. Contact email :

fernandes.raymond@gmail.com

**7099. USA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1988), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 82 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., working as a Computer Engineer in USA. Contact email : willatauro@gmail.com

**7049. CANADA :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1986), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 85 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BE (Computer), working in CANADA in a Non IT Field. Seeks a working girl in Canada and holding a PR Visa. Contact email : anniedrz@gmail.com

**7079. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in

December 1962), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 67 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Inter MBA, working as a Manager. Contact email : archielewis.al@gmail.com

**7047. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1982), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., C.S. in Process, having family business. Contact email : mail.soj@gmail.com

**7068. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1983), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. HSC, working as a Customer Service. Contact email : cynthiadalmeida83@gmail.com

**7041. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1985), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 10th Std., working as a Plant Operator. Contact email : ronnydsouza075@gmail.com

**7052. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1977), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., Retail Management, working as a General Manager. Contact email :

albert.pinto2006@gmail.com

**7040. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1991), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.C.A., MBA Pursuing, working as a GIS Analyst in MNC. Contact email : ronaldpereira1210@gmail.com

**7050. LONAVLA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1985), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 75 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA., working. Contact email :

dsouza\_adrian@yahoo.co.in

**7019. MUMBAI :** TAMILIAN Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1981), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as

a Customer Services. Contact email : dasvinod1@gmail.com

**7045. CANADA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee, (Born in September 1985), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., Hotel Management, having permanent Resident. Contact email : bmathias88@gmail.com

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

**7008. USA :** Separated Roman Catholic, (Born in October 1983), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MD, MS, working as a Senior Engineer. Contact email : jesumary58@yahoo.com

**7004. MUMBAI :** TAMILIAN Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 90 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. (Inst.) MBA, working as a Sales Engineer. Contact email : amarian1988@gmail.com OR 9967657806

**6994. AUSTRALIA :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic divorcee, (Born in April 1959), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Dip. ITI Course, working as a Technician. Contact email : ninearies21@gmail.com

**6996. MUMBAI :** TAMILIAN Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1990), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BMS., M.Com., MBA in Marketing, working for L & T Infotech. Contact email : rodnidavid@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 a 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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**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

**7143. MUMBAI :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1987), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A. (Literature) working as a Sales & Marketing Manager. Contact email :

irisedsouza@gmail.com

**7123. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1987), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., CS., M.Sc., working as a Sr. Manager Programmer. Contact email :

r.douza.co@gmail.com

**7131. DUBAI :** Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1990), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Tan Complexion, Edn. T.Y. B.Com., working as a Manager. Contact email :

rebecca.raj06@gmail.com

**7122. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1993), Ht. 5', Wt. 45 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. IT., working as a Tech Support Engineer. Contact email :

lynnettelewis67@gmail.com

**7128. MUMBAI :** Affluent business family R.C. East Indian Spinster, (Born in 12-04-1988), Ht. 5' 2", very beautiful and pretty. Edn. MS General Surgeon, Doctor by profession. Contact email : drvd2019@gmail.com

**7121. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1988), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 55 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Bachelor of Physiotherapist, working as a Physiotherapist. Contact email :

ryanbarboza806@gmail.com

**7120. CANADA :** Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1986), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 51 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., University of Toronto, working as a Customer Support for Canada Government. Contact email : joafaria@yahoo.ca

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

mail2tinafernandes@gmail.com

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

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

loretta6479@gmail.com

**7082. MUMBAI :** Tamilian Roman catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1985), Ht. 5', Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 12th std., working as a sales girl in Big Store. Contact email : susanmoses1385@gmail.com

**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

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

Complexion, Edn. M.Com + Import Export Certificate Course, working as a Billing Assistant in Well known Hospital. Contact email : perpetuadiaz7@gmail.com

**7093. MUMBAI :** Gujarati Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1982), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working for Private Bank. Contact email : annie.waghela@gmail.com

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

celinefernandes2014@gmail.com

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

**7086. MUMBAI :** Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1991), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 12th + Hotel Management Graduateion. working as a Developer Manager in Insurance Company. Contact email : samanireena05@gmail.com

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

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# AN OPEN LETTER

Abp Giambattista Diquattro,  
Papal Nuncio to India  
Apostolic Nunciature  
50C Niti Marg, Chanakyapuri  
New Delhi – 110021  
(nuntius@apostolicnunciatureindia.com)

24th June 2020

Respected Nuncioji,

Peace of Christ! Permit me to introduce myself as the former National President of the All India Catholic Union, former Director of the International Council of Catholic Men (Unum Omnes) and presently the Convenor of the Indian Catholic Forum and advisor to Catholic Church Reform International. With both anguish and hope I write to you regarding the unfortunate developments in Mysuru diocese, headed by Bp K.A. William.

Dr Gerry Pais MD, a devout 80 year old doctor from Mysuru itself, had purportedly written to you on 16/5/2019, 16/6/2019, 27/9/2019 and 27/2/2020, regarding the alleged misdeeds of K.A. William, hereinafter referred to as William. Dr Pais had also written to Cardinal Oswald Gracias, President of the CBCI, on 16/5/2019, 9/6/2019 and 23/12/2019. He has further written to Abp Peter Machado of Bangalore, the Metropolitan of the Karnataka regional bishops, on 23/3/2020 and 28/5/2020, met him in person and had a telephonic conversation with him on 23/4/2020.

On the other hand Justice Michael Saldanha, retired High Court Judge, has inter alia entered into the following correspondence/ communications: 24/5/2020 letter to William and his advocate Gerald Castellino; 4/6/2020 letter to Rev Alfred John Mendonca, a priest of the diocese, and on the same day to William, Abp Machado and Cardinal Gracias; 8/6/2020 another letter to the above three; and on 9/6/2020, 12/6/2020, 15/6/2020 and 16/6/2020 to William and Abp Machado.

This sordid matter has also found extensive coverage in both the secular

and Catholic media. In the light of the above I assume that you are adequately informed about the averments and allegations against William. Nevertheless, in order to put things in their correct perspective, a recap of major events is called for.

1. William is allegedly involved in the brutal killings of two of his priests – Rev Rafael Colaco on 28/11/2019 and Rev William Albuquerque on 3/3/2020. It is alleged that William uses various methods to influence the local police, including entertaining them every Saturday at the Southern Star Hotel.

2. The police have therefore allegedly been used to coerce or influence witnesses. The circumstances surrounding the death of Albuquerque are frightening. Two days prior to his death he was summoned for interrogation to the office of the Mysuru Police Commissioner. What transpired there is not immediately known. When he died two days later his body was taken to a church run hospital and his death was declared as being natural due to cardiac arrest. Subsequently the body was sent for post mortem and the priest's relatives were coerced into taking his body for burial in his native place Perar in Mangaluru. The story doesn't end there. Subsequently Rev Alfred John Mendonca, another diocesan priest, was purportedly despatched to Perar on 1/6/2020 with an alleged sum of Rupees Twenty Lakhs to purchase the silence of Albuquerque's relatives. When they declined the money they were asked to sign a declaration, previously prepared in English, absolving William of all culpability for the death.

3. In like manner it is alleged that another diocesan priest, Rev Arogya Swami was called on 7/6/2020 to make a confessional statement before the police about Albuquerque's death.

4. Another serious allegation against William is that he has two mistresses, and had two children by them. One of them is allegedly named Sunitha. I have in my possession her photograph, as also that of the two children. However, since they are minors it is not appropriate to reveal their identity.

One may here draw your kind attention to the provisions of Canon 277 (1&2) "Clerics are obliged to observe perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, and are therefore bound to celibacy ... Clerics are to behave with due prudence in relation to persons whose company can be a danger to their obligation of preserving continence or can lead to scandal of the faithful". William's alleged acts are nothing short of scandalous.

5. Another allegation is that William and a priest of his diocese, Leslie Moraes, were involved in sexually molesting and kidnapping an employee, a married woman named Sahana. Last year this woman had released a video revealing all that had transpired. That video went viral. Dr Pais states that this woman's life was in danger so he had taken her to a shelter home, Vimochana, in Bangaluru. She had recorded her kidnapping before a human rights lawyer in Mumbai. However, under pressure from William she retracted her earlier confessional statement at a press conference organized and purportedly funded by William. It is pertinent to here record that the Supreme Court guidelines, commonly known as the Vikasha guidelines, for sexual harassment in the work place, do not seem to have been followed in this case under reference. This retraction tied the hands of many concerned persons, including the undersigned. Justice Saldanha further alleges that Rupees Twelve Crores were paid to the woman to secure her retraction.

6. There are also allegations of financial misappropriation of public funds. Justice Saldanha alleges that after the floods in the Coorg area of the diocese in 2018, William organized various fund raising programmes under the banner of "Coorg Disaster Relief Fund". The campaign extended to Mangaluru and Bangaluru, where Sonu Nigam, a Bollywood star, performed before a crowd of one lakh people. The total collection was Rupees Forty Nine point Five Crores according to Saldanha; though the diocese issued a clarification that it was Eleven Crores. Saldanha was humble enough to admit that his presumptive figure may have been wrong, but it didn't detract from

the disappearance of the collection that did not benefit the flood victims in a manner commensurate with the collection.

7. Dr Pais further alleges that another elderly priest, Rev Becket D'souza (71) is now being harassed by William because the latter believes that D'souza is the one who co-ordinated the complaint against him, signed by 37 priests of the diocese.

8. Dr Pais further states that William is on record boasting that he has had people beaten up 25 times.

9. Justice Saldanha alleges that William is always accompanied by two henchmen named Anthony Dias and Alexander, who wears a khaki uniform.

The Indian Catholic Forum (ICF) was formed for the reform and renewal of the Catholic Church in India according to the teachings of Vatican II. A few quotes will put this letter in perspective. "Every layman should openly reveal to them (hierarchy) his needs and desires with that freedom and confidence which befits a son of God and a brother in Christ. An individual layman, by reason of knowledge, competence, or outstanding ability which he may enjoy, is permitted and sometimes even obliged to express his opinions on things which concern the good of the church" (LG No 37). I believe that both Dr Pais and Justice Saldanha are therefore well within their ecclesiastical rights and duties to flag this issue. Since the matter "concerns the good of the church" the ICF also cannot remain a mute spectator.

The "Decree on the Bishops Pastoral office in the Church" makes some pertinent observations. A bishop "should be characterised by due prudence with that trustfulness which fosters friendship and thus is naturally disposed to bring about a union of minds" (CD No 13). "A bishop should stand in the midst of his people as one who serves. Let him be a good shepherd who knows his sheep and whose sheep know him" (CD No 16). Pope Francis has gone a step further in affirming that pastors should have the smell of the sheep. Unfortunately, the sad tale of events in Mysuru seems to have the rotten stink

of blood, gore, vengeance and subterfuge. No conscientious Catholic can remain a silent spectator to the same.

I may here point out that a similar story of kidnapping, diversion of funds, having a mistress and child, using police force etc had transpired with Bp Gallela Prasad of Kadapa diocese two years ago. The ICF was then in the forefront to highlight the case; and your predecessor in office removed the offending prelate.

Permit me to also draw your kind attention to the very explicit provisions of Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter "Vos Estis Lux Mundi" that came into effect on 1/6/2019, regarding matters of sexual abuse by clerics. It covers "forcing someone, by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts" (No 1ai). It covers "actions or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid civil investigations" (1b). Vulnerable persons include those that are deprived of personal liberty or unable to resist the offence (1.2b). Such offences are to be immediately reported (3.1). Any person may submit a report (3.2). The report may be sent through the Pontifical Representative (3.3). The report shall include as many particulars as possible, such as indications of time and place (3.4). "Prejudice, retaliation or discrimination as a consequence of having submitted a report, is prohibited" (4.2).

The investigation is to be undertaken by the Metropolitan, in this case Abp Machado of Bangaluru, who is well acquainted with the facts of the case. However, if there is a conflict of interest (as seems to be in the instant case) then the Metropolitan is obliged to recuse himself from such investigations (12.6). Co-operation of the laity and qualified persons is recommended (13.1). The investigation is to be completed within ninety days (14.1). Pope Francis' letter and its provisions seem to have been observed in the breach.

Bearing in mind the similarities in the cases you already have a precedent to go by. We therefore humbly request you to take immediate action in the matter and remove William from office and the territorial jurisdiction of Mysuru diocese.

A canonical enquiry should be set up at the earliest and have competent lay persons, woman's activists, experts in criminal law and finance, as provided for in Pope Francis' letter; before more irreparable damage is caused to the Catholic Church in India.

I may here mention that I am presently doing research in church history, including in India. The country's decadal population growth rate is 25%. However, in the decade 2003 - 2013, 59 out of 166 dioceses (36%) have recorded negative growth. They have shrunk despite the church's tall claims and huge institutions. The number of clergy, both diocesan and religious, has also shrunk from 22,974 in 1998 to 22,451 in 2013. In Europe we know that several convents and monasteries have been converted into "Bed & Breakfast" home stays under the website "Monastery Stays". In India too, some convents meant for aspirants have now been converted into working girls hostels.

Our Lord Jesus asked us to read the signs of the times (Mat 16:30). Nebuchadnezzar was also warned to read the writing on the wall (cf Dan 5:5ff). The portents are ominous. Hence your firm and immediate action is solicited, before it is too late. Considering the gravity of the matter a copy of this Open Letter is being marked to Cardinal Gracias, CBCI President, and personal advisor to Pope Francis. Copies are also being marked to Dr Pais, Justice Saldanha, the National President of the All India Catholic Union, and the Catholic press, for information and appropriate action.

This letter is written without prejudice to anyone, and based on information provided from credible sources.

Respectfully and hopefully,

**chhotebhai**

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