

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

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MASK
COVID-19
#STAY
HOME
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The Lockdown - A Time To Review, Revive, Re-Learn & Re-Invent!

Apparently, the unending lockdown seems headed for a conclusion—or does it really!?! What we each will remember the lockdown for once it is finally over and done with will depend on various factors, not least on ourselves, for the simple reason that we're each having varying experiences! COVID-19 apart, for some it has been a period of trauma with jobs gone for a toss overnight and little or no means of sustenance in hand, to others a period of forced rest, given the kind of hectic schedule maintained through the year.

Time for serious change...

To some the lockdown has been an extended period of 'spring cleaning', change ruling the roost! To others, a time to catch up with pending matters (including those much-needed 40 odd winks!) and to yet others an opportunity to make up for the lack of quality family time, not excluding prayer time. To those of us involved in the media apostolate, the best exercise will have been to re-examine on the one hand the kind of involvement in evidence on our part vis-à-vis the media and, on the other, **to check on our proficiency at the unavoidable use of language as a medium of effective communication, which to some might be English, to several others some regional language.**

To the serious journalist, mastery over a given language is something indispensable in that it comes with constant updating and upgrading, the foundation for such an attitude being a keen sense of openness and a willingness to leave no stone unturned, even if that means going the proverbial extra mile in a bid to improve one's prowess. This of course would make no sense to those who imagine and



even have no qualms about claiming vociferously that **it is enough to have a "workable knowledge of English"**, whatever that means! Indeed, such an attitude as this can never bring the serious Catholic writer—be it priest, religious or lay—any sense of fulfilment in the performance of one's role other than in seeing one's name in print. It follows then that if one considers the way one reads and understands as being of no consequence, or the way one speaks and writes as of no importance, one ought not to be involved in the media per se!



by Ladislaus L D'Souza

A Test of Faith

To the practising believer, the lockdown has proved to be an eye-opener in more ways than one what with places of worship all shut and thus beyond reach. 'Online' has suddenly become the new buzzword and password for either dropping or observing the Sunday obligation, not to mention the inactivity on the front of the generally most hectic liturgical week in the calendar, priests themselves becoming invisible and gamely coming to be classified under 'non-essential services'. Whilst to some all this came, the very thought of waking up on time to attend Mass, be it on a weekday or a Sunday, anathema to them, to several others, not being able to receive the Eucharistic Lord on Sunday and during Holy Week proving to be a terrible disappointment. Worsening the trauma of such faith-filled individuals is the now undue delay in the opening of our churches, Cardinal Oswald Gracias, as Archbishop of the most populous

multi-rite diocese in the country and President of the CBCI cautioning against the reopening of churches without proper Special Operating Procedures (SOP) in place.

Many are of the opinion that there need be no further delay. We could well be quick with putting the bare necessary protocols in place and starting off immediately and then observing closely the reaction of people and the trend of participation in church services, constantly reviewing the situation and the measures adopted. Further, even as reports and images of the lockdown and social distancing adopted at the times of epidemics in centuries past keep circulating, **we need to be more innovative in terms of adopting safety measures more suited to the modern day.** Indeed, if, considering that we are in the computer-internet-robot age with 21st century technology on all fronts at our fingertips, we stick to observing primitive procedures, what progress can we claim to have made?

Justice is to LIVE for

Strangely, while the pandemic brought to the fore the godly side of human beings, the inhuman side of humanity also manifested itself ever so harshly in the double murder of the father-son duo, Jayaraj and Fenix in Tuticorin, Tamilnadu. The speed with which the county and the world were made aware of the **Police brutality that came into play for a crime that wasn't ever committed**, viz, allegedly keeping their shop open beyond the closing hour of 8 pm is significant, even more gratifying being the moves made by certain social activists especially Catholic Priest-Advocates to initiate due legal proceedings.

As Christians, our first priority is (Contd.. on p. 4)

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during the
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(Contd.. from p. 2)

supposed to be FORGIVENESS as has been manifested in so many instances. Nevertheless, the Christian conscience really needs to perceive how justice done to the deceased and to the family of the victim cannot be genuine unless it includes reformatory measures that can astutely prove duly deterrent to all those who brazenly dare to take the law into their own hands. We must then propose and even unyieldingly demand identical treatment of those guilty of the heinous crime the details of which are too crude to be repeated, be it verbally or in writing. The difference in the penalty should merely be in the items used in the sordid torture of the victims, the lathi and other 'hard objects' replaced with electrically operated metal rods and electrodes (a la methods adopted by Kim Jong-un, the supreme ruler of North Korea), essentially proving that punishment and forgiveness can indeed go together.

Social distancing – the 'haloo-haloo, haloo-haloo' approach

Amongst the latest news on the COVID-19 relief issue are two stipulations of specific interest in relation to the unlocking of the lockdown: 1)

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advice of the Chief Minister of Maharashtra [CM] to Ganapati mandals to **keep their celebrations at a low key this year** and to thus set an example for the world to emulate; and 2) one is not allowed to travel beyond 2 kilometres from home, except to or from one's workplace, "or face the consequences". Firstly, with no guidelines for the Ganapati mandals yet in place, how low the key to Ganesh Chaturthi 2020 will be is anybody's guess! As for stipulation 2, all one would like to ask is: 'is Maharashtra becoming a police state or what!'

It is strange that while the government has come up with guidelines for the opening and regular functioning of churches and other places of worship [no handshakes and kissing of statues, no sprinkling of holy water...], it merely advises mandals to keep their celebrations low-key! The CM gamely fosters the adoption of the 'haloo-haloo, haloo-haloo' (slowly-slowly) approach in everything. And so, while churches continue to be in lockdown mode ostensibly until SOP are in place, mandals and mandaps appear to have been 'lavkarach' (swiftly) given blanket permission to proliferate. In the first place, on what grounds are the *formation of mandals and the setting up of sarvajanic Ganesh mandaps* being permitted this year at all? **With droves of so-called devotees going mandap hopping for prasad during the 10-day festival and for food on the final immersion day, not to mention pollution of every hue generally resulting annually from the celebration of the Ganesh festival, how dare the Government overlook the distinct possibility of the spread of the deadly virus!**

Nailing the lie

Amazingly, the CM seems to dwell at length on the *mandal-mandap* nonsense, gloating over how certain groups approached him to apprise him of their decision not to host the *dahi-handi* pyramids this year and about how he has convinced mandals to have their Ganesh idols no taller than 4 feet in height (girth and weight

obviously unlimited, though!) but makes no mention of the reopening of educational institutions. Could it be that the CM believes that schools and colleges, students and teachers carry a greater risk of spreading COVID-19 than the soon-to-begin Ganesha celebrations, mandals, mandaps et al?

Either the CM believes that the virus also adopts his 'haloo-haloo, haloo-haloo' approach advice, or he delights in actually trying to pull a fast one on the minorities by way of an Ostrich-like burial of its head in the sand. In all fairness, it must be emphasized that if Muslims could be made to forfeit the celebration of their most significant Id and Christians their celebration of Holy Week, shouldn't the CM have unconditionally dropped the Ganesha celebrations this year?

Partiality & Favouritism, the name of the game

Unfair, Mister CM! Unfair!! Your actions reek of the stench of partiality no less! Calling for meetings of municipal and police personnel after dishing out lame advice to the 'mandals' is an act of favouritism that is not the done thing in the given situation – that exercise should have been indulged in before giving out such advice! As for setting an example of restraint to the world in terms of celebrating festivals – just forget it! Countries the world over will be waiting to offer you better examples and saner advice, Mister CM! Instead, you'd do well to keep in mind and understand the implications of the fact that **Mumbai, the Capital of Maharashtra, though the financial capital of the country, also presently leads the country in the unchecked spread of COVID-19.**

In conclusion, Mr CM, if I may ask, with your 'haloo-haloo, haloo-haloo' strategy, and preoccupied as you are with the *mandal-mandap* issue, have you really a vision for restoring the state to the glory enshrined in its very name, **MAHA-RASHTRA**, please?



The Indo-China Border conflict

It is unfortunate that in the midst of this unprecedented worldwide coronavirus pandemic, we are witnessing conflicts on the Indo-China border. We all need to be directing our energies towards combatting this pandemic. One hopes that this border issue would be sorted out amicably and lasting peace is achieved.

Today, all our neighbours seem to have turned hostile, even a small country like Nepal is challenging our nation. Our relationship with our neighbours seems to be at its lowest ebb. Is the leadership in our country found to be wanting, one tends to ask? Are our leaders sending out the wrong message to the world? They need to guard themselves against making statements without giving a thought to what they are saying. The recent statement from the prime minister for instance, with regard to the border issue with China, which invited a retort from the former prime minister Mr. Manmohan Singh. He advised the prime minister to be "mindful of the implications of his words and declarations on our nation's security, as also strategic and territorial interests." Yes, our statements should not be subject to misinterpretation by the world. Words of wisdom, coming from a man who rarely speaks, a man of few words.

However, without going into political debate, I would like to view this advice from Mr. Manmohan Singh, in a different perspective. 'Mind your words.....', he says, how true! I think this piece of advice should be directed towards each one of us. Yes, we need to be discreet in what we say while relating with others in the family,

in our neighborhood, in society, because our words can be misinterpreted, our words can make or mar somebody's fair image. Rather, it would be advisable to remain silent. We need to draw inspiration from his words. At this moment, the following quote comes to mind, "my silence speaks a thousand words!"

—Melville X. D'Souza
Orlem, Malad West

Criminals in Khaki

The custodial deaths of father and son duo P. Jeyaraj and Bennix is the latest example of how police brutality results in the loss of lives. This clearly states that some police are no more for the protection of the people. They are worse than goons. Does the Government support them for all such nuisances? It's the starting of a cold war and I hope people will stand against these criminals in khaki and the law teach them a lesson.

—Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai

A Good Move

The move by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ban 59 Chinese apps, including TikTok, UC Browser and ShareIt is a welcome move. This will encourage children to divert their attention to more productive activities, instead of wasting time on such apps.

—Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai

We are living in a

changed world

Most religions teach that there is a life beyond this worldly existence and that life after death has not ended but only changed. Today however a totally different picture has emerged after the killer virus made its invisible presence felt through a pandemic that is taking a toll of thousands of lives and infecting millions the world over. Life as a result has changed drastically, without even dying. So, the question that arises is how long are we going to live with masks on and social distancing, state- lockdowns and containment zones, hand washing and sanitising, crashed markets and rising prices, working from home and losing one's job. The list is endless. Scientists have yet to ascertain whether the virus is a living organism or a lifeless protein molecule. Whether the virus originated in the Chinese laboratory or Chinese animal market place where dogs, cats, rats, and snakes are sold as delicacies. How asymptomatic persons test Covid -19 positive and how an ordinary sneeze throws up 40,000 droplets that infect people around. Politicians on the other hand are still confused whether the viral spread is local or community transmission. It is a pity that we have developed and stockpiled weapons of mass destruction but unable to combat a tiny microscopic virus with a vaccine. So, when will all this end or are we witnessing ominous signs of the impending prophesied apocalypse?.

—A. F. Nazareth
- Alto Porvorim

Online education leading to cyber-bullying and black-mailing

Coronavirus has affected each and every person directly or indirectly. Students who have been wrecked throughout these isolated months are

(Contd.. on p. 7)

Goans Smitten With 'Optimum Bias'



From a worthy political successor to the quixotic campaigner leading the state's charge against the dread of the coronavirus, the CM of late has been a mixed bag of contradictions whenever he has ventured forth to allay public fears over the 'corona situation' in Goa.

True to his signature style; after a period of denial, the CM who the other day admitted that the spread of the virus in the state was 'nothing but' community transmission, quickly retracted his statement to once again reaffirm that it is not community transmission.

He clarifies that 'the virus is not in the air' and it has spread in Goa from 'one person to another - now whatever that means!



by Pachu Menon

Ironically though, this 'transition' of the disease has been rather rapid considering that within a span of three weeks it has spread across the state, thanks to 'carriers' who were in some way or the other associated with the hotspot at Mangor Hill or the Urban Health Centre in Vasco which is stated to be a single source for a bulk of cases detected in the state.

Reports about the state depending excessively and exclusively on fines collected by the police department for traffic infringements and violations of the pandemic guidelines by members of the public to fill its coffers speak for the pitiful fiscal conditions that the state has slipped into.

With the slew of measures announced by the government to give relief to stakeholders of trade and industries and other establishments involved in economic activities and also to the public to recover from the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is ob-

vious that the state is rushing headlong into the next phase of unlocking.

Amidst this chaos however, the CM has been an embodiment of resoluteness advising Goans not to panic and that 'there is no need to get scared'.

And the teeming crowds of locals have complimented his 'cheerful mood' by rejoicing at the easing of restrictions by crowding the streets and flocking the market places as if they have just come out of a forced holiday!

The other day there was a post in the social media which ought to have created ripples with its genuineness and the matter-of-fact approach to the present scenario in the state relating to the pandemic.

The post made a mention about something called 'Optimum Bias' which make individuals disregard the reality of an overall situation because they feel that they are excluded from the potential negative effects.

The pandemic has so far been throwing up statistics of deaths which are indifferent to our psyche. It is only when tragedy strikes closer to home that one realizes the folly of this belief.

Local to community transmission has just started to flare up. We are as much in a state of emergency as we were when the nation went into a lockdown mode to contain the spread of the virus.

The magic mantra continues to be the same even today – STAY HOME STAY SAFE!

But with the state's Tourism Minister insisting that 'the show must go on' the

government has decided to reopen its doors for domestic tourists.

On the face of such illogical decisions, the forthcoming monsoon Assembly session would have provided the Opposition enough opportunities to corner the government for its irrational approach to a number of issues which has weakened the state's resolve to meet the coronavirus challenge head-on.

Even so, reduced to a mere formality with the session being curtailed to just one sitting due to the COVID-19 crisis, there is not much hope of anything being achieved at all.

The virus is virtually on a gallop in the state! The rapidity of infections has various localities across Goa earning the containment tag with an alarming regularity.

Moreover, with these areas being cordoned off, people living within the confines of the containment zones are finding it difficult to get a regular supply of their daily provisions and other essentials.

In the absence of a system that could cater to their immediate needs, residents are bound to have a natural resentment towards their wards being declared as containment zones.

But then when these modalities become the best possible way to check the spread of the disease, the administration cannot but take a stern stand on the matter!

When Pinarayi Vijayan and his government in Kerala have earned in-



(Contd.. from p. 6)

ternational praise for their efficient and sensitive response to the crisis, how is it that Goa has faltered so very badly after having earned the distinction of being a 'Green Zone' when the whole country was in the throes of the COVID-19 spread!

So far it was apparent that Goa's energetic Health Minister and the self-contradicting CM were the visible faces of the state's fight against coronavirus!

However, it is quite surprising to have the 'expectation quotient' of the people vis-à-vis their legislators in Goa almost always tottering at the bare minimal level.

Barring the Opposition leader and the very vocal MLA from Curtorim who were not only taking up COVID-related matters in their constituencies with the CM, but were also seen exhibiting the humane side of their persona on a number of occasions; Goa has had to contend with quite a few legislators who were over-enthusiastic in finding faults with the state's highly-publicized 'resistance mechanism' to keep the viral effects at bay.

Rather than corner the government over its lapses and engage in blame-games, it would be appreciable to have the ruling and the Opposition coming together to devise ways and means to contain the coronavirus surge in the state.

-THE END-

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struggling hard to cope up with this patience demanding situation. Since online education system has made students to go through mental stress regarding their career being at stake, it has also generated some severe issues within the online education system like harassment and cyber security.

Many of the students especially girls, have been harassed and blackmailed through online sessions. But the issue becomes a suffering when the administration of universities put a deaf ear to this very serious problem. There should be a proper check and balance of attendants of the classes and the administration should record information of online classes and its participants. Otherwise the sufferer would only be the student who has to be at risk just to save his/her semester.

—Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai

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Prop. B. D'Souza

The Good, Bad, Ugly & Worst!

July 1st is "Doctor's Day"! All doctors and medical staff are reminded of the 'Hippocrates Oath'- "I will use my treatment to help the sick according to the best of my ability and judgment, but never with a view to injury or wrong-doing ... Similarly I will not give a woman a pessary to cause abortion."

Now the Mumbai Mirror a supplement of the TOI on 01 July 2020 revealed on page 06 – "India accounts for 4.6 crore of world's 'missing females'!" – report submitted by the United Nations Population Fund; and which attributed the figures to the practice of Gender Based Sex Selection!

Good: There has been a significant decline in 'child marriages' over the last decade, from 47% in 2005-06 to 27% in 2015-16 in India! // Bad: 4.6 lakh girls were 'missing at birth' each year in India between 2013 and 2017! // Ugly: Two countries, China (50%) and India (40%), account for about 90% of females missing at birth annually worldwide!

Worst: On 25 June 2020, the Vatican released a 300-page book, New Directory of Catechesis, which contained new sections on 'Bioethics'! The president of the National Catholic Bioethics Center on 27 June stated, "that in the wake of 'gene experiments gone wrong', the Church must stand firm against the unborn being 'sacrificed' on the altar of scientific research! Edited human embryos contained significant unintended edits that could lead to birth defects or other medical issues later in life. The embryos were also subsequently destroyed! We cannot do this to our youngest brothers and sisters!"

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

WHETHER HEALTH SERVICES CAN BE LEFT TO THE PRIVATE MEDICAL HOSPITALS AND SERVICES IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY LIKE INDIA?

by Eric D'Sa

A popular English news channel in India alleged recently that several private hospitals in the country were “exposed” by a “sting operation” to be levying fees in excess when Covid 19 patients went to them for care. It is not clear why a “sting operation” was necessary; the high cost of medical care in the top hospitals of the country is well known to the ordinary Citizen. Anyone who has had a major surgery or received intensive care in any of the private hospitals can testify to that. The question now is whether such exorbitant rates are justified during a pandemic such as the one we are in the midst of, or indeed, ever.

This question is answered if we ask a counter question; why do we have so many private hospitals in a poor country such as India? We have as per recent statistics more hospital beds in the private sector than in the public sector. It is estimated that there are 19 lakh hospital beds, 95,000 ICU beds and 48,000 ventilators in India. Most of these are concentrated in seven States, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana and West Bengal. Except for Tamil Nadu, Delhi and West Bengal, there are far more beds and ventilators in the private sector than in the public, according to the Center For Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy.

The reason for this abundance of private health care is obviously the lack of adequate public health care. This situation has developed due to two main reasons. Since Independence, India has, quite rightly, focused attention on the larger picture. The priority in a developing country would be the provision of primary care at the peripheral level, preventive measures, immunisation, maternity and paediatric care as well as dealing with common infections such as tuberculosis. We have done this well, resulting in impressive improvements in many health-care indices in the last few decades. There is still more to be done in the poorer states. They have an example in what the state of Kerala has achieved.

However, not enough hospital beds and specialised facilities were provided by the public sector during this long period of time. At the same time, the burgeoning middle class and increasing wealth produced an explosion in the demand for good quality health care. Private sector was quick to capitalise on this demand. Governments as in the case of education were happy to pass on the responsibility to the private medical practitioners and private hospitals.

The second reason for the dominance of private medical hospitals in India is the lack of adequate investment by govern-

YOU THE CITIZENS DECIDE:

ments in public health. The Indian government spends an abysmally low 1.3% of GDP on public health care, which is woefully inadequate. Allocation has to be at least double this amount to address some of our pressing needs. Greater transparency and tighter administration are necessary to ensure that our resources are utilised appropriately. Specialists should be adequately compensated to obviate their need for private practice. More general hospitals need to be built in our cities and towns.

Private medicine in India is by no means uniform. It is estimated that there are more than one million unqualified medical practitioners, mostly in the rural areas. Most of them provide basic health care, charging a modest fee. Some may have claims of expertise (often unproven) in alternative systems of medicine such as ayurveda and homoeopathy. It is not unheard of them to sometimes venture into minor surgery. In the absence of alternatives these medical practitioners can not be brushed aside.

At the other end of the spectrum are state-of-the-art corporate hospitals, that are well equipped and well-staffed and which provide excellent medical service at high

cost. These are often set up in metro cities at huge cost and have successfully engineered a reverse brain drain of many medical specialists from pursuing lucrative jobs abroad and staying back in or returning to India. Even foreigners especially from Arab countries come to India to be treated by these hospitals.

Between the two extremes are a large number of private practitioners and institutions providing a wide range of services of varying quality. Some are run by trusts, charitable organisations and religious missions, often providing excellent quality at modest costs. The wide range of quality in medical services in India reflects the wide range of income and wealth in India.

The public health-care system desperately needs higher government spending. Health care cannot be left to private medicine in a developing country, or indeed, in any country. The United States, despite spending more than 15% of its enormous GDP on health care in the form of largely insurance-based private medicine, has poorer health-care indices than Europe, where government-funded universal health care (e.g. The National Health Service of the United Kingdom) is available, though the per capita health-care expenditure in Europe is substantially less than in the U.S.

Health-care spending by the government must be appropriate, based on evidence, and transparent and accountable. Training of doctors and health-care workers also need to be the main responsibility of the government. More doctors and trained nurses should be produced by increasing the institutions and making necessary changes in how they are educated. Recent reforms in the selection of medical students need to be scrutinised to see if they are having the desired result. It is time for us the Citizens to start pressurising our governments to start spending more on putting up more public sector hospitals, so that we can tackle the future pandemics without getting into a panic.

10 Covid19 patients cured using two Ayurveda tablets claims Dr Giridhar Kaje



Bengaluru: Well known Ayurveda doctor from the city Dr. Giridhar Kaje who basically hails from Puttur in Dakshina Kannada carried out clinical trials using Ayurveda tablets at the Victoria hospital recently. He says that all the 10 patients being treated with the tables have recovered and been discharged."I used two tablets prepared using 14 herbals," he said. "All the 10 patients were symptomatic. Many were suffering from diabetes, BP, and other problems. They were treated between June 7 and 25 at the state-run COVID 19 hospital Victoria hospital. This trial has been recorded by the ICMR" he informed. Kaje informed that the patients were in the age group of 23 to 65 years. He also stated that all the patients recovered quickly. "Two Ayurveda tables were given along with allopathic medicine," he said.

India now has two coronavirus vaccines set for human trials: All you need to know

As Zydus Cadila was given the approval for human trials of the coronavirus vaccine contender days after Bharat Biotech got a similar green light for its vaccine Covaxin, India is now set for human studies of two coronavirus vaccines.

After Bharat Biotech, which developed a potential novel coronavirus vaccine called Covaxin, Ahmedabad-based Zydus Cadila has been given the green light to begin Phase I and II human trials of another coronavirus vaccine candidate. This is the second coronavirus vaccine to get approval for human trials in India. Novel coronavirus infections continue to climb here with India becoming the world's fourth worst-hit nation.

Coronavirus cases in India crossed 7,00,544 mark with death over 20,003 and growing in a faster phase. Situation is grim.

With drug manufacturers across the world scrambling to develop a vaccine for Covid-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, Ahmedabad-based Zydus Cadila said it has received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to conduct human studies for its coronavirus vaccine candidate.

Earlier, the drug regulator had given approval to India's first indigenous coronavirus vaccine candidate Covaxin. Covaxin has been developed by the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV).

INDIA NOW HAS 2 VACCINES SET FOR TRIALS: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. Zydus Cadila Healthcare Ltd said it has received approval from DCGI for human clinical trials of its coronavirus vaccine candidate.

2. The approval process was fast-tracked following a recommendation by the subject expert committee on coronavirus, considering the emergency and unmet medical need during the pandemic.

3. The potential vaccine showed a "strong immune response" in animal studies, and the antibodies produced were able to completely neutralise the wild type virus, Zydus said in a statement.
advertisement

4. Sources have said that the company submitted data of clinical trials on animals to the DCGI, in which the vaccine candidate was found to be successful with respect to "safety and immunogenicity". After this Zydus Cadila was given the approval to begin human trials.

5. Zydus will begin human trials this month in over 1,000 subjects in multiple sites in India, the company said. Phase I and II trials will take around three months to complete.

6. Meanwhile, the ICMR has written to select medical institutions and hospitals to fast-track clinical trial approvals for the vaccine candidate Covaxin.

7. Given the urgency, ICMR is aiming to launch the coronavirus vaccine by August 15. Twelve clinical trial sites have been identified at present.

8. Covaxin is derived from a strain of SARS-CoV-2 isolated by the ICMR's National Institute of Virology.

9. Bharat Biotech is working expeditiously to meet the target, however, the final outcome will depend on the cooperation of all clinical trial sites involved in this project, the ICMR told the selected institutes.

10. The indigenous inactivated vaccine was developed and manufactured in Bharat Biotech's BSL-3 (Bio-Safety Level 3) High Containment facility located in Genome Valley, Hyderabad, India.

No vaccine has yet been approved for commercial use against coronavirus in the world but more than a dozen from over 100 candidates globally are currently being tested on humans.

ARE We Are Still Secular.....

YES

by Don Aguiar.

Last November, my Sikh friend and I was driving from Dehradun to Chandigarh — a fascinating four-hour journey, with the added attraction of visiting Paonta Sahib Gurdwara. We had to break on the way to give ourselves and our car some rest. And what better than my friend taking me to the abode of his Guru. Besides the soothing kirtan, it is the langar that one savours, seated on the floor among a multitude of people from all walks of life. Some partake of all meals as they have no means to satiate their hunger.

Breaking bread with them gives an indescribable spiritual high, and to experience this, one doesn't have to belong to any one religion. We, too, enjoyed the langar and came out to get on with our journey.

We stopped to buy some knick-knacks from a kiosk outside the gurdwara. Just then, we spotted a family of Gujjars (Muslims nomads who rear cattle in semi mountains and sell milk), in an intense discussion in front of a tea vendor. The family comprised an elderly couple, two middle-aged couples and four children. Three women were partially veiled. They seemed poor as the eldest gentleman (probably the father) counted coins and some crumpled notes.

Undoubtedly, the issue was how much they could afford to buy. They asked for three cups of tea and four samosas.

Gathering courage, my Sikh friend asked him, "Kya aap sab khana khayenge?" (Would you all like to have food!!) They looked at one another with a mix of surprise, apprehension and a hurt self-respect.

There was silence. Sometimes, silence can be loud. The innocent eyes

of the kids were filled with hope. "Hum kha ke aaaye hain," (we have eaten already) he responded.

There was an instant retort, "Kahan khayaa hai subeh se kuch bhi, Abba?" (We have not eaten anything since morning, Papa!!).

Hearing that, a dull ache in my chest caught me by surprise. The stern look in the eyes of the three men and the pleading moist eyes of the women said it all.

My Sikh friend insisted that they come with him. They agreed, reluctantly. We entered the gurdwara (Sikh Temple).

A good feeling descended as my friend deposited their shoes at the jora ghar (Shoe deposit room in all Gurdwaras). The elders were awed by the architectural marvel.

However, there was fear in their eyes, which was understandable. They were entering a non-Islamic place of worship for the first time.

But the children couldn't care less, their innocent faces single-mindedly focused on food. Some onlookers flashed strange looks from the corner of their eyes. But then I followed the children, adopting their easy attitude as they excitedly chose head wraps of different colours. (Everyone is supposed to cover their heads inside a Gurdwara).

Except for the eldest member, all accompanied us inside, and emulating my friend, bowed their heads and touched their forehead to the floor. Many others must have noticed, as I did, that these children went through this ritual with utmost reverence. They took Parshad (offering) from the Bhajji (The Priest) who asked them if they needed more. The children gladly nodded.

We entered the Langar Hall and my

friend took the kids along to collect thaalis (plates).

They did it with joy, like only kids would. Seated opposite us was a newly-married couple. The bride, with red bangles accentuating her charm, asked the children to sit beside her, and two of them sat between them. The way she was looking after them, I could tell she would make a loving mother.

Langar was served, and though we had already eaten, we ate a little to make our guests comfortable. One had to see to believe how they relished it. The initial apprehension had vanished and they ate to their fill. I have no words to describe the joy I experienced.

We had nearly finished when an elderly Sikh and a youth with flowing beard (perhaps the head granthi and sewadar-helper) sought my friend out.

My friend was overcome by fear, and more than us, our guests were scared. He walked up to them with folded hands.

The head granthi enquired, "Inhaan nu tusi le ke aaye ho? (Have you brought them in?)" My friend nodded.

The next question had my friend baffled, "Tusi har din path karde ho? (Do you say prayers every day?)" He almost blurted "yes", but it would have been a lie. So, with utmost humility he said "no".

Expecting an admonishment, the head granthi surprised my friend, "Tuhaanu tha koi lorh hi nahin. Aj tuhaanu sab kuch mil gaya hai ji (You don't need to. Today you have got everything)." My friend was flabber-



(Contd.. from p. 10)

gasted. Was it advice or sarcasm? The head granthi added, "Inha nu Babbe de ghar lya ke te langar shaka ke tusi sab kuch paa laya. Tuhaada dhanwad. Assi dhan ho gaye (By bringing them to the Guru's abode for langar, you've got everything from God. Thank you. We are blessed)."

Then, with folded hands, the head granthi walked up to the elderly couple and requested them, "Aap jad bhi idhar aao to langar kha ke jaaiye. Yeh to uparwale da diya hai ji (Whenever you happen to pass through here, please come and have food. It is God's gift)."

We escorted my guests out of the Langar Hall. Just as we were about to pick our footwear, one of the children said, "Humme aur halwa do naa." (Get us some more sweet offering). We went in to get more parshad.

Finally, as they were about to depart, the elderly lady whispered to her husband.

I enquired, "Koi baat, Miyaji?" (Is there any problem, Mian Ji!!)

Almost pleadingly, he said, "Yeh keh rahin ki, kya aap ke sar par haath rakh sakti hain? (She is saying, can she keep her hand on your heads)!! We bowed as she blessed us with tears in her eyes.

A wave of emotions swept over me.

Is it my imagination, or for real, that I often feel the beautiful hand of a Muslim lady, wrapped in purity and love, on my head?

This is the reason, we are still secular.... For now it is not bad as yet but there is a group who call themselves secular as per their communal belief and ideology and then speak irrelevant and stupid things. If somebody speaks against them then that person is trolled..... BUT will we still continue to be secular in future? It is up to we the people to decide.... We rise up to ensure that our country always be a secular democratic republic. ●

Another Catholic priest commits suicide in India



Tuticorin, July 1, 2020: A Catholic priest was found hanging on July 1 morning in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu.

Father Xavier Alwin of Tuticorin diocese is the fourth Catholic priest to end life in the past one year in India.

"It is sad to inform the unexpected demise of Fr. Alwin, aged 35. His funeral will take place at 4 pm on 2nd July 2020, Thursday, in Amalinagar. Heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. May his soul rest in peace," says a message from Father Norbert Thomas, chancellor of Tuticorin diocese.

Earlier this year, Father Alwin was appointed the English teacher at St. Thomas Matriculation School in Tuticorin town. He came to the hostel 15 days ago since the schools are closed because of the nationwide lockdown to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Father was found hanging from a ceiling fan when the school staff went to call him. After knocking the door for a long time, they looked inside through the window and found him hanging.

His body was taken for postmortem and a case has been filed in Vadabagam South police station. Police inspector Arul is investigating the case and the details are still unknown until the evening.

Father Alwin's friends and associates have expressed shock over his sudden death. They described him as a jovial and enthusiastic person who was fun loving. "He made everyone happy. I could not even think of him dead," says a priest of Tuticorin diocese, requesting anonymity.

Father Alwin was born in 1984 in Amalinagar, a small coastal village of near Tiruchendur in Tuticorin district. He was ordained in 2015 and served as assistant parish priest in Kootapuli, Manapad, and then in St. Antony's Church in Tuticorin before being appointed as the English teacher.

Hi colleagues recall that Father Alwin loved to be with the students and motivated them. He was also a collaborator

of the Thoondil Students Movement, an initiative of few likeminded priests of the diocese to prepare the coastal area students for competitive examinations.

The priest had also worked with the transgender community for their rights.

Father Alwin's death has come 12 days after the body of Father Thomas Ettuparayil was found in a well inside a parish compound in Kerala. The priest was in-charge of St Thomas Church Punnathura under the Archdiocese of Changanacherry.

He had gone missing on June 21 and his body was recovered a day later.

On June 20, Father Bala Showry Reddy, the vicar of Kolakalur parish Guntur diocese, was found hanging from the ceiling fan in the presbytery.

The diocesan sources said the priest ended his life because of loneliness and depression because of the nationwide lockdown.

On October 11, 2019, Father Mahesh D'Souza of Udupi diocese in Karnataka diocese was also found hanging from a ceiling fan in his room in Shirva in Udupi district. The 36-year-old priest was serving as assistant parish priest of Our Lady of Health Church and the principal of Don Bosco School attached to the parish.

Increasing reports of priest suicides have prompted the editor of the Indian Currents weekly to call for a review of seminary formation and monitoring of the life of priests at work places.

"A few things need unadulterated attention of the hierarchy – a relook at the protracted training imparted in seminaries and formation houses; a review and monitoring of the life of priests at their work places; and heed to the feedback from the ground and act upon it," Capuchin Father Suresh Mathew, wrote in the weekly's latest edition.

Matters India

Suicide Mission

SUICIDE MISSION

During the Second World War this term referred to Japanese pilots who went on suicidal missions, where death was certain. The Kamikaze pilots flew their bomb-laden aircraft straight into enemy targets. Then we had the LTTE suicide bombers, like the one that assassinated former Prime Minister Rajive Gandhi. It gave rise to a host of fidayeen warriors, who cared not for life or death, because they had been brainwashed into believing that they would be rewarded in heaven. All these suicidal missions were ideologically driven. They were not acts of depression or self-defeat.

Sadly, today, with three young Catholic priests committing suicide in a span of a few days, the term Suicide Mission has assumed a sinister new meaning – that of “missionaries” committing suicide. Including the one late last year, they have all been in the southern States of Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra and now Tamilnadu. There was no lockdown to blame for the first case, in Karnataka.

I have been reading the comments in the Catholic media on these cases. A number have blamed the lockdown,

and its resultant frustration, for these deaths. Others have attributed them to loneliness, celibacy, or improper seminary formation. There is some merit in all these explanations.

I live in Kanpur that has a little over 4000 Catholics. In recent years 6 Catholics have committed suicide, all male. 5 of them were married, and the sixth, a young man, was in love. Three of the married men were in failed marriages, and the other two had financial problems. So marriage, per se, is no solution for suicide. Commentators please note!



by chhotebhai *

On three occasions I have saved people from suicide. The first time was in 1974, when I had to quit my job in Bombay and rushed home, to save somebody from suicidal tendencies. In 1980, when I was living in Jyotiniketan Ashram, Bareilly, a newly married young man, whom we had helped, threatened suicide by jumping in the well. I called his bluff and dared him to do so. He didn't. The third time was in 2002 when my parish priest phoned me at 3 a.m. to say that he was going to jump off the school roof. I reached out to him in time and saved him. The important point in all these episodes is that the concerned persons had expressed their suicidal intentions, thereby saving their lives.

This begs the question. Of the four relatively young priests that recently committed suicide, did any of them give a hint or indication of their intent? Very often such persons test the waters, by dropping hints. Was anybody attentive to them?

Another factor, peculiar to men, is that they think that a display of emotion, or crying, is a sign of unmanly weakness. They bottle up their emotions, allowing the build up, as in a pressure cooker. Suicide then becomes the safety valve. Unfortunately, by then, the goose is cooked. Men, be they married or celibate, must express their feelings. Those who argue, fight, laugh or cry are less likely to be suicidal. It is the “strong silent” types that are potentially dangerous. Still waters run deep. The shortest sentence in the Latin translation of the Bible is “Dominus Flvi” (the Lord wept) – cf Lk 19:41. At the death of his friend Lazarus too, Jesus wept (Jn 11:35).

When we recall self-inflicted death, how can we not think of Jesus? He chose to die, though he could have prevented it. He did it for a supreme cause – the salvation of mankind. Yet, one of his close associates, Judas, also chose to die at the same time. Realization had dawned on him. He too wept and repented. But he did not wait to hear Jesus say “Father forgive them, they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34). Too quickly, Judas had moved his gaze from the Crucified Lord, and died in despair. It is a warning to all of us who profess to be Christian, celibate or married, male or female, young or old; we cannot and should not take our gaze off the Crucified Lord. This is in the spiritual realm, not something that can be handled by a clinical psychologist.

Not that there are no psychological reasons that could contribute to despair – like loneliness, frustration, a sense of inadequacy or an inferiority complex. Such persons would show withdrawal symptoms – a loss of appetite, being abnormally quiet, avoiding company etc. Those who notice

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such withdrawal symptoms in others should be quick to reach out to them in empathy.

A word of caution here. Commentators have said that some of these priests were very jovial. Again, please remember that clowns are usually the saddest people. Their clowning is a mask for their actual feelings. They are playing the game “kick me, if you can’t love me”! If their joviality is a form of self-flagellation, then be warned.

Today there is much talk of the Corona virus. We should also know about social viruses, spread by the media, that are highly contagious – something that Malcolm Gladwell writes about in his book “The Tipping Point”. I will quote two of his case studies. He found that the rate of suicides in tiny Micronesia was 7 times more than in the USA. It was a contagion there. He says, “As suicide becomes more frequent the idea itself acquires a certain familiarity, if not fascination, to young men, and the lethality of the act seems to be trivialised. Especially among young boys, the suicide act appears to have acquired an experimental, almost recreational element”.

He quotes David Phillips, a sociologist at the University of California. “Immediately after stories about suicides appeared, suicides in the area served by the newspaper jumped”. Such a “contagion is neither rational nor necessarily conscious”. In another instance, “News coverage of suicides by self immolation in England in the 1970s prompted 82 suicides by self-immolation the next year”. The signs are ominous. The virus has already spread in the Church in India, especially in the South. The next priest about to commit suicide may be closer and swifter than you think. Beware.

I appeal to all the bishops, especially in the southern dioceses, to call clergy meetings, to openly discuss priest suicides. Talking about it would automatically reduce the risk. This is the approach that Alcoholics Anonymous

follows. And Bishops, please note that if any priest does not turn up for the meeting, he is your prime suspect, and you must reach out to him immediately. I plead with you to take my suggestion seriously. You may save a precious life.

Now to vocation promotion and seminary formation. Rather than a subjective opinion, I will quote from the Vatican II document “Decree on Priestly Formation” (OT) and “Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests” (PO). Having been the founder Secretary of the “U.P. Regional Youth & Vocations Bureau” from 1979 - 82, OT is one of my favourite documents.

In his introduction to the Decree, Alexander Carter writes, “A seminary is not a lumber mill or a smelter. It cannot take a raw youth and, after subjecting him to a few approved processes, turn out a neatly fashioned or keenly honed priest” (Abbot edition, Pg 436). So the seminary is only a refinery, not alchemy. It can convert crude oil into refined oil, but it cannot convert iron ore into gold. This is why I have always stressed the importance of discernment at the entry level itself. The army or the IAS have very strict entrance tests, knowing too well that once a person enters the system it cannot be easily removed. The reverse is true of vocation promotion. Most follow the Don Bosco model of catching them young and innocent. To that one may also add – immature and ill informed. Once they enter the seminary (formation) system every attempt is made to make the aspirants conform, often deforming them in the process.

When somebody very close to me went to join the army he passed all the tests, and was sure to be selected. Just 30 out of 90,000 applicants remained. On the last day the Service Selection Board the commander told them that none of them had been selected, because they were too intelligent for the army, and they lacked the killer instinct! Shocking, but true. The army only wanted pliant, non-thinking candidates. So too with our vocation

promoters, they are simply looking for pious and docile young persons, probably an image of what they themselves were when they joined the seminary.

Back to Vatican II. It stresses “right intention and full freedom” (OT No. 2) and again “Careful inquiry should be made concerning the rightness of his intention and the freedom of his choice” (OT No 6). I daresay that both those factors are missing in a 15 year old joining a minor seminary. I am of the opinion that minor seminaries should be scrapped. Those above 18 may be allowed to “come and see” how priests live and work, and simultaneously pursue secular studies. They should not be allowed entry into a major seminary till they are at least 21 years of age. I am only echoing what the document says, “It is likewise the concern of bishops to decide, in view of the circumstances of individual regions, that the age currently required by general law for holy orders, be raised” (OT No 12). It also warns about maintaining standards, no matter what. “Necessary standards must always be firmly maintained, even when there exists a regrettable shortage of priests” (OT No 6).

I might here mention that there is no shortage of priests in India. I am in the process of studying statistical data from Catholic Directories dating back to 1912. I found the latest comparable data in the 1998 edition. The priest to people ratio in the world was 1:2444. In Africa and the Americas it was double at 1:4476 and 1:4042. In Asia and Europe it was a healthier 1:2619 and 1:1330. But India took the cake with a stunning ratio of 1:649. So there are no grounds for compromise because of an imaginary shortage of priests. To the contrary, India has too many.

I will now touch on the last point of companionship or community life. One commentator had even suggested that instead of living alone, priests should be in their parishes by day and return to a common “compound”

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On Rights And Wrongs

Rights have gone all wrong in today's India! It is a season of discontent for millions everywhere: the pandemic COVID-19 has disrupted life and livelihoods, the routine and the 'normal'. People have been forced to adjust and to adapt; to become more frugal, moresimple and much more. It is also been a time of immense grief, pain and suffering particularly for the poor and the marginalised; the migrant worker and the daily wager; the unemployed and the differently abled. To add insult to injury, India's insensitive ruling regime instead of responding to the genuine cries of the people has gone all out the way to decimate human rights, destroy the democratic ethos of society and to throttle every form of dissent and protest.



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ

At this moment, high among the human rights violations in the country are brutal beating in police custody and the subsequent deaths of the father and son duo, P Jayaraj (59) and his son J Bennicks (31). They were arrested on 19 June for 'allegedly' keeping their mobile phone shop in the main market of Sathankulam town (Tuticorin Dt, Tamilnadu) open during a curfew imposed during the pandemic lockdown (cctv footage however, belie this). They were lodged in the Kovilpatti sub-jail. Both Jayaraj and Bennicks were terribly tortured in police custody after which they were admitted to the Kovilpatti government hospital on 22 June; the son died that

very night, the father breathed his last on the morning of 23 June.

The police of course, have their own 'doctored' version of things, with very little credibility. There are practically no takers to what they are saying. One of the friends of Bennicks has gone on record saying, *"Three of us were there when police came and took Jeyaraj in the vehicle. We went to the police station with a few others. We heard cries of both Jeyaraj and Bennicks for hours as police tortured them through the night. We will produce the video before the court to expose police lies"*

The 'ray' in this extremely inhuman incident is that there is a national outrage condemning what has taken place and asking for the perpetrators to be brought to book; besides, well-known NGO's like 'People's Watch' have left no stone unturned to highlight these gruesome murders. Statements of condemnation have come in from all sections of society.

Finally, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has taken cognizance of the custodial murders of Jayaraj and Bennicks. In an order on 30 June which is bound to have far reaching implications the Court said *"In our opinion, the ante-mortem injuries found on the bodies of the deceased, coupled with the averments in the report of the learned judicial magistrate no. 1, Kovilpatti, especially the statement of head constable Revathy, would be prima facie enough to alter the case against the Sattankulam policemen, who were*

actively involved in the investigation of the case to one under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (murder)." In expressing its dismay at what is happening, the Court further added, "In fact, they (police) were emboldened enough to even intimidate the judicial officer to put spokes in the wheel of his enquiry.

By 2 July, five of the policemen responsible for this custodial torture and deaths have been arrested and the woman constable, the only eyewitness, who had the courage to stand up for the truth, is being provided with her family members, round-the-clock protection. Whatever, the final outcome, the father-son duo will never be brought back to life; however, what several are hoping for, is that the final result with exemplary punishment for those found guilty, will be a litmus test.

That however, is a wild guess and hope. In India, there are several today who can get away with murder – even if there is enough of evidence pointing to the 'culprits'. Some just take law and order in their own hands and do so with impunity; besides they also know that they are cloaked with immunity since they know that however heinous their crime they will always have the protection of the current political dispensation. One does not have to go far to know who are the ones being 'protected' by this unjust system. The fake encounters in Gujarat are a classic example. It is common knowledge that innocent Muslim youth were killed in trumped up charges and with a 'justification' which even an average eight-grader can see through. Over the years, some police officers directly responsible for these killings, were even sent to jail. They are out today with an added 'aura'; they are felicitated, given promotions and even their entire salary for the period during which they were incarcerated. The shocking and untimely death of Justice Loya is now on the backburner. Everyone knows who is the master-mind be-

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hind the 'fake encounters' and where Loya's needle of suspicion would finally stop!

Ironically, 26 June, the day on which the Tuticorin case was gaining prominence, was the 'UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture' which marks the moment in 1987 when the *UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, (UNCAT) one of the key instruments in fighting torture, came into effect. Today, the Convention has been ratified by 162 countries. Despite pressure from human rights defenders and lip-service promises, India is one of about twenty-five countries who have not ratified this significant convention. That people who are arrested for allegedly some crimes committed by them are tortured whilst in police custody, is an open secret. The deaths of Jeyaraj and Bennix are not an aberration; these take place at frightening regularity – and in ninety-nine percent of the cases nothing happens to the policemen who indulge in such violence and even murders. According to a rough estimate, there have been at least six thousand deaths in police or judicial custody in India, in the past three years. This is a conservative figure and the actual number could be even higher! The National Human Rights Commission also recently citing the National Campaign against Torture report (released on 26 June) said that a total of 1,731 people died in custody in India in 2019.

Interestingly on 26 June itself, at a meeting in Geneva, thirteen experts from the United Nations Human Rights Council, in a highly publicized statement, have demanded the immediate release of eleven people, including six students, arrested for participating in protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). One of those named in the statement, Jamia Millia Islamia M.Phil. scholar Safoora Zargar who is five months pregnant, (she has since been released on bail on humanitarian grounds after being in prison for

more than two months). She had been booked for terrorism for allegedly inciting the Delhi riots in February by taking part in sit-ins and delivering speeches against the CAA. The signatories to the statement are eight UN special rapporteurs and five members of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Besides Zargar, they have demanded the release of students Meeran Haider, Gulfisha Fatima, Asif Iqbal, Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal, Aam Aadmi Party supporter Khalid Saifi, Jamia alumnus Shifa Ur Rehman, Gorakhpur doctor Kafeel Khan, JNU alumnus Sharjeel Imam and Assam peasant leader Akhil Gogoi.

The hard-hitting statement said, *"These defenders, many of them students, appear to have been arrested simply because they exercised their right to denounce and protest against the CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act), and their arrest seems clearly designed to send a chilling message to India's vibrant civil society that criticism of government policies will not be tolerated. Authorities should immediately release all human rights defenders who are currently being held in pre-trial detention without sufficient evidence, often simply on the basis of speeches they made criticising the discriminatory nature of the CAA."* The statement added, *"Although demonstrations ended in March due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and India's Supreme Court issued a recent order to decongest jails because of health concerns related to the pandemic, protest leaders continue to be detained. The reported spread of the virus in Indian prisons makes their immediate release all the more urgent."* Finally, *"The arrests seem clearly designed to send a chilling message to India's vibrant civil society that criticism of government policies will not be tolerated."*

It is a shame on the country that a prestigious and highly impartial body like the UN Human Rights Council should lambast the Indian government in such a direct way. It is a scathing statement indeed by any standards, especially to a democracy like India

where the rights and freedom to dissent and protest should not only be safeguarded but also protected. It is imperative that the government of India pay heed to this significant UN statement and release all the anti-CAA protesters immediately and unconditionally.

Several human rights defenders continue to languish in jail; besides those wrongly arrested in the Bhima – Koregaon cases there are others arrested on fictitious charges in other parts of the country just because they had the audacity to stand up against the brute force of a dictatorial regime. On 29 July in a statement marking two hundred days of the unjust arrest of Akhil Gogoi, Bittu Sonowal, Dhaijya Konwar and Manas Konwar, the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) demands their immediate release and withdrawal of all ill-conceived charges foisted against them stating, *"NAPM demands the immediate release of all Akhil Gogoi, Bittu Sonowal, Dhaijya Konwar and Manas Konwar and withdrawal of all false charges level against them. We call upon the Full Bench of the Guwahati High Court to immediately intervene in this case of gross delay and abuse of the legal process and free all the activists, unconditionally. We stand in solidarity with the autonomous and democratic organizations and activists in Assam who protest against the communal & extractive agenda of BJP and other exploitative political entities, with a strong belief in constitutional values, peace and human rights. We call upon the Government to put an end to this vicious episode of clamp-down and instead engage in a serious and meaningful dialogue with the people of the state to address some of the long-standing issues in an amicable way, upholding the rights of all sections, in particular the marginalized and disenfranchised communities"*.

India has been faring extremely badly on the Human Rights front on every single global ranking! Besides the custodial deaths, the illegal deten-

(Contd.. on p. 17)

Everyday COVID check

At 7 p.m. open the bottle (you know which one to open) and smell it.

if you can smell, you are not affected ..

then pour it in in a glass or tumbler..

Taste it. if you can feel the taste, you are not affected.

Enjoy and repeat this regularly rather daily.

IT'S HARD TO BE A TEACHER AT CURRENT TIMES. WHY READ ON

Teacher: "Construct a sentence using the word "sugar"

Pupil: "I drank tea this morning."

Teacher: "Where is the word sugar."

Pupil: "It is already in the tea..!!"

Not Easy to be a Teacher !!!!!

TEACHER: *Our topic for today is Photosynthesis.*

TEACHER : Class, what is photosynthesis?

Student: Photosynthesis is our topic today.

Not Easy to be a Teacher !!!!!

TEACHER : John is climbing a tree to pick some mangoes. (Begin the sentence with Mangoes)

Student : Mangoes, John is coming to pick you...

Not Easy to be a Teacher !!!!!

TEACHER : What do you call mosquitoes in your language?

Student: We don't call them, they come on their own...

Not Easy to be a Teacher !!!!!

TEACHER : Name the nation, people hate most

Student: Exami-nation...



Not Easy to be a Teacher !!!!!

TEACHER : How can we keep our school clean?

Student: By staying at home...

Not Easy to be a Teacher !!!!!

TEACHER : One day our country will be corruption free. What tense is that??

Student: Future impossible tense...

AND THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!

Breaking News

If you are experiencing the following:

1. Headache
2. Poor eyesight
3. High temper
4. Always out of mind
5. Difficulty in sleeping
6. Easily irritated and angry
7. Cant communicate properly
8. Feeling dizzy

This is not CORONAVIRUS! these are signs and symptoms of a person with no money!!! It is called

POVID-20....

Poverty Virus Disease 2020

Don't get scared, this one does not kill

Please, laugh to ease tension

God is our strength!

Joke of the Day.....

I couldn't find the lock, so I wrote "COVID 19 POSITIVE" on the door and left.

When I came back, I saw that the inside was empty, my Corona notice disappeared

And instead hung another notice: "Disinfection done. Everything cleaned."

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(Contd.. from p. 15)

tion of human rights defenders, fundamental rights of the poor, the marginalized and minorities have taken a severe beating! Freedom of speech and expression, the right to freely preach, practice and propagate one's faith, the right to dissent and protest, the right to a just wage all seem like a reality which belonged to a different age. The ruling regime has no qualms of conscience in decimating the legitimate Constitutional rights of the citizens; it is time then, that 'we the people of India' stand up as one, visibly and vocally, to protect and promote all that is precious and needed for the future of our existence as one nation. Eleanor Roosevelt, who was instrumental in giving the world the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, once said *"where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home -- so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. [...] Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."* We need to act now, in whatever way we can, to right the many wrongs in our country today!

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

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by night. He was not far from the truth. "No priest can in isolation or single headedly accomplish his mission in a satisfactory way. He can do so only by joining forces with other priests" (PO No 7) "In order that priests may find mutual assistance ...and be saved from the dangers which may arise from loneliness, let there be fostered among them some kind or other of community life" (PO No.8). "Priests should not be sent singly to a new field of labour ... they should be sent in at least twos or threes so that they may be mutually helpful to one another" (PO No.10) Jesus himself sent his disciples out in pairs (cf Mk 6:7).

Unfortunately, our bishops, in their inordinate desire to erect more churches/parishes, are spreading their resources too thin. Instead of having two priests in one place they prefer to have one each in two places. They are cleverer than Jesus, hence paying the price. Notice that priests from religious orders are not committing suicide. It is the diocesan ones. This is because the religious priests are living in community and are expected to follow some norms of community living, like eating and praying together.

But our single parish priests become lords of all they survey. If in the lockdown, they had nothing to survey or to lord over, they suddenly discovered that they were really nobody. The balloon of self deception bursts, and they run for the rope instead of rushing to the crucifix.

Let us hope and pray that our bishops and priest will pay heed to Jesus and Vatican II. Never mind what I have to say. Else we will be reading about many more suicide missions. May we be spared that agony and ignominy.

• *The writer was the founder Secretary of the U.P. Regional Youth & Vocations Bureau (1979-82)*

Vanilla Cake



Ingredients:

- 250 gms maida
- 200 gms sugar
- 4 eggs
- 120 gms butter
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 350 gms raisins
- 100 ml rum
- Few drops of vanilla essence
- 150 gms lemon peel
- 50 gms walnuts
- 30 gms crystallised cherries

Method:

1. Grease a cake tin and sprinkle a little maida on the surface. Place a sheet of paraffin paper at the bottom.
2. Cut the cherries, walnuts and lemon peel into small pieces and immerse them along with the raisins in the rum.
3. Cream the butter and sugar along with the vanilla essence.
4. Add in the eggs gradually mixing all the while. Fold in the maida and baking powder. Mix in the rum with all the ingredients soaked in it. Pour the cake batter into the tin and bake at 160° C for about 15 to 20 minutes.

— Sweta D'Cruz

Let Us Not Mask The Real Problem

As in the past, bureaucracy prevails over in the attack that took place in a hotel run by the AP Tourism Development Corporation in Nellore. When requested to wear a mask, the Andhra government official beats up a staffer in the open with an iron rod. The lady officer suffered severe injuries in the murderous attack. Even though the official was arrested and suspended from the tourism department, stringent punishment should be given to the erring official. The assault drew protests from several quarters, including the National Commission for women, which sought an action taken report from the police. But the action taken is only for an eye wash and the government official will be allowed to continue working in some other department and escape severe punishment. Let us not mask the crux of the problem.

Sathankulam custodial deaths have become the talk of the town. Even though there is enough evidence about the deaths, the murderous cops are not still arrested. It was evident that both Jayaraj and Bennicks were allegedly tortured to death at the police station and there is no escape route. The custodial deaths were referred to CB-CID and it is just an eyewash. It was a strange thing that the magistrate faced opposition from the officials at the police station and the court also feared that the lady eye witness to the happenings would be targeted too for speaking truth against her colleagues, or there may be an attempt to intimidate her into withdrawing her statement. If the lathis at the police station were to be given forensic tests, then the truth will be out in open. An incident like what happened in Sathankulam should not happen ever again to Tamils. The only way to ensure that is to deal maximum punishment to those guilty of the crime,



C.K. Subramaniam

Minimal accountability, disdain for court directives and abysmal conviction rates are factors that continue to embolden the Indian police to act without responsibility. When an innocent, common man fears the police, it speaks volumes about his or her abject loss of confidence in the law enforcers. The Supreme Court guidelines in all cases of arrest or detention are clear cut. In its 1996 judgment, DK Basu vs State of Bengal, the court had laid down each requirement, fixing responsibility to every member of the investigation hierarchy. Prevention of unnatural deaths in police or judicial custody, mainly due to police excesses, was the intention of the Supreme Court.

A careful analysis of the number of custodial deaths unequivocally proves that the court directions are flagrantly flouted. In 2019, there were, on an average, five custodial deaths per month in India. The people of Tamil Nadu are up in arms over the custodial death of a father-son trader duo in police custody in the State's Sathankulam town. The poor have little ammunition to protest. No state, barring a few, has put the 'Police Complaint Authority', as ordered by the top court. Augmenting investigative techniques, providing better facilities in rural police stations, refresher courses in wide-ranging subjects, psychological counselling are some ways to reform the police. Such actions by a few cops have brought disrepute to the entire police department.

It is almost impossible to keep policing each household. What happens in custody or any investigation?. Gathering information that is not known to police intelligence which follows its own set of certain rules. It is more like asymmetrical warfare between one party having advanced their resources



with another party in a well oiled merchandise mechanism. Police should give confidence to the public in following rules and enforcing it without any types of corruption. Otherwise, all businesses will look at police as complementary forces which can be got through pay money or pay kind for example, few tips about vanishing employees, supply chain, opening longer hours in all areas etc. CBI should address the root cause of custodial death to reform the police department and proactively use its time wisely.

Violence of any type by anybody should be totally avoided in all films in all languages. If possible violence in words could also be stopped and it is quite imperative that the visual media impact catching more among uncultured people. For these film artists money is the only concern. They will include these scenes in their next movie for marketing. That's it. They don't have any vision that our country should progress. They make their hero's superheroes and they will kill anyone in the movie. It is time to have rational thinking.

Carry On Corona Angels



The coronavirus outbreak came to light on December 31, 2019 when China informed the World Health Organisation of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause in Wuhan City in Hubei Province. Subsequently the disease spread to more Provinces in China, and to the rest of the world. The WHO has now declared it a pandemic. The virus has been named SARS-CoV-2 and the disease is now called COVID-19.

Whatever said and done Coronavirus touched our heart and soul for 100 days and we are well equipped to face the pandemic with a resolute vigour and sustained social distancing. The services extended by the service staff, domestic help, drivers, delivery agents, our immediate relatives and the outsiders in general are really phenomenal and their yeoman service to the society cannot be forgotten for centuries by this world. 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. We are all waiting for D-Day with baited breath when the nation will announce the actual opening.

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. It is time to open up slowly. The migrant workers have left home hoping for the best in their place of existence. Bankers deserve special praise. Doctors and nurses have crossed one hurdle with grit and determination. In a society where the poor remain the poor, it is a golden opportunity to pay heed to the deprived strata of society and give the much needed upliftment at a crucial time.

Now the government order states that any person from a non-containment



Jayanthy Subramaniam

zone should be allowed. Thus a selective approach is to be enforced and a holistic way solving the crux of the problem is arrived at. We have to help out the maid servants, the newspaper vendors, courier service agents and make sure that both social distancing and other formalities are strictly followed within the compound of housing societies in and around the city. To give them a break is our motive and it should be done most systematically without harming anybody and avoid controversies in the best way possible.

At a time when wearing a face mask is mandatory to contain the spread of coronavirus, a businessman from Maharashtra's Pune district has got himself a customised gold mask worth Rs. 2.89 lakh. Nearly 55 gm of the yellow metal has been used in mak-

ing the mask, businessman Shankar Kurhade, a resident of Pune's Pimpri-Chinchwad town, told reporters here while wearing the gold mask.

Work From Home due to COVID-19 enforced lockdown norms is seeing a trend of buyers tightening their purse strings and opting for budget friendly residences rather than luxury offerings. Those who earlier preferred 'paying guest' accommodation were increasingly looking at owning an apartment to suit their budget. Customers have understood the necessity of a home and for developers it has opened up, if not luxury, budget segment residences available for occupation in metro cities.

Beaten with the Corona stick, we have become 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 fail to operate. There are two kinds of people; one makes rules and the other lives life. Now, we are reduced to a single homogeneous kind of living by the rules. One hundred days of house arrest is over and we are willing to see the outside world at least by the year end.

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7114. GOA : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in January 1973), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. 12th + Dip. in Technical Field, working as a Projectionst in **KUWAIT**. Contact email : hilarylobo48@gmail.com

7102. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1988), Ht. 6' 1", Wt. 95 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters, working for MNC. Contact email : am.pereira@rediffmail.com

7039. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, Handicap - slight Scoliosis - taking treatment, spine slightly curved. (Born in September 1976), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 45 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A. Computer Prog. / Hair Designer, Having own business. Contact email : reginarodrigues634@gmail.com

7101. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in April

1988), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters in Logestics doing part time MBA. Working as an Asst. Manager. Contact email : gracian.moras@gmail.com

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

7100. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1987), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 52 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. H.S.C., working as a Event Coordinator. Contact email : celeseinepereira@gmail.com

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

7084. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1956), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 9th std., working as a Machine Operator. Contact email : fern.gilbert54@gmail.com

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

7097. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1991), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 97 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as Sr. Account Recievable in private company. Contact email : dsouzadonald11@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 : jesusmary58@yahoo.com

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

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

7031. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1985), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Undergraduate, IT Software, works at TCS. Contact email : josephavild@yahoo.co.in

7005. DUBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1986), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS /CFA, working as a Head Treasury in Dubai. Contact email : matri3119@gmail.com

7028. ABUDHABI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1985), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Diploma in Mechancial Engineer, working as a Stores Officer in Shipping Company. Contact email : pjmpraveen@gmail.com

6977. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in April 1980), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. S.Y. B.Com., working as B Bartender at princess Crews. Contact email : dlimadenzil@yahoo.com

7034. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.C.A., Software Engineer, working as an Software Engineer, Asst. Manager (IT), Only Son. seeks alliance from Mangalorean RC Spinster, educated, working in Mumbai. Reply with full details & photofraph to email : ID : vivian1548@gmail.com
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7127. MUMBAI : Goan R.C. Spinster, (Born in December 1992), Ht. 5' 5", Edn. Ph.D., Student. Contact email : exmi2019@gmail.com

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

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

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

7098. MIRAJ : Protestant Spinster, (Born in November 1983), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 52 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters in Dental Science, Doctor by profession. Contact email : dprebentisch@yahoo.com

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

7081. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1993), 5' 3", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters of Dentistry (MDS), Dental Surgeon, Doctor by profession. Contact email : carlferns93@gmail.com

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

7080. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1991), 5' 5", Wt. 78 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as an Accountant. Contact email : fernandesronita25@gmail.com

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

7076. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1975), 5' 7", Wt. 55 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., MBA., working as a Senior Executive. Contact email : tednvir@gmail.com

7078. USA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1992), 5' 6", Wt. 65 kgs, Brownish Complexion, Edn. B.E. Mumbai, MS Newyork, working as a Consultant. Contact email : \rcmatrimonial2892@gmail.com

7069. MUMBAI : Tamilian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1992), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., Nursing, Staff Nurse. Contact email : mpchandran68@gmail.com

Mobile : 9820041633

7091. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March

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7064. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1988), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, working for Private Company as an Accounts Executive. Contact email : cecrc19@gmail.com

7075. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1989), 5' 4", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters in Life Sciences, working as Gyneacology. Contact email : tyron.noronha@yahoo.com

7060. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in February 1983), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Diploma in Finance from NMIMS, Diploma in B, Self employed. Contact email : vianneyde2k@yahoo.com

7058. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1987), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working back office. Contact email : venita_fernandes@rediffmail.com

7057. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1993), Ht. 5' 1", Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters, working as a Design Thinker. Contact email : louelladsouza10@gmail.com

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Thomas Apostle of India - July 3.



-Compiled : Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

Thomas the Apostle is one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus according to the New Testament. Thomas is commonly known as "Doubting Thomas" because he doubted Jesus' resurrection; later, he confessed his faith, "My Lord and my God," on seeing Jesus' crucifixion wounds. According to traditional accounts of the Saint Thomas Christians of modern-day Kerala in India, Thomas is believed to have travelled to the Kerala Coast. Thomas reached Muziris (modern-day North Paravur and Kodungalloor in the state of Kerala, India) in AD 52, it is said.

According to traditional belief of many Christians of India, the Apostle

Polo, the Venetian traveller and author of Description of the World, popularly known as Il Milione, is reputed to have visited Southern India in 1292. According to tradition, in AD 232, the greater portion of relics of the Apostle Thomas are said to have been sent by an Indian king and brought from Mylapore to the city of Edessa, Mesopotamia.

Originally a church was built by St. Thomas himself at Mylapore. This tiny holy shrine was badly damaged over time, in 1523 under Portuguese authority, a new church was built over it. The present Gothic Cathedral was blessed in 1896, and raised to the status of minor basilica by Pope Pius XII in March 1956.



Little Mount : Known locally in Tamil as "Chinna Malai", a place associated with St Thomas and originated in 68 AD of great religious, historical and tourist importance about 10 Kms from the city proper. It is legendary that during many attacks by his oppo-

Thomas was martyred in Mylapore, in Madras in AD 72. He is believed to have established seven churches (communities) in Kerala. These churches are at Kodungallur, Palayoor, Kottakkavu (Paravur), Kokkamangalam, Niranam, Nilackal (Chayal), Kollam, and Thiruvithamcode. Thomas baptized several families, other families claim to have origins almost as far back.

Mylapore, Madras, Tamil Nadu, India :

Traditional accounts say that the Apostle Thomas preached not only in Kerala but later also on the Southern east coast of India – and relics are found at San Thome Basilica in Chennai, Mylapore, India. Marco

nents to preach Christ, the apostle to refuge in a cave in this former jungle area, the cave is still seen. It has a window-like opening which is said to have been made miraculously to allow the saint to escape his enemies on one occasion. A cross similar to that on the mount is seen. A stream of



water always flows which is reputed to be created to help the people who came to hear the Apostle of God.

St. Thomas Mount : In Tamil it is "Peria Malai", some refer to it as "Farrangi Malai" due to the habitation of the Europeans in the 1500s. Consistent tradition marks it as the place where St. Thomas, who lived in the vicinity was martyred in 72 AD. A picture of the Virgin Mary there is reputed to have been painted by St. Luke the evangelist on a plank about one foot square, and always accompanied St. Thomas and often referred to as "the scapular of Thomas". The mount is reached by about 135 steps through a paved road said to be built by a rich American merchant. Here, a polished granite stone marks the spot where on February 5, 1986, Pope John Paul II stood to bless the sea of people during his visit to Chennai, Meenambakkam airport is seen nearby. Hordes of pilgrims and tourists visit this place round the year.

Saint Thomas Cross :

Ornate crosses known as Saint Thomas Crosses; also known as Nasrani Menorah, Persian Cross, or Mar Thoma Sleeve. These crosses are believed to date from the 6th century as per the tradition and are found in a number of churches in Kerala, Mylapore and Goa. An oldest known written document refers to this type of cross as a St. Thomas Cross. There are several interpretations of the Nasrani symbol. The interpretation based on Christian Jewish tradition assumes that its design was based on Jewish menorah, an ancient symbol of the Hebrews, which consists of seven



Doctrine Of The Holy Angels

Christian doctrine teaches us that the angels are spiritual beings who were created by God to serve Him. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church 328: "The existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls "angels" is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition.

As purely spiritual creatures angels have intelligence and will. They are personal and immortal creatures, surpassing in perfection all visible creatures, as the splendor of their glory bears witness.

The Lateran Council IV and Vatican Council 1 stated that "simultaneously at the beginning of time, God created from nothing both the spiritual and corporeal creation, i.e., angelic and mundane" (D.428, 1783).



BY MELVYN BROWN

Fr. Boedekker, O.F.M., from America says, "The angels are real finite persons, fellow- creatures, with sharp intellects and free wills, but without bodies." Unlike most of God's creations, the angels by their nature are superior to other creatures, even men, and have a greater possession of intellect and power (2 Peter.2:11).

(Contd.. from p. 22)

branched lampstand (candelabra). The interpretation based on local culture states that the Cross without the figure of Jesus and with flowery arms symbolizing "joyfulness" points to the resurrection. In 1258, some of the relics were brought to Ortona, in Abruzzo, Italy, where they have been held in the Church of Saint Thomas the Apostle. He is often regarded by the church as the patron saint of India, and the name Thomas remains quite popular among Christians of India who mark the feast on July 3.

Angels are mentioned 148 times in the Holy Bible (Old and New Testament). The angels move faster than light and are independent of space, matter and time. Pope John XXIII said: "An angel of Paradise, no less, is always beside me, wrapped in everlasting ecstasy on his Lord. So, I am ever under the gaze of an angel who protects and prays for me."

Angels are venerated because they have been "glorified by God for having remained on His side in their test. SS. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are known as the Archangels.

Pope Pius XII declared: "we must be linked up with the Holy Angels; we must form with them one strong family because of the times that are to come." The pontiff in his encyclical *Humani Generis*, reprimanded those who did not regard the angels as personal beings. Angels are totally spiritual persons.

The late John Cardinal Wright, who was Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, wrote: "The angels confirm us in the faith and increase our hope and love for God." He went on to say, "Angels owe their theological status to divine revelation".

The General Catechetical Directory, 1971, declared that the teachings of the Catholic faith include the angels as objects of Catholic faith.

Our Lady is the Queen of Angels. The stigmatic priest, Padre Pio, who is now a saint once told a person that he would get the information from his guardian angel. "Can you actually hear the angel?" asked the man in awe. At that moment, the saint spoke with a smile: "Do you think I am deaf?"

The Old and the New Testaments recall the work of the Holy Angels. Pope John Paul II said, "The New Testament highlights the role of angels in Christ's Messianic mission. Pope Innocent III



framed a dogmatic decision called *Firmiter*, "God alone is the creator of all things visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal, the angelic, that is, and the sensible (material)."

The Church of Saint Peter in chains, is in Rome. The chains which had bound Peter are still there. We are told in the Bible how St. Peter awoke to see his cell bathed in a bright light. "Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared and told Peter to dress quickly, the chains fell from his hands." Then the angel instructed the first Pope, "wrap your mantle around you and follow me."

The Second Vatican Council told members of the Church that we are a pilgrim Church, our ultimate goal being heaven. "I myself will send an angel before you..." (Ex.23: 20-24).

In the meantime the whole life of the Church benefits from the mysterious and powerful help of angels." (334. CCC). human life is always under the watchful care and intercession of Holy Angels.

Pope Paul VI on the 23RD October 1968 said, "The *Opus Angelorum* is a great work of love for our brothers in the priesthood, and has an important missionary mandate in the Holy Church.

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