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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

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Discipleship is the Important Thing, IT Does Not Require a Particular Kind of building or a Particular Kind of Gathering

by Don Aguiar.

It is a tragic understatement to say that the coronavirus and the COVID-19 disease it causes have turned our world upside down. The fact is that the virus has totally shattered our lives. Perhaps not in a hundred years, since the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 which destroyed more lives than the Great War, have so many countries, so many peoples of the world, been fear-stricken and traumatized.

How has the virus impacted our lives of faith — religious faith, that is.

Since the virus is largely spread through interpersonal contact, government authorities have banned all groups in close proximity — and so all public transport systems and common recreation areas have been closed.

The transference of Mass's performance-based ritual from the sanctuary to the screen did not disrupt already existing liturgical behaviours; priests did what they normally do — perform the rituals — and believers did what they normally do — watch the rituals being performed.

Thus, the ritual behaviours didn't change because the already dominant operative, behaviours were not disrupted.

The behavioural disruption came with the inability to recreate the physical presence of the community and physical participation in the shared Eucharistic meal.

If anything, the online mass has unwittingly contributed to the liturgical disruption of the physical liturgical community through taking the viewer from the pew to the couch.

During the centuries of persecution, Christians had no church buildings,

no clergy, no religious, no Masses, no religious institutions, no diocesan structures, and no contact outside their circle.

What they did have was each other and a commitment to maintain as well as they could the faith that was passed on to them and to pass it on to the next generations even at the risk of their lives. They were poor, oppressed and lived in perpetual danger, but they prayed and shared their ability to help one another in need. In many ways, it was the Golden Age of Christianity.

Those Christians knew that church is not someplace to go, but something to be, something to do.

The coronavirus pandemic is an opportunity to learn or relearn that today. We have had to be faithful without much of what we thought essential, symbolized by a building and what goes on inside it. But God is still with us whether we are in a cross-decorated building or not. The real issue is, are we with God?

Around the world, there are Christians who clamour to have their buildings re-open so that they might exercise their Christianity. They ignore the fact that confronted with a highly contagious disease, the most Christian thing to do is to protect others by following the advice of disease experts.

Jesus never told his followers to gather in a particular place each week. He did say that our lives will be judged on whether or not we respond to him in our needy sisters and brothers. He did say that when we pray, we should go apart to a private place and pray in secret to the Father who sees what happens in secret.

When he spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus said that places are not important, that what matters is worship "in spirit and truth." The woman had asked him where

proper worship should be done, at the temple on Mt. Gerizim or at the temple in Jerusalem. His answer was basically, "Neither."

In that case, do we need buildings at all if we can and should pray anywhere and everywhere? We do not and we do.

Originally, Christians gathered in homes. Besides being persecuted, Christian communities were small enough to not need special buildings and were too poor to erect them. Eventually, as numbers increased, homes were modified to allow larger gatherings. The remains of the oldest known ones are in Dura-Europos in Syria. Its frescos, the earliest surviving Christian art, are in a museum at Yale University in the United States.

Over time as Christian communities grew, buildings were adapted or erected for liturgical use. The three-aisle layout that is so common in churches comes from basilicas (public halls) that were repurposed into churches or were the architectural model for them.

So, we have buildings in which we gather in the name of Jesus so that our discipleship can be confirmed, nurtured, confronted, affirmed and comforted.

But many people in the Church in India and the world are concerned about the dangers of deviation and manipulation present in certain retreats, meetings or prayer groups that offer "psycho-spiritual" therapies. These practices, coming largely from overseas, raise fundamental questions: Should we recognize boundaries between the spiritual and the psychological? Which ones? On what basis?

Such perplexity and bewilderment invite us to establish reference points that are as clear as possible on a



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complex, controversial terrain. This is a typical question of the modern era and that, certainly, the spiritual and psychological elements are mixed in the unity of the human person, but today as yesterday, there is a distinction between ways of thinking about spiritual experience, as well as on the level of practice (psychotherapy, spiritual accompaniment and the pastoral dimension in general).

But the discipleship is the important thing. Without that, the gatherings are nearly worthless. And that is the reason this pandemic is an opportunity for each of us. Discipleship does not require a particular kind of building or a particular kind of gathering.

Buildings, Sunday gatherings, public prayers and hymns are the accompaniments of religion, but not the essence of Christianity. Christianity most basic reality is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The "religious" trappings aid our commitment to and celebration of that relationship but are not the relationship.

Too much of the Church's public presence and long-winded utterances presume a captive audience, assume that people are ready to submit to the superior logic and unqualified authority of its

pronouncements.

The register of Church life needs to resume as interactive and conversational rather than as the didactic and directive.

Good teaching always depends on two things: the attentive listening of the teacher and the realization that all successful communication is predicated on a real and growing relationship.

Any and all experiences of living communities have been based on and live out of that substratum living interaction where values are shared and the deeper needs for nourishment in the journey of life and faith are met. The medium for that is the interactive and conversational style that invites belonging and rewards commitment.

Now that the danger of contagion makes the buildings and large gatherings unavailable, we are invited to concentrate on what our faith really is. It is prayer, service and trust that we celebrate with others when we can, but which we must live regardless of circumstances.

We can gather few by few to break open the Word, break the Bread, and share our faith. We can be church, as were the persecuted Christians of early times.

Christianity Is A Religion Of Joy And Happiness!

Once a Hindu person told me, "Father, I have a friend in my office. He is Hindu. He was a very shy and reserved person. He hardly mixed up with others. But later he fell in love with a Christian girl. He did not become a Christian but got married in the Church. Ever since I saw a change coming over him! Every Saturday-Sunday he would go to his mother-in-law's place and join into groups there. He would proudly narrate in the office, how he would even sing, dance and enjoy life! Yes, he would even drink and make merry! We all in the office realised that he has now become an extrovert, carefree, enjoying life, happy-go-lucky! Of course all in good sense.

"And so" I questioned.

"I ask myself, is there something in the Christianity which encourages a person to be happy and joyful?"

THE BRIDES OF CHRIST!

It is worth reflecting over the difference between the Christians and other religious people. Is there something in our faith that makes us enjoy life? Certainly, the Christianity is a religion of joy and happiness. Jesus told us that the kingdom of God is like a wedding feast of Rajaputra. A king gave a feast. Everyone is invited. Some refused to join. All those willing, lame, dumb from the street were invited to join in the celebration! In the parable the king is God the Father, the prince is Jesus Christ. It is Jesus' wedding being celebrated. Then who is the bride of Jesus? She is the Church, meaning all individuals baptized in Jesus Christ. We are all his brides! Therefore the whole Christian life is joy not just as guests at the wedding ceremony but as brides Jesus!

Once (Cfr. Luke 5.33-39) Jesus was passing through cornfields. His disciples pulled corns and ate! The Pharisees asked Jesus, "we all fast and do penance, why do your disciples do not? And Jesus answered, "As long as the bridegroom is with them how can they fast?" Who is their bridegroom? It is Jesus Christ himself! With him we enjoy life, celebrate life! That precisely is the teaching of Christianity: It is the religion of joy and happiness.

THE EUCHARIST, A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION:



Fr. Michael G. Vasai

Which is the greatest Christian prayer? It is the Eucharist, the Holy Mass. If we go to its essence what do we find? It is Lord's supper. It consists of 'eating' and 'drinking', singing and dancing, clapping and enjoying in the company of our Christian community gathered in the house of God our Father! Psalmist shouts, "Joy was in my heart Alleluia! When I heard them say, let us go to God's house! "We eat the very body of Jesus Christ and drink his very blood! We are nourished, invigorated to bear our humdrum life happily! The Eucharist is the community coming to Thank and celebrate our unity and our union with Jesus and the Father.

DO NOT WORRY, GOD IS YOUR FATHER!

Can a Christian be sad? Never! Jesus said, "Do not worry. God is your father and this father of ours knows all our needs. He grants everything that we require before we ask!" And therefore enjoy life! ... Do I sound preachy, superfluous? If so let us check our faith level. If we really believe in the Christian message, we cannot be sad. We cannot be losing our joy in life; but rather we should be always full of joy, happiness, hope and enthusiasm! Unless and until we have this faith deep down in our hearts we cannot

be true Christians and we cannot be truly happy. We are missing a great opportunity.

Mary, our Mother whose birthday we celebrate on 8th September gives us the same message at Cana. She had come for the wedding feast together with her son Jesus Christ. The host realised that wine was over and maybe he will be put to shame. Mary realises his difficulty and rushes to Jesus, "They have no wine!" Though his time had not come and it is not the matter of concern to him and Mary, he changes six jars of water into wine! Wine is a symbol of joy. The best wine he served to all the people till the end. Mother Mary at Cana assures us of our life of joy and happiness.

CELEBRATE LIFE!

My Hindu friend was right in his observation. The Christians tend to happily go lucky people! There is nothing wrong in celebrating every occasion in our life. The reception of the Sacraments like Baptism, First Holy Communion, weddings, confirmation that we can 'celebrate' death in the family! We celebrate eating and drinking! We enjoy ourselves even at small occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, jubilees, retirements and what not. We have every right to celebrate and to make the whole life a celebration!

Hence can Mary be called mother of sorrows? Can Jesus be called 'suffering Jesus'? No! They suffered physically but not spiritually. They accepted all suffering as the will of God and suffering turned into peace and joy. Mother Mary was asked to accept the socially controversial virginal motherhood. The moment she was told that it is the will of God, she said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord be done to me according to your





Significance of Teachers' Day,

In India, Teachers' Day is celebrated on September 5. The tradition started in 1962 and it was started to honour Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

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word!" Then she goes through seven sorrows astutely! She is not sorrowful because she accepted the will of God. Who suffers, the one who is not united with God. He is like a fish out of water struggling to live. One who is with God is like a fish in the water. He faces difficulties with all courage and enjoys peace in his heart.

Jesus was subjected to suffering beyond imagination. Many thought he would die on the way to Calvary. But he carried the cross peacefully, silently; reached the every point, lied on the cross, got crucified, hung on the cross hungry, tired and thirsty, forgave the enemies and died surrendering his spirit in the hands of the Father! The message is: Take up your cross and follow me! Accept this life as it comes, as willed by God, the father and you will meet only happiness!

CORONA TECHES US TO BE MODERATE!

In fact infinite joy is ours but our social obligations limit the celebration. We have been extravagant. Corona teaches us to be moderate. We are bound to limit the number of guests and the expenses on occasions. Let us observe the limitation and enjoy the birthday of our Mother as best as we can!

AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA!

whose birthday also happens to be on the same day.

Teachers' Day is dedicated to all our teachers, mentors and gurus who guide us to be learned students and better human beings.

Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a philosopher, a scholar, an exemplary teacher, and a politician who dedicated his life towards education and in shaping up the youth of the country. He was also the first Vice-President and the second President of India. His contributions in the field of education are exemplary.

He was born on September 5, 1888 in a middle class family in Thirutani, Tamil Nadu. He was an outstanding student and studied philosophy at Christian College, Madras. He taught at various colleges in his lifetime from the University of Mysore to the University of Calcutta. He was also appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, Delhi University as well as Banaras Hindu University.

He was also awarded many awards such as the Bharat Ratna and was nominated 27 times for the Nobel Prize.

It's not just on Teachers Day, but always that we need to remember our dear teachers for the role they play in moulding our future.

—Jubel D'Cruz,
Dombivili, Mumbai

Pandemic: Man-made or Act of God?

As Covid -19 continues unabated on its killing and destructive trail, the question uppermost in the minds of most people today

is, whether the corona virus is 'man-made' or and 'act of God'. At one point of time most scientists were inclined to believe that the virus was 'man-made in the Wuhan laboratory of China to serve as a bio-weapon for the destruction of enemy countries. Others believed it to be a virus that escaped accidentally from the Wuhan lab while a vaccine for AIDS was being developed. Ecologist were quick to react and condemn humans for the reckless use of the planet's natural resources and the destruction of the planetary eco-system and environment. Our erudite finance minister Nirmala Seetharaman believes it to be an "act of God" which has caused the country's economic slowdown. For Doomsday believers, the end of the world is imminent as the pandemic signs are believed to be a precursor of the final destruction of the world. No prophet has yet turned up to prophesy the "Word of the Lord". Spiritual leader Dalai Lama feels the need of a third religion which is neither theistic or non-theistic, but one that creates a greater awareness of our interdependence on nature to deal with climate and environmental changes with the help of science. For the Dalai Lama "the earth is our home and our home is on fire" We need to take action to put out this fire.

— A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim



"if a picture could speak a 1000 words....!"

— Contributed by Audrey D'Souza

Teachers' Day 2020 Online!

It was Aristotle who said, "Teachers, who educate children, deserve more honour than parents, who merely gave them birth; for the latter provided mere life, while the former ensured a good life." And so it is that reverence for one's teachers has long been a tradition the world over, India being no exception. Indeed, that reverence, which runs deep in Indian culture dating back centuries, the 'guru-shishya' tradition, or *parampara* ("lineage"), denoting as it does a succession of teachers and disciples in traditional Vedic culture cutting across religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism (both Tibetan and Zen) is legendary! Each *sampradāya* (spiritual tradition - Sanskrit: सम्प्रदाय),

its own *akharas* (or *akhada* - Sanskrit and Hindi: अखाडा, shortened to *khara* - Hindi: खाडा) denoting a place of training and practice with lodge and board, both in the context of Indian martial artists or a *sampradāya* monastery for religious renunciates in the tradition of the *gurukulas* (where the pupil lives with the guru for the duration of his education). Mentoring in this steadily developing bond involved teachings (or imparting of knowledge), whether Vedic, agamic, architectural, musical or spiritual, being transmitted from a *guru* ("teacher" - Sanskrit: गुरु) to a *shishya* ("disciple" - Sanskrit: शिष्य) or *chela*.

Effects of genuine teaching . . .

Interestingly, such a relationship, based on the genuineness of the guru, the respect unlinked to attributes such as age, looks, commitment, devotion and obedience on the part of the student, has ever made

for a very profound way of transmitting knowledge. The student eventually masters the knowledge that the guru embodies, further proving true what Gerald Belcher says: "The best education is not given to students; it is drawn out of them." A natural offshoot of the entire process is *Guru Purnima*, a tradition of gratitude to all gurus, whether spiritual or academic, who as enlightened humans, have generously shared their wisdom with nary an eye



by Ladislaus L
D'Souza

on monetary compensation, based rather on *Karma Yoga*. Incidentally, the word *Guru* is derived from two Sanskrit roots, *gu* implying darkness or ignorance, and *ru* denoting dispeller of that darkness/ignorance. This significant festival which was revived by Mahatma Gandhi to pay tribute to his spiritual guru, Shrimad

Rajchandra (1867-1901), is annually celebrated in India, Nepal and Bhutan by Hindus, Jains and Buddhists on full moon day (*Purnima*) of the month of *Ashadha* (June-July) in the Hindu calendar.

Teachers' Day, India

It is in this context that Teachers' Day celebrated annually in India on 5 September takes on added significance. Interestingly, the person to whom Teachers' Day in India owes its origin is the Late Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the first Vice President of Independent India and its second President. When Radhakrishnan ascended the country's Presidentship in 1962, he was approached by some of his friends and students with a request to be allowed to celebrate his birthday, 5 September. The President, a renowned Scholar and educationist, replied: "Instead of a private celebration of my birthday, I would consider it

a privilege to have 5 September observed as Teachers' Day in the country." Such a request coming from the President of the Republic of India, an advocate of edification, a distinguished envoy and, above all, a great teacher himself who once said that "teachers should be the best minds in the country", clearly demonstrated his affection for teachers and dedication to the teaching profession.

Born in 1888 in a Telugu speaking Niyogi Brahmin family in Tiruttani of Chittoor District down South, this small city boy never minced words when acknowledging the great role played by education in his steady rise to the status of an esteemed politician and a visionary educationist.

A man of great erudition

Dr Radhakrishnan, who is known to have made significant contributions to several established journals on a variety of subjects covering theoretical, theological, moral, instructive, communal and enlightening subjects, was awarded the country's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna in 1954 and is—hold your breath!—the only Indian to date [and probably the first non-Christian ever] to have been awarded the **Order of the Golden Spur** by the Vatican City State during the visit of Pope Paul VI to India in December 1964!

Jacques Martin Barzun, a French-American historian known for his studies of the history of ideas and cultural history, and who passed away barely eight years ago, says: "In teaching you cannot see the fruit of a day's work. It is invisible and remains so, maybe for twenty years." Rightfully, then, on Teachers' Day, teachers



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and students alike have the golden opportunity to re-look at 'teaching' as much more than a profession—as a vocation of sorts. And a godly one at that, for a **teacher is essentially a moulder of minds and thus the ruler of hearts that he or she can either make or break for the rest of the child's life.** The story of the half-empty bottle of perfume and broken bracelet that appeared in the *Sierra Vista Herald* (Newspaper) on Christmas Eve 1997 (in a column by Steve Woody, publisher of the Montrose Daily Press, Montrose, Colorado) is too significant to be overlooked!

Standing before her new fifth-grade class, Mrs Thompson told her students an 'opening-day-of-school' lie: that she loved them all alike and would treat them all alike—a lie whose significance she herself would remember the rest of her life, conscious as she was that such loving was obviously impossible because there in row in front of her, sat a kid slumped in his seat.

The teacher noticed that the lad, named Teddy Stoddard, didn't mix with the other children at play. A seemingly unpleasant child, always unkempt and ever in need of a bath, got from her nothing but 'Xs' on his worksheets, each topped by an 'F'! Poor little sullen Teddy, no one seemed to care for his presence at all!

Incidentally, the teacher, who was required to review each child's records had, somehow, because of rising pressures on the home front apart from classroom demands, managed to get to Teddy's file last, only to be stunned by its contents that indicated how from the brightness and neatness noted in his 1st Grade remark, his condition had turned into one of hopelessness, his mother's terminal illness and death hitting him hard. Her eyes now opened, Mrs Thompson was, one day, suddenly faced with reality as, on the last day before the Christmas holidays, her pupils all

brought her presents wrapped in bright paper and colourful ribbons—all, except Teddy, whose gift was clumsily heaped in a grocery sack, which on being opened, yielded a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a bottle of perfume barely a quarter full, causing a ripple of laughter among the kids, she herself stifling a giggle by commenting on how pretty the bracelet looked and by daubing some of the perfume on her wrist. The day done and the children all out of the classroom, Teddy stayed back awhile to say: "Mrs Thompson, you smelled just like my mom used to." That was enough for the sudden tide of tears welling up in her eyes to flow unhindered behind the closed door of her classroom. By the time the surge had abated an hour later, she had resolved to stop teaching reading, writing and such other stuff and to start paying due attention to the one child named Teddy Stoddard. And as she worked with him, she witnessed his mind coming alive, every word and act of encouragement drawing from him a faster response. As for the days when tests were scheduled, Mrs Thompson would remember to dab a little of that special perfume.

To cut a long story short, Teddy, amazingly, went on to become one of her smartest and pet pupils in class, and she, his favourite teacher whom he kept regularly updated as regards his academic progress, graduating with the highest honours, eventually signing his name as "Theodore F. Stoddard, MD"! In time, she willingly accepted his invite to sit in the place of the mother of the bridegroom at his wedding, making sure she wore both the half stoned bracelet and that special perfume!

Not for nothing does Teachers' Day remind students of the efforts put in by their teachers to ensure that they get proper education, besides enabling teachers to look forward with joy to a celebration of their love and patience and due recognition of their efforts by students and former students alike.

Relevance of teachers and teach-

ing . . .

William Arthur Ward, a renowned writer of the 20th century puts it very succinctly when he says: "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." What relevance, however, does a teacher and 'Teachers' Day' have in a situation like the ongoing pandemic that has necessitated a total lockdown involving most sadly the closure of all educational institutions, thus blocking all possibilities of any interaction between teachers and students? Well, if a clap involves two hands, the onus is on both the teacher and the student to ensure that the pandemic and the lockdown, neither of which can obviously be of a permanent nature, does in no way diminish the value of 'teaching' and of the 'teacher' per se and, consequently, of Teachers' Day. Whilst the general populace awaits with bated breath the arrival of a vaccine to counter COVID-19 and a return to normalcy following a general lifting of the lockdown, educational institutions are said to be reinforcing efforts to ensure that teaching via media apps helps maintain the status quo whereby education continues uninterrupted. Of course, neither online teaching nor online learning is cakewalk as is evident from comments floating around – absence of the classroom atmosphere and discipline, lack of accountability as such in terms of student participation and so on.

"Good teaching," avers Sydney J. Harris, the famed American journalist of the last century, "must be slow enough so that it is not confusing, and fast enough so that it is not boring." Speaking from personal experience - as a primary school student, I never knew what it was to cry, except when beaten by my mother for being naughty! And so it was that when during class in primary school, I was pulled up for being distracted, I couldn't help but laugh. My teacher, Thelma D'Souza of happy memory, seized the opportunity to lighten the atmosphere in the classroom by re-

(Contd.. on p. 9)

GOD'S



Wonderful Gift

Dear Readers,

Like me, the majority of you would be able to see the print of this magazine and feel its glossy surface. We are able to hear our favourite song and perhaps sing it. Furthermore, we are able to enjoy the fragrance of a mogra flower and relish the taste of a well prepared bhel puri. The gift of our five senses is something we take for granted.

A teacher once asked her class to name the Seven Wonders of the World. Pat came the usual answers of architectural marvels created by man. One bright little girl, however, answered that the wonders were God's generous gifts of love, laughter and the five senses including that of hearing. For those who are profoundly deaf from birth and their families, hearing opens shut doors to endless possibilities of learning and activity once out of their reach. It is one of the seven wonders. Hence the invention of the cochlear implant is indeed a miracle.

The miracle workers at Holy Family Hospital (HFH), Bandra, Mumbai are none other than Dr. Chris de Souza, MS, DORL, DNB, FACS, FRCS, and his team of ENT surgeons, audiologists, a speech therapist, a social worker, a co-ordinator and the nuns of HFH who have extended full support to this noble endeavour. Dr. Chris and his team have restored the hearing of around 200 patients, mainly children.

The cochlear implant program at HFH is open to all, irrespective of community, location in India and income group. Each cochlear implant, including training, costs around Rs.

8 lakhs. Generous donors such as Salman Khan and Ratan Tata, and other smaller donors have enabled these operations to take place on underprivileged children. On his part, Dr. Chris waives his charges. A gurdwara has offered its services to provide food and accommodation for Rs. 100 a day for those hailing from other parts of the country. Generous donors have pitched in to defray these nominal costs for those who cannot afford them.

The cochlear implant is a device that directly stimulates the auditory nerve endings through electrical impulses conveyed through tiny wires. It consists of two units. The external unit is outside the ear. Its function is to collect sound waves through a microphone and transmit them digitally to the implant which is an internal device that bypasses the damaged portion of the inner ear. After the operation, extensive speech training has to be imparted to the recipients.

In India four out of hundred children are born with hearing loss. Regrettably many cases are not detected and the child's lack of response to sound is misinterpreted as low IQ. Experts say that it is better to operate on the child at an earlier age as a child who cannot hear is unable to learn to talk and it becomes a challenge to teach the child. To address this issue, HFH has an audiology department which is housed in a cheerful room with attractive paintings. It has state of the art equipment that facilitates the very accurate evaluation of the hearing of new born children. This is needed because very small children cannot speak and are therefore unable to tell anyone if they can hear or not.

I was privileged to be invited to a program for children who have received implants and their parents on 3rd March 2020 which is International Hearing Day hosted by HFH. After brief talks parents of children who have received cochlear transplants were invited to speak briefly. The beaming mother of Mohd Azam had good reason to call Dr. Chris the 'Godfather' of deaf children. Mohd was treated as a Special child prior to the implant. He is now going to a normal school where he is progressing well. The cochlear implant has enabled Radhika to pursue Bharat Natyam. I met Radhika's mother and she proudly told me that Radhika will be performing shortly in Karnataka. The excitement on the faces of the young recipients of the implants was palpable as they came forward with their parents to be felicitated. The children then performed for us. They joyfully danced, sang and recited poems for those present. What a delightful way of celebrating the gift of sound!

But it is not only children who have benefited from cochlear implant. Implants have been successfully conducted on older patients as well. At the function Dr. Chris spoke about a young lady who was severely hearing impaired. This lady was the sole bread winner of her family. She was about to lose her job when she started getting blind. She went through with the cochlear implant and was thus able to save her job.

For enquiries, HFH contact: email : cochlearimplantholyhospital@gmail.com.

Monica Fernandes

Pandemic And Praying Time

(Contd.. from p. 7)

As nations across the world implement social distancing measures, ban large gatherings and close all non-essential businesses and places to slow the spread



of the COVID-19 disease and we among the millions of worshippers who can no longer visit religious sites or participate in communal prayer will have to look for different options. Like work from home, the process of working we can plan and pray in the best way possible at home. Some of the world's largest and most historic religious sites are shutting their doors for the first time.

When you hear many voices singing prayer, you find your voice in the voice of others. That has the capacity to make you feel part of a body of worshippers. When you hear many voices singing prayer, you find your voice in the voice of others. That has the capacity to make you feel part of a body of worshippers but now group praying is not possible. What religion offers to the solitary individual is that he or she is part of something greater than themselves. What could more demonstrate that than being with a group of other people?



Jayanthy Subramaniam

As we failed to get momentum and forced to pray indoors it is time we have to look for the family people to join you in a silent prayer. All the religious places are closed down due to pandemic and as a responsible citizen of India we must adhere to social distancing norms. Thousands of Hindu pilgrims who perform daily rituals and visit temples in the Indian holy city of Varanasi are impacted by India's recent nationwide curfew, as are the country's Muslim, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist communities. We are creatures that need to be alone for

the time being. As an alternative you can accompany your grandson and pray for the welfare of the society. And worship with other people has the ca-

capacity to lift one above themselves but that is not practically possible.

Praying in a pandemic, the communal worship is hard to resist for some but that is the order of the day. Many churches, synagogues and mosques have closed for the first time, but some cannot resist group prayer despite risks. A musical balm to lift spirits in the time of pandemic is to be arrived at due balance our praying time within the four walls of your house. Elders try their best to raise the spirits of the

people during the pandemic. It was "strange that the State governments were opening up activities involving economic interests but cite the COVID-19 pandemic when it came to religious activities and the devotees are highly disappointed. With the result they arrange for online group singing and that is followed by the other groups all over the country. They fix time through online viewing and pray to God in a group sitting at home. This is the order of the day during the pandemic.

It is time for the residents to pray for eradication of coronavirus and that may ease out the prayer process and provide an opportunity to come together in a group praying position. The Vatican called the service An Extraordinary Prayer in the Time of Pandemic, a sombre echo of an announcement by Italian officials minutes earlier that the coronavirus death toll in the country had surged highest. It is time to pray to God and look for a vaccine or a preventive medicine for survival in this universe.

torting: "Ladislaus! Don't laugh from your gap!" the gap she referred to being the space of a missing tooth in my laughter!

Teachers, as real icons of knowledge and wisdom, nourish and prepare their students for the future. In a world darkened due to ignorance, they are a source of light, creating as they do due awareness among students and common folk, not merely by their teaching but by the example of their lives. It is said that the French army under Napoleon that went out to fight other European nations was not carrying arms merely to promote the glory of France, but rather they were convinced that they were fighting to promote "*Equality, Fraternity and Liberty*" for the whole of humanity. Napoleon won many a battle not solely by his military skills, but because he knew how to sustain this highly motivating spirit of the French Revolution among his fighting men. Isn't that precisely what our teachers have done, in the process standing tall as the true pillars of our success! It is their motivational attitude that has helped us garner knowledge, hone our skills, deepen our confidence and eventually choose the right path to success!

Gratitude online!

Frankly, pandemic or no pandemic, lockdown or no lockdown, the internet age in which we live offers us vast scope for demonstrating our gratitude and thoughtfulness in ways both instant in action and creative in content. And talking of creativity brings to mind Albert Einstein's words: "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge." Teachers' Day affords us an ideal opportunity to show them online, in ways they wouldn't have dreamed otherwise, our gratitude for the crucial role they have played in our student lives and thus in nation building.

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Turgid Flows The River

A Short Story

Once again, Asha felt a pang of doubt. Hurriedly, she changed into her purple cotton sari, for that was the one everyone in the village admired the most. She noted the hour of the day, like the farmers did from watching the sun rise, and, this time she was certain she would discover his reason for being always so late down at the river collecting clay.

Asha recalled telling him earlier that the clay oven needed repair and he had, in his carefree way, told her not to worry. That was, she mused, only last night. He had left the hut when it was quite dark, when only the rooster dared to crow at the fading face of night. Now, she reasoned, it would be almost three hours since he had left, and the river was only a few minutes' walk away.

Outside, the village was still and a cool summer breeze brushed its lips over the tree tops of the neem and tamarind trees. The village folk were slowly coming out of their homes: farmers to the open paddy fields, young women with their water vessels and a few elderly women at their ovens and some at the tulsi plant in front of their homes, to sprinkle it with clean water.

She raced down the familiar path that led to the river. She saw Kamala at the village well, wearing the same faded pink sari, outsized bangles and a cheap silver ring on her left hand. Asha did not hail out to her, it was no good involving strangers in a family problem, she thought.

Vinod, her husband, by nature was loving and caring, but like most men in the village, a little attracted to other women. She remembered doing so much to keep him interested in

her – yet, now when he was late bringing the river clay for the oven, she was a bit suspicious. Why couldn't she trust Vinod? Was it because she loved him, or was there any truth in the fact that she might be jealous, she would never know. Now, as she tripped down the narrow lane, Asha was certain he would be there – and not alone, after all, he was a handsome young man in the village and married, most single girls took advantage of the fact.



BY MELVYN BROWN

She smiled to herself. How silly of her, she kept repeating, to imagine that her friends: Gita, Roma or Rhea would have anything to do with him. Never, she scolded herself. But there, it was said. It was out in the open.

The river flowed endlessly, without stopping.... Asha reached the spot where Vinod ought to have been. His clay baskets were not there, the large one and the smaller one- nor the spade he used to scoop up the clay. She looked around but only the wind seemed to blow and sigh at her. The birds circled in the crimson-grey of the early morning. Where had Vinod gone? Was there a problem?

Then, like an apparition, Gita appeared. Asha wept, looked at the girl a long time as her tears flowed, her eyes were already thickly filmed with tears. But Gita was the understanding type of woman. She put her arm around Asha in a tender and moving way – like a young mother would.

"Why,, o Asha? Why?" asked Gita sympathetically.

"I came to see if Vinod was here," she replied with a sob abjectly, adding: " He left the house early to bring home the river clay – our oven is cracking....."

"I know. I know." Affirmed Gita." Come, you must not wait here. Vinod will....perhaps, he is at home waiting for you, yes."

"Are you sure? "Asha asked keeping back her tears, asking herself, that's if you're not hiding him somewhere. It was quite unlikely, Asha mused on second thought, Gita was an honest friend, she wouldn't....

Carefully, over the wet sand and beyond the dry, dusty road, they made their way back to the village. There were still not many people moving around, not even the children who, at home were getting ready to walk the mile to learn. Two women in the distance were walking close to each other, for one was supporting the failing strength of the other.

Back in her hut, Asha looked frantically all around in wild wonder. She turned towards Gita seeking support. She wanted to hear something, anything to calm her nerves, the dry and parched tongue was begging for a drop of water.

"Don't worry, dear." Said Gita in a consoling voice.

"But, where is Vinod?"

"Vinod will come, you must be patient."

"Yes. Yes, of course. Thank you Gita," She said and held her hand.

"Now, I must leave. You will be all right, yes?"

Asha nodded meekly.

A stray dog in the village seeing Gita leaving the hut, wagged his

(Contd.. on p. 13)

Sycophancy Isn't Funny

Ouch! They've done it again. Those Gandhi topi wearing Congress wallahs. The original Gandhi topi has been replaced by another Gandhi hat – the obsequious and sycophantic one, before the descendants of another Gandhi – Indira.

This sycophancy was at its worst display at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) held on March 24th August, to discuss a letter written by 23 Congress “dissenters”. Firstly, it is wrong to call the letter writers dissenters. They were only asking for a revamp of the functioning and leadership of their party, having included a caveat that they had utmost respect for the mother-son Gandhi duo of Sonia – Rahul.



by chhotebhai *

My mother was a member of the All India Congress Committee (Indira) as also the U.P. Congress Committee (Indira); though she chose to go with the Congress (O) during the Emergency, and later rejoined the Congress. However, I have never been a fan of the Congress, post the Emergency. I also hold Indira Gandhi responsible for the bifurcation of Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh; thereby creating a permanent enemy on the western front, and burdening the country with refugees from Bangladesh in the East.

Over the years I have voted for the Janata Party, Janata Dal, CPM and Samajwadi Party, depending on who the candidate was. It was only after Manmohan Singh (MMS) became Prime Minister that I began voting for the Congress. But in the last municipal election I voted for my friend who had left the Congress to join AAP. This is my political caveat.

After the Congress debacle of 2014, where Rahul Gandhi had led the charge, I had written a widely published article “Why Rahul should Quit”. I had then advocated that Rahul Baba take a two-year sabbatical from politics, go and live or marry his girl friend abroad, and leave the Congress to its fate. However, after the Congress won the three State elections of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan I had reversed my opinion to write another article “Pappu can Dance”, based on his nickname and a popular Bollywood song.

After the 2019 debacle, when Rahul resigned as Congress President and made appropriate noises that a non-Gandhi should lead the party, I thought it was a wise and humble decision. But reverting to his mother as the interim President meant that the Congress had taken one step forward and two steps backward. The “resolution” passed at the recently concluded CWC meeting can best be described as a huge leap backwards for Congresskind.

In 2004 when Sonia asked MMS to be Prime Minister she was hailed for heeding her conscience. However, I felt that it was more of a conscientious decision because she knew that she had zero administrative experience. The Damocles Sword of Bofors would also be hanging over her. So she made a wise and practical decision to step aside.

In more recent times the Congress made two huge blunders. When the time came for a new Rashtrapati, they should have made MMS, the venerable statesman, the President. Instead they chose Pranab Mukherjee, who should have been made Prime Minister then. But the Gandhi parivar was always wary of Pranabda, because he had the intelligence and political ac-

men to upstage the Gandhis. And the latter did not want to lose their personal fiefdom, the Congress party. The second blunder was when Rahul, the brash babalog, tore up an ordinance passed by the Government. That was a direct insult to the Government led by MMS. Had MMS then resigned, or if Pranabda had become Prime Minister, the course of Indian politics would have been very different today.

As a result the country is now caught in a cleft stick between the Gandhi parivar on the left and the Sangh parivar on the right. The nation is the poorer for it.

At the CWC meeting Rahul baba indignantly objected to the letter writers doing what they did when his mother was sick; even though one of the main votaries, Gulab Nabi Azad, was at pains to say that the letter was delivered only after he had ascertained that Sonia was fit. Sycophants then jumped into the fray accusing the letter writers of collusion with the BJP, resulting in Rahul actually having to phone Kapil Sibal to say that he had not done so. But the smokescreen had been raised, no matter who actually lit the fire, or now, the pyre of the Congress!

The CWC meeting has raised more questions than it has answered. If Sonia has been unwell, and for quite some time; then why is she clinging to the chair? How does she justify her being so easily convinced by her sycophantic durbar to continue in office? It smells of hypocrisy. The same goes for the sibling duo of Rahul-Priyanka. Why do they make public statements saying that a non-Gandhi should lead the Congress, and then act in a way that gives quite the opposite message?

When the Congress was in power at



(Contd.. from p. 12)

the Centre for ten years, Rahul could have easily become a minister, and learnt the art of administration. He also seldom participated in parliamentary debates. He wanted power without the attendant responsibility. This is obvious from his behaviour at the CWC meeting, including his silence on not being the next Congress President, if and when his mother relinquishes office.

I always held MMS in great esteem. But now he too had joined the bandwagon of sycophants, most of whom are half his age. He should graciously withdraw from active politics. Only then will history be kinder to him as he has sometimes stated.

Sycophants insist that it is the Gandhi family that is the glue that binds the Congress together. This speaks very poorly of the party. It is also a whopping lie. Sonia was anathema to Mulayam Singh Yadav, which is why he refused to support her claim to form a government in 1998/99. She was also anathema to Sharad Pawar, who together with Purno Sangma and Tariq Anwar broke away to form the National Congress Party (NCP). Sangma's son Conrad, has now aligned with the BJP in Meghalaya. In Andhra, a Congress bastion, YS Reddy's son Jagmohan also chose to cut his umbilical cord with the Congress, as did Mamta Banerjee in Bengal. Earlier Ajit Jogi, former Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh had also quit the Congress.

Ironically Jogi, Sangma and Reddy are all Christians. This gives the lie to another canard of the Sangh parivar that all Christians are lackeys of the Congress, and that Sonia is a plant of the Vatican to convert India to Christianity!

More recently young stars like Priyanka Chaturvedi joined the Shiv Sena and Jyotiraditya Scindia the BJP. Both have been rewarded with the membership of the Rajya Sabha. It is obvious that the Gandhi's cannot recognize the talent in others, precisely because of the lack of wisdom

that they suffer from. Far from being the glue, the Gandhis are actually the sticky point for many others who share the left-centrist vision of the founders of the grand old party.

This begs the question about the future of other bright Congressman like Shashi Tharoor, Kapil Sibal, Gulam Nabi Azad, Manish Tiwari and Anand Sharma. Will they too be sidelined in the Gandhi Party (why call it the Congress now)? What will be their political future? Will they be content to play second fiddle to the incompetent Gandhi parivar, or will they look for greener pastures?

Will Sharad Pawar, the wily old fox, who outwitted the BJP in Maharashtra, extend them a welcoming hand to make the NCP a national alternative to the BJP? Will other prominent fence sitters like Abhishek Manu Singhvi and the Chidambarams also jump ship? Time will tell. Watch this space, for in the Congress there is place only for sycophants; and its not funny.

• *The writer is the National Convenor of the Indian Catholic Forum. The views are personal.*

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(Contd.. from p. 11)

tail frantically and barked and followed her in a series of leaps and bounds. From time to time Gita bent down and tapped the dog on the head.

Then, she met Kamala returning from having filled her 'sorai's' with clean water for drinking and cooking. "I saw you with Asha", Said Kamala.

"Yes. It happened again," announced Gita sadly.

"Poor Asha," whispered Kamala. "And it's over a year since Vinod was drowned in the turgid waters of the river."

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Ridge Point : SW Monsoon water flow

Water dependent India, agriculture oriented folks of the south, as those in Mumbai, Goa and along the West Coast on the shores of the Arabian Sea are aware that June to September is the time for the 'Southwest Monsoon'. A season of principal rainy season for the Indian subcontinent. This is the monsoon all over the country; receiving nearly 75% of its rainfall during this period. In 2020 as predicted it has been hyper active and rain has been in excess so far - signs are that the monsoon will soon abate.

It withdraws from the extreme north-west by the beginning of September, progressively receding southwards. The east coast is considered a rain shadow region as it lies on the eastern, leeward side of western ghats. The rain water flows west into the Arabian Sea and east into the Bay of Bengal. Many of us have at some time or the other wondered where and how this division of water significantly happens.

Flow of rain water East & West :

It is noteworthy that "Ridge Point" near Sakleshpur, not far from Hassan in Western Ghats of Karnataka — The direction of flow of the rainfall is decided at this point significantly. From here, it either ends up in the Arabian Sea or in the Bay of Bengal.

This stone laid by British officers on this ridge has inscribed on it the words Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal. If you travel towards Sakleshpur from Bisle Ghat, you will reach



a scenic hamlet called Mankanahalli just 5 kms from Bisle. There you'll find an inscription laid on a concrete platform. The inscription makes a mention of the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and the 'Ridge'. This is the point in the mountains that determines which way rivers or streams are likely to flow. The natural distribution of rain water

Monsoon Water flow from Western Ghats

between the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal taking place at Mankanahalli, at the platform which also affords scenic spots at the tri-junction of Hassan, Madikeri and Dakshina Kannada. From this spot, one can have a panoramic view towards the sea coast.

British officers conducting topographical surveys of the Western Ghats

found that it was the point where rain water splits and reaches two different seas. The rain water from the series of hills and mountains to the left of this point flows towards the west drainage basins that feed into the Arabian Sea while water from the eastern side drains into the Bay of Bengal.

The small rivers and streams that flow westward from this "Ridge point" join the Kumaradhara and Nethravathi rivers after a short run varying from 20 km - 60 km and finally meet the Arabian Sea. The eastward flowing water from this ridge flows for a

length as tributaries of the Hemavathi river and is useful for irrigation and drinking water purposes. Water flowing to the east links up with River Hemavathy, a tributary of River Cauvery, to culminate its journey in the Bay of Bengal after flowing through Tamil Nadu. Such ridge points are seen in the hilly regions of Western Ghats and determine water flow to rivers either flowing west or east. Another such ridge point is at Kalasa in Mudigere where water flows separately to Sringeri and Mudigere. Similarly, water flowing from Pushpagiri Hills of Madikeri gets 'split' into two-one reaches River Cauvery and the other River Kumaradhara, which flows towards Mangaluru and joins the Arabian Sea there.

- Compiled :
Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

Saint Junipero Serra: Mark Of The Finest

By Melvyn Brown

“**F**riar Junipero... was one of the founding fathers of the United States, a saintly example of the Church’s universality and special patron of the Hispanic people of the country.” _Pope Francis

The trees and branches of the Catholic Faith have been seeded and grown by saints, prophets, mystics, and those lay apostles chosen by God. Men and women have risked their lives against the evil from Satanic forces out to destroy the culture and religions of the world.

One such brave heart saint was a Catholic Spanish priest and friar of the Franciscan Order. He was destined to become the first Franciscan Missionary to establish his Order and missions in the Sierra Gorda, today, a World Heritage site.

Saint Junipero Serra, O.F.M. earned the title of “Apostle of California.” The irony of destiny, combined with the ignorance of those protestors who follow blindly their leaders, the saint who went to the battlefield with only a cross in his hand was to be maligned a racist. This is the true and incredible story of one man’s courage to heal the wounds of the nation’s natives and to convert thousands of poor souls to a way of life in Christ, much against the Spanish army and their cruelty, he had been sent to be a Catholic priest for the spiritual needs of the soldiers.

In 1769 a Spanish expedition was sent to California to conquer and to find the historic treasures of gold

which was said to be hidden in the seven cities. The Spanish soldiers went to kill and loot whatever they could, while Father Junipero went with a cross to save souls.



The Franciscan missionaries went under the leadership of Junipero to build schools, hospitals and churches for worship after bringing the natives to the Christian faith. A strong network of Catholic missions started from the port of San Diego where they landed.

Saint Junipero was truly a holy man of God who had compassion and love for those suffering under the hard and bitter stand taken by the Spanish army.

There were times when the priest did not always approve of the natives way of life, but respected their views as children of God. His understanding and kindness won over many thousands of the Indians to Catholicism. Saint Junipero the Spanish friar had to cope with the struggle put up by the natives and his missionary vision

of establishing for God a land and a people to be proud of, who would find a place in the modern world.

Father Junipero admitted that without God’s providence and his religious brothers tireless efforts, the missions might have failed.

The story of Saint Junipero was made into a Hollywood film called, The Seven Cities of Gold. Conquest and adventure was to become the seed to understanding the saints mission, a spiritual drive centered on education and mission.

Father Junipero Serra after almost 200 years received the approval and reward for his dedication, courage and faith. The “Apostle of California” was to be raised to the high altar of Holy Mother the Church as a Saint.

Pope Francis canonized Junipero a saint at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on 23 September 2015.

The Pontiff spoke about the elected saint with a strong sense of respect for the man. Pope Francis made it clear that Saint Junipero did not enslave the natives, but educated them, gave them a place in the ways of the Western world. “ Saint Junipero is a saintly example of the Church’s universality and special patron of the Hispanic people of the country. “ He is also included among the Saints of the United States and Mexico.

Saint Junipero Serra died on 28 August 1784. He was laid to rest at Carmel Mission Basilica Museum, Carmel-by-the-Sea. His feast is on 28 July .

Little boy and barber

A barber whispers to his customer, "This is the dumbest kid in the world. Watch while I prove it to you." The barber puts a dollar bill in one hand and two quarters in the other, then calls the boy over and asks, "Which do you want, son?" The boy takes the quarters and leaves. "What did I tell you?" said the barber. "That kid never learns!" Later, when the customer leaves, he sees the same young boy coming out of the ice cream store. "Hey, son! May I ask you a question? Why did you take the quarters instead of the dollar bill?" The boy licked his cone and replied, "Because the day I take the dollar, the game is over!"

Chinese restaurant menu

A Punjabi man went to a restaurant in China.

Chinese waiter: Sir, I have stewed liver, fried kidney, boiled tongue and frozen legs.

Punjabi man: Yaar, tu apni problems chhod. Menu card le aa.

*contributed by: Jubel D'Cruz,
Dombivli, Mumbai*

A red-faced judge convened court after a long lunch. The first case involved a man charged with drunk driving who claimed it simply wasn't true.

"I'm as sober as you are, your honor," the man claimed.

The judge replied, "Clerk, please enter a guilty plea. The defendant is sentenced to 30 days."

"I'm practicing law," whispered Pete. "But don't tell mother. She thinks I'm still a pimp."

Why should lawyers wear lots of sunscreen when vacationing at a beach resort?

Because they're used to doing all of their lying indoors.

ATTORNEY: She had three children, right?



WITNESS: Yes.

ATTORNEY: How many were boys?

WITNESS: None.

ATTORNEY: Were there any girls?

WITNESS: Your Honor, I think I need a different attorney. Can I get a new attorney?

ATTORNEY: Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

WITNESS: Did you actually pass the bar exam?

A mother-in-law explaining work to her newly wed Daughter-in-law.

"I am Home Minister as well as Finance Minister of this house, your Father-in-law is the Foreign Minister, my Son, I mean your husband runs the Ministry of Demand and Supply, and, my daughter runs Planning & Development Ministry. Now you tell me which Ministry would you like to run?"

Daughter-in-law instantly replied with a smile, "Dear mother-in-law, I'll be the leader of OPPOSITION...."

Journalist ::: "Mr Malema I hear you are a bread winner at home...."

Julius Malema ::: "You know, you must not believe everything you hear about me, people are jealous of me. I have never entered any bread competition in my life. Who ever said I'm a bread winner must bring proof... he must show us the entry for which says Julius Malema entered the competition...its a lie I'm not bread winner...How can I be a bread winner if I didn't enter any bread competition.."

The wife checked her husband's phone and found these names:

- The Tender one
- The Amazing one
- Lady of my Dreams

She got angry and called the first number to find out that was his Mother. Then she called the second number on which his Sister replied. When she dialed the third number, her own phone rang !!

She cried until her eyes got swollen because she had doubted her innocent husband, So she gave him her whole month's salary to make up for it...

Husband took the money and bought a gift for his girlfriend whose name was saved as "Ghafoor Bhai mechanic"

Dear sis Dolly,

I'm married for 17 years. Every time my wife and I have a misunderstanding she demands transport money for her 3 brothers who stay in Witbank to come + beat me up here in Midrand.

After they have beaten me, I must still give them transport money back to Witbank.

What can I do please? I'm spending a lot. - Sipho.

Sis Dolly:

"Dear Sipho, I sympathize with you. I suggest you and your wife move to Witbank to save costs and so that you can get beaten there free of charge.

With love,

Sis Dolly

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ONE RUPEE for A NEW INDIA

Just a couple of days before his retirement from the Supreme Court, Justice Arun Mishra gave (perhaps unwittingly) the people of India a very special gift: a ONE RUPEE COIN! It was in the form of the 'punishment' meted out to senior public interest lawyer and activist Prashant Bhushan for the contempt of court case against him. Bhushan was already found 'guilty' and the quantum of 'punishment' was only to be given. It was done on 31 August a little after the clock struck twelve noon! The 82-pages sentencing judgement concludes with, "We, therefore, sentence the contemnor with a fine or(SIC)Re. 1/-(Rupee one) to be deposited with the Registry of this court by 15.09.2020, failing which he shall undergo a simple imprisonment for a period of three months and further be debarred from practicing in this Court for a period of three years"(#93)

It was perhaps one of the most high-profile cases in the Supreme Court in recent times. Bhushan after all, is a well-known lawyer and has taken up cudgels on behalf of the poor, the excluded and the exploited; it has always been against the powerful, the vested interests and of course the ruling regime -particularly the current political dispensation. The immediate provocation wastwo tweets Bhushan made in June; first against four former Chief Justices and in a second tweet against the current Chief Justice. As the case unfolded it was clear that Bhushan would never relent besides Justice Mishra was well known in givingfavourable judgementsto the likes

of the BJP/RSS and other powerful groups.

Justice Mishra said that they were "showing magnanimity" by not imposing a severe punishment. He is fooling no one! There would have been 'magnanimity', if he had declared the entire case null and void and apologized to Bhushan for all the mental trauma he has caused him, for the tremendous loss of resources and time and if he had decided to look objectively at all the charges of corruption against past



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH

and sitting judges. Instead by awarding the Re 1/- fine he has initiated a national movement;where hundreds of people who stand up for democratic principles, for truth and justice, for Constitutional values and certainly **SJ** for Prashant Bhushan, were spontaneously ready to put the Re1/- into the kitty. Re 1/- is mainly in coins today; but the ordinary citizen is short-changed all the time. If you pay in cash with a big note or coin, the small change (particularly the Re1/-) is hardly returned. In fact, one cannot get one of those 'masala' pouches or even a gulp of tea, today for Re 1/-. That coin has become useless; today it is pregnant with meaning! It is not about a 'token' punishment; it has become suddenly a powerful symbol of a resilient and new India waiting for change, ready to overthrow all those who have been destroying every sacred institution of our democracy!

One needs to re-visit the sequence of this case :on 27 June (the day after the anniversary of the 1975 emergency in India)Bhushan wrote a one-sentence

tweet opining about the Indian Supreme Court's role in eroding freedoms in the world's largest democracy; he said "When historians in the future look back at the last six years to see how democracy has been destroyed in India even without a formal Emergency, they will particularly mark the role of the SC in this destruction, and more particularly the role of the last four CJIs." Two days later (29 June),his second tweet said,"The CJl rides a Rs 50-lakh motorcycle belonging to a BJP leader at Raj Bhavan, Nagpur, without wearing a mask or helmet, at a time when he keeps the SC on lockdown mode denying citizens their fundamental right to access justice!"; this tweet had a photo of the CJl Bobdeastride a Harley-Davidson.

Some members of India's Apex Court were upset with these tweets. On July 9, 2020, a petition was filed by an advocate, for contempt based on the tweet against the CJl sitting on a motorbike, with an application for exemption from producing consent of the Attorney General (AG) or the Solicitor General (SG). The matter was listed on July 22 before the Bench presided over by Justices Arun Mishra, B R Gavai and Krishna Murari, which passed an order, inter-alia, stating, "this petition was placed before us on the administrative side whether it should be listed for hearing or not as permission of the Attorney General for India has not been obtained by the petitioner to file this petition. After examining the matter on the administrative side, we have directed the matter to be listed before the Court to pass appropriate orders. We have gone through the petition... We take suo motu cognisance of the aforesaid tweet also apart from the tweet quoted above and suo motu register the proceedings... We issue notice to the Attorney General for India and to Mr. Prashant Bhushan, Advocate also." The Supreme Court issued a show cause notice to Bhushan after initiating the criminal contempt against him for his two tweets. Besides this, another suo motu contempt petition was also pending before the same three-judge bench against Bhushan for calling past CJIs corrupt
(Contd.. on p. 22)

Rely On Rain Water Harvesting

Water stock encouraging but do not waste it

**SAVE RAIN WATER -
A CLARION CALL**



It is heartening to note that heavy monsoon rains across Maharashtra and other parts of the country increased water level to considerable extent and it is good news. Monsoon rains have not failed in recent times and we have had rainfall in the last couple of days and that raised our stock level for 200 days full supply. Even though much of the rain water is going to the drains and touch the sea, the lakes are slowly filling up to the brim and we can ensure 24 hours water supply in the days to come. We hope that the rainfall will continue for two more months and we will have sufficient supply of water to manage during the next year as well. This does not mean that we should over use water in the days to come and find a shortage thereafter. Excellent rainfall in the city is a boon to Mumbaikars this monsoon season. However, we should plan and have ways and means to save rain



C.K. Subramaniam

water methodically. Rain water harvesting is done in the Southern state despite having scant rainfall. We Navi Mumbaikars should think in terms of rain water harvesting, so that we can bank on additional sources of water whenever we feel shortage of water. And the water so saved can be used for plants till the time we get next season rains. It is time to plan and have a thought about the future when the monsoon rains touch a new high this year. It is a clarion call to save water.

Rain water harvesting assumes greater importance in a City like Mumbai. It is indeed a pathetic position with so much rain water going to drains. We are at loss how to plan for the future as the city is expanding beyond our expectations and the need for storage of rain water is of greater value when there is absence of rains during one particular monsoon season.

Rain Water Harvesting (RWH) is extremely efficient and cost effective for those who happen to have a traditional dug well in the premises. They just have to connect the various down take pipes from the terrace directly to the well. The down-take pipes can in many cases be connected to one another at a height along the wall and brought down as one bigger pipe and connected to the well. The horizontal connection can be above ground level in places where there is no vehicular movement or concealed just below the ground. The inlet pipe projecting into the well should have an elbow connected to it so that the rain water hits the walls of the well and the water runs smoothly down the walls. Otherwise, the momentum of water falling directly can disturb the mud at the bottom of the well and render water muddy, particularly during the dry season when the water level tends to be low.

Once in two or three years, the well may have to be desilted to remove the deposition of mud at the bottom. The terrace must be swept clean of mud and leaves once in May and again in October. If there are any overhanging branches on the terrace these should be pruned. If not pruned, grills have to be fixed at the out-flow points to retain the leaves. This however, necessitates the need to periodically check the grills during rains, as otherwise the leaves will block the grills and cause clogging. In case of complexes with more than 5 stories, neither dust nor leaves will be found on the terrace. If any food is served on the terrace, the floor should be swept and the food droppings collected. If the terrace is merely washed, the food dropping would end up in the well and contaminate water.

If only bore wells are available, a safe but not very efficient method of charging a bore well would be to dig a pit of 3 or 4 or 5 ft diameter around the



(Contd.. from p. 18)

bore well to a depth of 10 feet say, keeping the volume of rainwater to be handled and then stabilize it with RCC rings. When the casing pipe becomes exposed in the pit, replace the exposed section of the pipe with a machine slotted pipe, leaving the bottom and top one foot portions as it is and cover the slotted section with fine nylon mesh and tie it with polythene cord. Alternatively, make horizontal slits on the exposed section using a hacksaw fixed with double blades. This will result in the rainwater entering the casing pipe after filtration and reaching bottom of the bore well. Although the area for the infiltration of water through the casing pipe during the duration of the rain will be limited, the tank will act as a holding tank for the rainwater, which can go into the casing pipe even after the rain has stopped. You can also replace this section with a pipe bigger in diameter provided with slots or slits and covered with nylon mesh. This will increase the area of the openings in the pipe for entry of the rainwater.

A four-inch layer of blue metal at the bottom of the pit will prevent the mud there from being disturbed by rainwater falling with force. This can also be reduced by fixing an elbow to the inlet pipe and extending it close to the wall. Once in a while, the nylon mesh cloth will have to be hosed with water to free it from any fine mud which may clog it. The well, as also the pit, should be covered with an adequately reinforced concrete cover in several sections so that it can be removed easily by one or two persons for any maintenance. A small service manhole should be provided in the small service manhole should be provided in the cover for periodic inspection of the well or pit. Builders are advised to go in for at least one traditional dugwell in each of their projects as this, generally, will have a good quantity of water and can be sustained by efficient charging of rainwater into it. Electricity consumption for pumping of water will also be much less, compared to deep bore wells because

of the shallow depths of these dugwells. Persons having only bore wells can also think of tapping the shallow water table by going for a tube well to draw the water from shallow depths and could provide a pit around it, as detailed above, with the casing having slits or slots and diverting all the terrace water into the pit to charge the tube well and sustain it.

Alternatively, they can have a shallow well dug around the bore well and provide the exposed section of the casing pipe with slots or slits as detailed above. There are suggestions that the terrace water can be first filtered and then put directly into the bore well casing pipe. This is safe only if the filtration is regularly monitored. Otherwise, extraneous matter may get into the bore well and spoil its functioning. The rainwater falling in the open spaces around the building can also be harvested efficiently and charged to the shallow water table by providing a water trap between columns of the gate and connecting it to an absorption pit. Making rainwater useful for domestic purposes is a right step in the right direction instead of just wasting rainwater. Mumbai should plan some special arrangement like RWH so that we will never face water shortage.

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12 Math Puns and Scripture Counsels!

A pun is a joke exploiting the different meanings of a word! Below are 12!

*Why do plants hate mathematics? Because it gives them 'square' roots! *Why did the bright student get upset when teacher called the student average? Cause it was a 'mean' thing to say! *Why was the fraction fearful about marrying the decimal? Because she would have to 'convert'! *Why does nobody enclose circles? Because there is 'no point'! *Why is the obtuse triangle always so very frustrated? Because it was never 'right'! *Why was the equal sign so humble? Because she knew she 'wasn't greater or lesser' than anyone else!

*What do you call a number that cannot stay in one place? – A 'Roamin numeral'! *I will do algebra, trig, and even statistics. But geometry is where I 'draw the line'! *Why should you never talk to Pi? Because she will go on and on 'forever'! *How do you stay warm in a room? Just huddle in a corner where it is '90 degrees'! *Why is six afraid of seven? Because seven 'eight' nine! *Why did seven eat nine? Because you are supposed to eat 3 square meals a day!

Some Scripture Counsels! "So divide your means in seven ways, or even eight, for you never know what disaster could happen on earth//So remember Your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them'!" (*Ecclesiastes 11:2//12:1*).

**—Dr. Hazel Colaso,
Bandra (W), Mumbai.**

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

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

7151. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1990) Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters in Marketing, Working as a Asst. Marketing Executive. Contact email : emanuelfindz90@gmail.com

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

7155. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1980) Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 67 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 12th std., having own business asm well settled. Contact email : mendoncajeson@gmail.com

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

7157. PUNE : Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1990) Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA (Marketing) & M.Com., working as a Senior Executive, Sales and Development. Contact email : amlahenry11@gmail.com

6986. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1990), Ht. 160 cms, Wt. 66 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate, working for MNC. Contact email : alwyn90lewis@yahoo.com

6982. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1989), Ht. 172 cms, Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. C.A., working as a C.A., Contact email : jpereiranirrh@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

6585. MUMBAI : Mumbai born and broughtup Roman Catholic Bachelor, Handsome, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 78 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. EXTC Engineering, working as a Networking Engineer. Having own accommodation. Contact email : 18.elaine@gmail.com

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

6531. POONA : Tamilian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1975), Ht. 6', Fair Complexion, Handsome, Edn. M.Com., Having well established business. Contact email : tony137@rediffmail.com

6707 MUMBAI : Goan RC bachelor, (Born in June 1975), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., having own business. Seeks a Family oriented girl. Contact email : maxabreo@yahoo.com / maxabreo@vsnl.net

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

6862. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1983), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 72 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., well settled working in Mumbai. Contact email : keith_peter1983@yahoo.co.in

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7160. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS, working as a Senior Merchandiser in a Global Retail Company in Dubai. She was born in Mumbai, schooled in Kuwait and last 5 years settled in Dubai. Seeks a tall, well spoken, independent man, with a good sense of humor, preferably based **ABROAD**. Contact email : prislobo10@gmail.com

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

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 an MNC in USA. Contact email : wilfyjoy1315@gmail.com or call

+91 98603 02527 / + 91 9970172527

7139. MUMBAI : Maharashtrian Protestant Spinster, (Born in May 1993), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 47 kgs, Fair Complexion, good looking, Edn. B.Com., working as a Sr. Advisor in MNC. Contact email : shirley.jadhav@gmail.com

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

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

7067. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1994), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 54 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Chartered Accountant, working for Finance Department in MNC. Contact email : wpm999@gmail.com

7046. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1986), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 54 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., / 7 Level German, working as Sr. Associate German a/cs. in Multinational Bank. Contact email : fernweh.stan@gmail.com

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

l2018anselm@yahoo.com

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

7073. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1982), 5' 3", Wt. 64 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M. Pharm, Ph.D., Seeks a well settled qualified bachelor. Contact : email :

apoline_ubi@yahoo.co.in

7035. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1988), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., Post Graduation Diploma in Tourism, Working as a Manager. Contact email :

louizad2002@yahoo.com

7071. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1983), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 63 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn.M.A. B.Ed., Teacher in Aided School. Contact email : marinamia44@gmail.com

7030. JAIPUR : Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1987), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 85 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A. in English & B.Ed., Teacher by profession. Contact email : jennifer27nov@gmail.com

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

7021. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in February 1988), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 58 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Sr. Sales Officer in Tatas. Contact email : ofira.afonso@gmail.com

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

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

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in a 2009 interview to Tehelka magazine. Bhushan had offered an explanation but the Supreme Court refused to accept the same and ruled the matter would be heard (that case, however, is now expected to come up before a different bench on 10 September)

In its judgment dated 14 August, the bench ruled that Bhushan was guilty of contempt of Court for his tweets against Chief Justice of India SA Bobde and last four CJIs, saying, “such an attack which tends to create disaffection and disrespect for the authority of this court cannot be ignored.” Further adding, “The scurrilous/malicious attacks by the alleged contemnor No. 1 (Bhushan) are not only against one or two judges but the entire Supreme Court in its functioning of the last six years. Such an attack which tends to create disaffection and disrespect for the authority of this court cannot be ignored...If an attack is made to shake the confidence that the public at large has in the institution of judiciary, such an attack has to be dealt with firmly...If such an attack is not dealt with, with requisite degree of firmness, it may affect the national honour and prestige in the comity of nations.”

Symbolically, 20 August (the day of the next hearing and on which the quantum of punishment was expected to be given to Bhushan) was the seventh death anniversary of the rationalist Dr Narendra Achyut Dabholkar who was shot dead by two bike-borne assailants in Pune. His murder and three more similar killings, that of communist leader Govind Pansare (February 2015), Kannada scholar MM Kalburgi (August 2015) and Bangalore journalist Gauri Lankesh, sparked nationwide debate surrounding issues of freedom of speech and various hostile forces to rational thought. The suppression of democratic rights and freedom had begun in India long before Prashant's tweets. On that day several hundreds of citizens had gathered all over the country and particularly on a national webinar to express their solidarity with Bhushan. Updates of the court pro-

ceedings were given regularly to the participants at the webinar. Several concerned citizens openly expressed their disgust of the way the Constitutional rights of the citizen were being trampled upon.

Towards the end of the hearing Bhushan's statement included the following, “I have gone through the judgment of this Hon'ble Court. I am pained that I have been held guilty of committing contempt of the Court whose majesty I have tried to uphold -- not as a courtier or cheerleader but as a humble guard – for over three decades, at some personal and professional cost. I am pained, not because I may be punished, but because I have been grossly misunderstood. I am shocked that the court holds me guilty of “malicious, scurrilous, calculated attack” on the institution of administration of justice. I am dismayed that the Court has arrived at this conclusion without providing any evidence of my motives to launch such an attack. I must confess that I am disappointed that the court did not find it necessary to serve me with a copy of the complaint on the basis of which the suo motu notice was issued, nor found it necessary to respond to the specific averments made by me in my reply affidavit or the many submissions of my counsel. My tweets were nothing but a small attempt to discharge what I considered to be my highest duty at this juncture in the history of our republic. I did not tweet in a fit of absence mindedness. It would be insincere and contemptuous on my part to offer an apology for the tweets that expressed what was and continues to be my bonafide belief. **Therefore, I can only humbly paraphrase what the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi had said in his trial: I do not ask for mercy. I do not appeal to magnanimity. I am here, therefore, to cheerfully submit to any penalty that can lawfully be inflicted upon me for what the Court has determined to be an offence, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen”.**

Caught very badly on the wrong foot, Justice Mishra and his colleagues refrained from giving the order for the sen-

tencing of Bhushan on that day. In an apparent face-saving device and as a last-ditch effort they felt that Bhushan had to unconditionally apologise in order to settle the matter; asserting that they were giving him 2-3 days more to think over things. But Bhushan in a style which is so characteristic of him, was unrelenting saying that he would never apologise.

On 24 August, in a supplementary statement filed through his advocate, Bhushan said, “It is with deep regret that I read the order of this Hon'ble Court dated 20th of August. At the hearing the court asked me to take 2-3 days to reconsider the statement I made in the court. However, the order subsequently states: “We have given time to the contemnor to submit unconditional apology, if he so desires.” I have never stood on ceremony when it comes to offering an apology for any mistake or wrongdoing on my part. It has been a privilege for me to have served this institution and bring several important public interests causes before it. I live with the realization that I have received from this institution much more than I have had the opportunity to give it. I cannot but have the highest regard for the institution of the Supreme Court. I believe that the Supreme Court is the last bastion of hope for the protection of fundamental rights, the watchdog institutions and indeed for constitutional democracy itself. It has rightly been called the most powerful court in the democratic world, and often an exemplar for courts across the globe.

Today in these troubling times, the hopes of the people of India vest in this Court to ensure the rule of law and the Constitution and not an untrammelled rule of the executive. This casts a duty, especially for an officer of this court like myself, to speak up, when I believe there is a deviation from its sterling record. Therefore, I expressed myself in good faith, not to malign the Supreme Court or any particular Chief Justice, but to offer constructive criticism so that the court can arrest any drift away from its long-standing role as a guardian of the Constitution and

(Contd.. on p. 23)

(Contd.. from p. 22)

custodian of peoples' rights. My tweets represented this bonafide belief that I continue to hold. Public expression of these beliefs was I believe, in line with my higher obligations as a citizen and a loyal officer of this court. Therefore, an apology for expression of these beliefs, conditional or unconditional, would be insincere. An apology cannot be a mere incantation and any apology has to, as the court has itself put it, be sincerely made. This is especially so when I have made the statements bonafide and pleaded truths with full details, which have not been dealt with by the Court. If I retract a statement before this court that I otherwise believe to be true or offer an insincere apology, that in my eyes would amount to the contempt of my conscience and of an institution that I hold in highest esteem “.

The high drama continued on 25 August. On this day however, the Attorney-general of India K.K. Venugopal was given some token importance. Earlier (particularly on 20 August), in spite of being the Chief law officer of the country he was clearly sidelined by the Bench. Towards end of the arguments on 20 August when he was allowed to submit his views, he was cut short as the Bench said that it was not hearing on 'the merits of the case' He submitted that he has a list of five judges of the SC speaking of threats to democracy and of another nine who had spoken of corruption in the higher judiciary – but before he could complete his arguments, Justice Mishra interrupted him saying 'we are not hearing on the merits'. Strange but true!

On 25 August, Venugopal made a strong case for Prashant Bhushan, particularly on his tweet on retired judges; *“Can anything be said whether whatever has been said is correct or not? We cannot possibly go into this aspect without the views of those judges. That would mean an inquiry which will go on and on. Prashant Bhushan can't be punished till this inquiry concludes. So, my suggestion would be to give a quietus to this matter without getting into that exercise.*

“Bhushan may be given a warning

and need not be punished, a warning to tell him 'Don't repeat this in future'. Bhushan's tweets seek the improvement of the administration of justice. Bhushan can be told not to repeat this and not given punishment... I myself wanted to file a contempt case against Prashant Bhushan when two CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) officers were fighting and he said I fabricated documents. But after he expressed regret, I withdrew. Let democracy follow in this case when he has exercised his free speech... It will be tremendously appreciated if the court leaves it at that. Even if he says he hasn't done anything wrong, this court should take a compassionate view. I speak for the Bar also... Although it is too late for him to go back on what he has said, he can still express regret”. He urged the Supreme Court “to show statesmanship and not use the powers of the contempt.”

Once again, the Supreme Court did not hand over the 'punishment' to Bhushan. One wondered why? Heading the bench was Justice Arun Mishra. His track record in the Supreme Court has been just disgraceful: he has blatantly been on the side of the RSS/BJP combine (his admiration of Prime Minister Modi is unabashed, referring to him in public once as “a genius who thinks globally but acts locally”) ; he has sided with their crony capitalist friends like the Adanis most of the time; given several questionable and dubious judgments (with others) like the case of Sanjiv Bhatt, the Haren Pandya murder case(where he overturned the acquittal of the 'alleged' killers), the mysterious death of Justice Loya and many others! His bench was regularly given important and politically sensitive matters. That was one of the bone of contentions which prompted Justice Gogoi and three other senior judges of the Supreme Court to hold an unprecedented press conference in January 2018. Prashant Bhushan has over the years has also been his 'bête noire'. Giving Bhushan some punishment was perhaps, the only way by which, Justice Mishra could have 'his pound of flesh' and be crowned, by Modi and his ilk, just as they did so to the former CJI Gogoi, post-retirement!

In a significant no-holds barred interview with the 'Frontline' Magazine (11 September 2020) Justice A.P. Shah, former Chief Justice of the Delhi and Madras High Courts and the Chairman of the 20th Law Commission of India said that the Supreme Court now appeared to see the world only through the executive gaze and in doing so was failing in its duty to protect fundamental rights. *“There is no doubt in my mind that with this decision, the Supreme Court has come across as an intolerant institution. It has effectively announced to the world that it is not open to any criticism. The more concerning aspect is how and why the court appears to be going after Mr. Bhushan for these tweets. The tweets in question are actually fairly trivial and inconsequential, which even the Supreme Court realises. This probably explains why the nine-year-old contempt case against Mr. Bhushan was tagged on here.*

“With regard to the tweet where Mr. Bhushan refers to personal liberties being destroyed, he could have arguably been more diplomatic in his choice of language, but it does not take away from the fact that it is the truth. Even I have said the same thing very often. And many historians, legal scholars, senior advocates, policy experts, political scientists, and other public intellectuals have expressed similar views. This decision is surely going to have a chilling effect, and will cause a complete curtailment of the most precious rights of all the fundamental rights—Article 19.1 (a)—the freedom of speech and expression. This right to freedom of expression is important not just for young lawyers. It is important for everyone who is critical of the court. With this decision, the court has basically sent out a message that no one must criticise the institution, and everyone must stay quiet”.

Not only Justice Shah, but several legal luminaires, intellectuals, civil society leaders from across the board, leading editorials/op-eds have expressed their disgust with what is happening in the Supreme Court today. Some of the judgments have been

(Contd.. on p. 24)

(Contd.. from p. 23)

extremely prejudiced, one-sided and hardly befitting of the most important pillar of democracy. Besides important cases (and judgements) are kept in cold storage. That several of the judges have succumbed to the political powers and have not displayed the courage and the prudence to protect the Constitutional rights of the citizen is to say the least.

Later in the evening Prashant Bhushan at Press Conference stated, *The Supreme Court of India has announced its verdict on the contempt case against me. It holds me guilty of contempt of court and has decided to impose a fine of Re 1, and failing that imprisonment of three months and debarring me from practicing for three years. I had already said in my first statement to the Court: "I am here to cheerfully submit to any penalty that can lawfully be inflicted upon me for what the Court has determined to be an offence, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen". Therefore, while I reserve the right to seek a review of the conviction and sentencing, by way of an appropriate legal remedy, I propose to submit myself to this order and will respectfully pay the fine, just as I would have submitted to any other lawful punishment. I have had the greatest respect for the institution of the Supreme Court. I have always believed it to be the last bastion of hope, particularly for the weak and the oppressed who knock at its door for the protection of their rights, often against a powerful executive. My tweets were not intended in any way to*

disrespect the Supreme Court or the judiciary as a whole, but were merely meant to express my anguish, at what I felt, was a deviation from its sterling past record. This issue was never about me versus the Hon'ble Judges, much less about me vs the Supreme Court. When the Supreme Court of India wins, every Indian wins. Every Indian wants a strong and independent judiciary. Obviously if the courts get weakened, it weakens the republic and harms every citizen. I am extremely grateful and humbled by the solidarity and support expressed by countless persons, ex-judges, lawyers, activists and fellow citizens who encouraged me to remain firm and true to my beliefs and conscience. They strengthen my hope that this trial may draw the country's attention to the cause of freedom of speech and judicial accountability and reform. What is very heartening is that this case has become a watershed moment for freedom of speech and seems to have encouraged many people to stand up and speak out against the injustices in our society. I would be failing in my duty if I do not thank my legal team, especially senior Advocates Dr Rajeev Dhawan and Shri Dushyant Dave. I am more confident now than ever before that truth shall prevail. Long live democracy! Satyameva Jayate!"

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

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