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Language a Medium of Inter-cultural Harmony

by Dr M. D. Thomas

21 February is celebrated worldwide as 'International Mother Language Day'. It could also be called 'world mother tongue day'. This day was proclaimed by UNESCO, that is, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in its General Conference in 1999. This celebration was launched in the year 2000.

The purpose of this observance is to promote awareness of the 'dignity of language' as well as linguistic and cultural diversity, crosswise the world. It is too obvious a fact that human culture is a question of diverse languages that help the humans to articulate their thoughts and feelings, along with experiences and aspirations, one to another.

The background of this declaration is the 'language movement' of the students of Dhaka University in Bangladesh, even before it became an independent nation. In the wake of Urdu being imposed as the state language, people came forward to fight for Bengali or Bangla, which was and is the national mother language of most of the citizens in Bangladesh. As a result, it could be noted that Bangladesh is the only monolingual country in South Asia, with nearly 98% of people fluent in Bengali.

The blood of the 'language martyrs' of the then East Pakistan, to be exact, on the 21st day of February in 1952, brings home to the world a powerful message that 'one's language should not be imposed upon the other'. The United Nations made this movement and victory a case in point to invite the attention of the entire world not to dare 'violating the fundamental right of the humans to one's own language'.

The humans are spread over the world in nearly 200 countries, speaking various languages and belonging to a variety of national cultures. People and organizations around the world celebrate this day through media posts, write ups, workshops and other events, in view of affirming the distinction of every language. The distinction of the language would mean 'dignity of every human person and community', too.

As we know too well, every human being is born with a language. He or she inherits it from the womb of his or her mother. And this mother tongue develops and takes shape in the lap of the mother, too. Of course, children growing up in bilingual homes could have more than one mother tongue or native language. At any rate, mother language is dear to everyone, beyond comparison, and world over. This is the eternal truth that is being celebrated today.

Again, every language in the world is the mother language of someone or other. Therefore, all the dialects and languages of the world carry with them the unique 'dignity and iden-

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Farmers Going Nowhere?

Until the Republic Day eve, the determination and resolve of the farming community, sitting on a dharna for over two months now, under trying conditions, was the envy of the world. They saw in this agitation, how it can be conducted in a peaceful manner despite very hostile weather conditions in which scores of their comrades succumbed to the vagaries of the winter. The government too was put on the back foot, as so long as they remained peaceful, [something even the apex court endorsed] they had to call the farmers for talks from time to time. It must be said to the credit of the government that they offered concessions in tranches while stressing repeatedly that repeal of laws is not an option. On the other hand, farmers remained adamant on their single point demand – repeal the laws first.

To bring pressure on the government, the farmers came with a unique idea of staging a tractor rally on the Republic Day – a day considered very important for the people and the government rightly suggested that they could have it on any other day but the farmers remained steadfast in their resolve reiterating all the time that the rally will be peaceful. The Apex court too did not interfere except to say it was up to the Police to give the permissions and set conditions on route, time etc. Government did that but the mayhem created on that day shamed the country. The Red fort was a scene of chaos and hundreds of police personnel suffered injuries in varying degrees which was something that could have been totally avoided. When you undertake to keep things peaceful, you need to face the consequences when things go horribly wrong even if anti social elements instigated the agitators. Some of the farmer unions distanced themselves from the agitation thereafter and walked out or expelled.

This has given the government an upper hand to harden its stance. Farm leader Rakesh Tikait in an emotional appeal, called on his followers to continue the agitation. This has paid dividends and thousands of them are on UP and Delhi borders. The UP government even tried to cut off essential services which was inhuman. The farmers have come to a point where they will lose their credibility if they give up their demand for repeal of laws. The govern-

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ment has even offered clause by clause discussion of the said laws which could be deleted or modified. Finally, they reluctantly agreed to put the laws on hold for eighteen months. This was a huge climb down by the government which normally does not back out. The farmers, with depleted strength, are holding out though.

The farmer's agitation has now gone international. The world is taking note of the happenings especially in countries with huge Indian population like the USA, Canada and UK. With some international celebrities voicing their concern for the farmers the Indian government has become jittery harping all the time about international conspiracy – a ploy used by the late Indira Gandhi. One could understand if some powerful country had to make a comment. Most independent observers were surprised that the External Affairs Ministry should have reacted to a celebrity tweet. It shows the nervousness on the part of the government. Normally, it should have been left to the spokespersons of the BJP to handle the matter. With external support to the farmers growing by the day, the government will have to come out with an out-of-the-box proposal. Perhaps accepting the demand to give legal status to MSP could be the game changer. In return the farmers should accept the offer for suspension of the laws. If this does not happen it could lead to an impasse with no end in sight for months to come. Narendra Modi's image as a Statesman could take a hit too. The farmers say they will not go anywhere, yet their agitation is going nowhere. Time to pause and think for both sides!

A teary eyed Prime Minister

It was rather unusual for the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to shed a few tears for his 'friend' Ghulam Nabi Azad of the Congress who completed probably his last term in the Rajya Sabha earlier this month. No doubt his stint in this August House was a long and fruitful one. His contribution as a staunch Congressman in the proceedings of the House has been worthy of appreciation and it is good that no less than a Prime Minister did just that. While lav-



by Marshall Sequeira

ishing fulsome praise on this Kashmiri leader the PM recalled how Azad [the then newly appointed CM of J & K] called [the then CM of Gujarat] Narendra Modi to tearfully and apologetically tell the latter of the terrorist attack on the tourists from Gujarat in which four of them succumbed to their injuries in the first decade of this millennium. Acknowledging the sentiments of the Prime Minister Azad was nostalgic about the whole episode. Azad too humbly reciprocated the appreciation by the Prime Minister despite the atmosphere of confrontation.

Unfortunately, in normal life, people speak well of others only when they breathe their last. During their life time, in politics one is dubbed with all sorts of allegations like corruption, unprincipled, anti-national etc but he becomes a saint if he joins the same party that accused him. Indian politics thrive on this type of gimmickry. By the way, Vallabhbhai Patel is being glorified now with Statue of Unity to spite the Congress for neglecting his legacy. Wonder what was done by the BJP for the many years in power in Gujarat for the son of the soil; even during the BJP rule at the centre under Vajpaijee either.

In paying tributes the outgoing Rajya Sabha Member Ghulam Nabi Azad, the PM kept up the healthy tradition of giving a fitting farewell to an outgoing member. His effusive praise of the member from the opposition party was well received. However, his jibe at the Congress that they should not view his 'good deed' of praising somebody from the G-23 [group that revolted against the leadership] was in bad taste. By saying so, Modi admitted that perhaps he was doing just that. By the way, people would have appreciated if at least one tear was shed for the 200 plus farmers who died agitating since November in Delhi under highly hostile winter. Farmers' lives also matter, PM-jee!

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ity' of the mother. That endowment should not be compromised, because a mother is a 'mother'. For that reason, all the languages on earth are worthy of respect and ought not to be compared as superior or inferior. A language is a language, for all the humans, irrespective of the number of people speaking it.

Mother language has a primary place in the process of education. Mother Tongue is the language of heart and mind. Children are the most familiar with the home language. Therefore, children should be taught in their mother tongue, at least in the initial stage. This will facilitate the unique heritage and traditions of the family and the tribe to flow in to generations.

Learning other languages through schooling or socialization is a welcome idea, as well. Learning a language would mean learning to think and understand, along with learning to imbibe a culture and to be cultured oneself. This will broaden the horizons of the child, certainly so. This will also help children grow up as citizens who are capable of appreciating the languages and cultures of other

groups. This is an effective means for promoting fellow-feeling among communities of different ideologies, traditions, cultures and nationalities.

Languages, when recorded, become 'literature' of poetry and prose, with the streams of poems, songs, stories, novels, memoirs, reports, news, views and interviews. They preserve the indigenous legacy of the respective civilization. They imbibe the cultural genius of the persons and groups they come in touch with, too. Language is the door to the culture of the humans, personal and social, with a world of prospects.



Fr. Dr. M. D. Thomas

In addition, 'languages have no borders'. They travel beyond boundaries as human beings move from place to place, in search of the better. As they journey, indigenous and local languages become regional, national and even international. In other words, according to the number of people learning, speaking and writing, those languages spread and acquire a national or global stature. And so, they become mediums of human civilizations, not in just one direction, but as a two-way traffic, definitely so.

What's more, languages are powerful

vehicles of dialogue and interaction as well as of thoughts and expressions. They share and spread understanding and knowledge, good will and friendship, harmony and peace, and the like. Languages have to criss-cross and cross-pollinate the perceptions, beliefs, convictions, ideas and cultures of the human world, religious and secular. Language is the most powerful medium of enriching each other, especially in the modern times, when the world has become very much a global village.

That would amount to state that the world is necessarily 'multi-lingual' in its fabric. It has millions of languages and dialects. Our great land India is known for its linguistic diversity and has thousands and thousands of dialects. The Indian currency, rupee or INR, has two national languages and 15 regional languages inscribed on it. The Constitution of India, in its eighth schedule, has recognized 23 languages as nationally recognized ones, as well.

Therefore, all the citizens of India have to make it a point to learn the language of the other. The North has to open up to learning the language of the South and the South, of the

(Contd.. on p. 7)

Lenten Directions: To Desire, To Humble, To Realize, To Return

“let us get up from the debris and run towards God”.

Already, we have begun our Lenten season with the Ash Wednesday. The Lenten season which is embodied with forty days before the Easter Sunday is steadfastly absorbed with repentance, fasting, penance, prayer, and ultimately, rewarded with the metamorphosis of our new self. One of the paramount gestures in liturgy that we had on the Ash Wednesday was receiving the ashes on our forehead which denotes death and repentance. The death reminds us that human flesh is composed of dust and clay and it is decomposable and finally return to dust from where it emerged. Secondly, we acknowledge that we are sinners and we want to utilize the lenten season to correct our faults, purify our hearts, control our desires and grow in holiness before God. With this firm resolution, we have entered into this Lenten journey.



**Br. Justin Arokia
Raj SVD
Bhopal**

We are all aware of what would happen to us during these forty days as it is portrayed in the gospels through the passage of temptation of Jesus, where Jesus was tempted three times. St. John, the Evangelist would say these three temptations, in his epistle, as “Lust of eyes” (materialism), “Lust of the body” (hedonism), “Pride of life” (egoism). Invariably, as we undertake these forty days of our spiritual journey, we would surely come across this kinds of temptations. And, we also can conquer these devils provided if we seek the help of the Holy Spirit and the assistance of our guardian angels. In order to have a fruitful journey in the coming 40 days, I would like to suggest some relevant tips which would help us to reunite ourselves with God once again.

Desire:

The Gospel of St. John portrays the man who was ill for thirty-eighty years, lying near to the pool. By looking at him, Jesus asked him, “do you want to be made well?”. He revealed his ardent desire to be made

well. Immediately, Jesus made him well. Dear Friends, our burning desire would give space for the miracle to happen. We are drowned in the pool of our past sinful life. In order to be healed like the sick man, we need to desire for it. This is what St. James in his letter says, “come near to God and He will come near to you”. First of all, we need to have burning desire within us to come near to God and to be healed by Him. As we are in the beginning of the lenten season, let us reveal our desire to God that we ardently desire to be healed from all our illnesses that have been haunting us for long time.

Humble:

Secondly, Humility is regarded as one of the significant virtues in our life, as Christians. And it is low self-regarded and sense of unworthiness. C.S. Lewis says, “True humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less”. This is what the Syrophenic woman did when she addressed Jesus for a favor, in the Gospel of St. Mark. She humbled herself before Jesus by saying “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs”. During our journey in the lenten season, we are expected to humble ourselves before God and others like this Syrophenic woman. Our pride, arrogance, ego, etc...will not allow us to return to God unless we humble before Him. St. James in his letter says, “God opposes the proud but gives graces to the humble”. So, let us humble ourselves before God to receive His graces for our lives.

Realize:

Thirdly, Self-realization is an expression used in western psychology, philosophy, and spirituality and in Indian religions as well. It is the truth to be known about who we are, what we are and where we are. Socrates rightly says, “The unexamined life is not worth living”. When we examine

ourselves, we would end up in self-realization of ourselves. This is what we see in the life of Prodigal Son who squandered all his share in a dissolute living. At one point of time, he realized the mistake he did against heaven and his father. Lent provides us with time and space to realize our past sinful life that we had been leading against heaven. We are expected to realize our sinful past through fasting, praying, examining our consciousness, and frequently reading the scripture.

Return:

Finally, Self-realization alone is not enough. The same parable of Prodigal Son shows that after realizing his mistakes the Prodigal son ran towards his father and said to him, “I have sinned against heaven and before you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son”. This is what we need to do after undergoing the process of realization. When we return to God with a purified heart and soul, He would welcome us with His extended hands and a compassionate heart and He would reach us before we reach Him. Because, God never looks for our past sinful life rather look at our repentant heart.

Dear friends, Lent is the period of finding out what has been lost as it is mentioned in the parable of the lost Sheep. Our God is always in search of the lost sheep. Especially, during the lenten season He is looking for the lost sheep with heart full of exceptions. Once, He finds us He will rejoice over us by hugging and blessing us with His graces. So, let us try to humble before the Lord irrespective of our past sinful life, with an ardent desire of being healed by Him from all our inequities. After realizing ourselves, let us get up from the debris and run towards God. Thus, there will be more joy in heaven. May Mary, our mother walk with us throughout these Lenten journey. (Your feedback is most welcome: justinsvd5@gamil.com)



It's time for a partial roll back of online church services

After ten months of the covid , life is gradually limping back to normalcy. Buses are plying , trains are running, planes are flying, and people are talking, as they usual do in the market places (and often without masks). Only children are not playing anymore and sadly nobody seems to be too concerned about them. And yes, we have witnessed a drastic drop in the number of youth and young adults attending church services, while ironically, the senior citizens who should be at home, are flocking to the church.

It has been observed that senior citizens form the majority of people physically attending mass on weekdays. I would put their figure at 95% plus. This is a worrisome trend. The youth and young adults are conspicuous by their absence in church though they are seen in all other places. Churches are much safer places than buses, trains, planes or markets. But the under 40's seem to be taking the easy way out by attending online church services. While the restrictions on senior citizens and children attending church services must remain in place till the end of the pandemic, the youth and young adults should be coaxed to attend church services, or the practice of physical attendance may fall into disuse.

The time has come to gradually withdraw the option of online masses for the youth and young adults, else they may never return to church,

as in the west. Parish youth activities need to be stepped up to encourage them to return to the church. We are in real danger of losing an entire generation of parishioners. And the quicker we realise this, the better.

I suggest that the special dispensation of fulfilment of the Sunday obligation by participating in the online mass, must be withdrawn for the youth and young adults. They may however be exempted if they suffer from comobities or are otherwise unable to attend due to valid reasons.

—*Prof Robert Castellino Orlem*

The cardinals should have been firmer with the PM

With reference to the article titled : Three Cardinals Meet Prime Minister of India on 19 Jan 2021 in The Secular Citizen dated 1st , Feb.,2021 the three cardinals on hearing from the PM that it was an independent agency that was dealing with the Fr Stan Swamy's case was an attempt to dodge getting him released should have insisted on a written assurance that he would be released immediately .

The cardinals should have insisted also on getting a written assurance from the PM for the immediate withdrawal of the anti -conversion laws in the country and the love jihad law .

Hence the cardinals should have firmer with the PM .

— *Peter Castellino*

Ash Wednesday: A Lenten stop-signal

The practice of austerity in the church has always been considered important in Christian spirituality. It was Jesus Christ who taught us the need of prayer and fasting to overcome evil and sin when he fasted for 40 days and 40 nights in the desert, before starting his earthly ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. The church therefore sets us aside every year a period of 40 days of austerity known as Lent, commencing Ash Wednesday to Good Friday, during which period Christians are expected to emulate the example of Christ by undertaking acts of penance, fasting, and other forms of renunciation, forgiveness, charity and self-sacrifice, to atone for sins committed. The theme of penance is also forcibly practised by the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday unlike the early days of sitting in sack cloth and ashes.

As pilgrims on a journey to our heavenly abode , Lent offers us a golden opportunity to stop at life's traffic signal to reflect on how we have undertaken our earthly mission over the years. It is also a time to give up our sinful ways and a time to repent and return to the Lord and to the path of righteousness.

Due to the present pandemic and safety protocols to be observed, the forehead of the faithful will not be signed with ash, to avoid physical contact. Instead, the priest will place the ash on the head of the faithful , and also keep an urn in the church for the faithful to sign themselves with.

All these externals however matter little as they are only symbols to remind the people that we are mere mortals created out of the dust of the earth, and will soon return to the earth. What really matters is the need for repentance and inner conversion.

—*A. F. Nazareth, Alto Porvorim, Goa.*

Love's Dark Secrets



Quite frankly, I must admit that I don't like the title! How can love be bracketed with dark secrets? It should not, but so often is; hence this attempt to remove the dark secrets and bring love out into the sunshine.

Let me begin with the story of Mary and John (not Joseph). They were approaching their twenty fifth wedding anniversary. In all probability Mary and Joseph did not have that joy, because the last reference to Joseph in the Bible is when Jesus was still 12 years of age. After that Joseph disappeared into the shadows.

Mary and John did not believe in "precious metals" like silver and gold, so abjured the commonly used term "silver jubilee". In the invitation cards they carefully chose the words "A celebration of 25 years of marital bliss". But the printer's devil was not so careful. The cards were printed with the words martial bliss, reminding one of the martial arts!



by chhotebhai *

Hey, come on. Marriage is bliss, and also a martial art, with the emphasis on Art. Indeed, in the complexities of modern life one needs to discover the art of marital bliss. Together with the arts, marriage also requires a scientific temper. Art, science, martial, temper – they are all part of marriage. Worth exploring the dark secrets, to uncover the bliss.

Mary and John both loved road trips for their annual family holiday. But their Maruti 800 was now too old for long trips. They couldn't afford a new car, so they went to a second hand car showroom. They fell in love with a berry red Tata Tiago, but the price seemed beyond their budget. They were crestfallen. The agency said that the car would go to the highest bidder, by e-auction. The couple felt

doubly stressed.

As the date of their anniversary approached the tension was palpable. John's blood sugar, cholesterol and pressure levels shot up. He had to be hospitalised. The anniversary celebrations were cancelled. On the eve of their anniversary both were receiving text messages, to which they were furiously replying. Both took it for granted that the other was replying to congratulatory greetings.

That evening the Tiago was delivered to their doorstep, with a price tag that was 25% more than the agency's price! Mary and John had been bidding against each other without knowing it. There was no communication between them, only a dark secret. Mary, in her great love, had purchased the car for her husband! He died of shock. End of story. Unfortunately, the lack of communication in a marriage is one of its darkest secrets, a lesson that needs to be learnt.

There are two classic instances of how love's dark secrets ended in tragedy. The best known is Shakespeare's story of Romeo and Juliet. Due to a lack of communication (non delivery of a message) Juliet consumed poison and Romeo stabbed himself to death. Love's dark secret ended in tragedy.

The other, lesser known, classical story is that of the silver fob chain. The young couple were penniless. She had cascading wavy hair that she kept under wraps because she didn't have a tortoise shell comb to embellish it. He kept his heirloom pocket watch hidden, like another dark secret, because he did not have a silver fob chain to go with it. Without telling her husband, the woman sold her

precious hair to buy the chain for her husband's watch. But he had sold his watch to buy the comb to adorn her hair! Another of love's dark secrets that ended in tragedy.

Years ago when I was into youth ministry I had organized a training programme for youth animators. The resource person for marriage counselling was Rev Pepe Casasnovas SJ. He told us that communication was the most important thing in a marriage – to attain marital bliss. I have never forgotten his words, and it has held me in good stead in my own marriage. He told us that silence or non-communication in a marriage, was like building a wall, one brick at a time.

It reminded me of my own parent's marriage. Both were great personalities, and recipients of papal awards from Pope Paul VI. Yet, in many ways, their marriage was a disaster. We had a huge dining table, which was expandable to accommodate twenty people sitting. Even in its constricted form it was about twelve feet long. My father would sit at one end and my mother at the other. If there was a fight there would a stony silence that would extend (like the table) for a month. It was torture. Though still very young at the time, I vowed that I would never let that happen in my family life.

Let the sparks fly, as must they will, but those sparks don't have to end in a conflagration of silence. I am reminded of these beautiful words from scripture "Even if you are angry, do not sin: never let the sun set on your anger or else you will give the devil a foothold" (Eph 4:26). This is a powerful lesson



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for love's dark secrets. Never go to bed without, in some way, reconciling and talking, or even through non-verbal communication.

I compare it to a glass of milk. If left out overnight on the dining table in the hot summer it will curdle by morning. Many couples don't fight to avoid conflict. This is misconstrued logic that is fraught with danger. It is better to argue and fight or to be angry, than to sweep it under the carpet, allowing it to simmer and eventually turn poisonous.

Many couples maintain a pretence of being in marital bliss because they are acutely conscious of what people will say, "The neighbours will hear us arguing and shouting". As a result, such persons are unaware of what God is saying - that anger, per se, is not wrong. We know that even Jesus got angry several times, but that anger was channelled correctly. It was justified anger.

As we approach Valentine's Day market forces will flood us with messages of chocolate, hug, kiss or proposal day. Fine, but? A romantic young man sent this WhatsApp message to his girlfriend, "Sweetest honey, I really love you. I will cross the treacherous Himalayan glaciers, I will brave the tsunamis of the oceans, I will cross the scorching deserts, even without Bisleri water, to see you because you are my oasis. You are my date (pun intended), my shady palm tree. I will be coming with chocolates and a bunch of red roses to take you out for dinner on Valentine's Day, if it is not raining!"

Tragedy or comical farce? Sure chocolates and roses have their place in a romantic relationship. But if we put conditions to our love relationship, especially to a marital one, then our marriage is doomed to darkness, with secrets out of the bag.

It is not enough to say "I love you". One could as easily say that to one's pet dog. There is more to it than meets the eye (I) – pun intended. One needs to say "I love you only, I love always

and I love you as you are". These are the three qualities of marital bliss – a love that is exclusive, eternal and unconditional. This may seem obvious, but so often we miss the wood for the trees, or the rose in this case.

Interestingly, this is also the official teaching of the church. While emphasising the unity and indissolubility of marriage (Can 1056) Canon Law defines it as a permanent and exclusive relationship (Can 1134), that does not permit any conditions for the future (Can 1101). There we have it. The official Catechism of the Catholic Church has these beautiful words: "Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of the wedding feast of the Lamb" (CCC 1602). And again, "The church attaches great importance to Jesus' presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage" (CCC 1613).

This is in sharp contrast to St Paul's myopic vision, clouded by an imminent end of the world, that "What I mean brothers is that the time has become limited and from now on those who have wives should live as though they had none" (1Cor 7:29). Fortunately, he makes the qualifying statement that "I have no directions from the Lord, but I give my own opinion" (1Cor 7:25).

Unfortunately, in a celibate dominated church, marriage has been denigrated as second class. Overzealous preachers invariably quote this chapter from St Paul. They also quote out of context Jesus' reprimand to Martha, that Mary had chosen the better part (cf Lk 10:41). This is why quoting Scripture out of context is dangerous. I temper it with the teachings of Vatican II. "From the wedlock of Christians there comes the family ... The family is so to speak the domestic Church" (LG No 11).

So let us dispel the dark secrets and let God's light shine on all human love. HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY.

• *The writer has several years of experience in youth and marriage counselling*

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North. In a similar way, the East has to learn the language of the West, and the West, of the East. Languages of different countries have to be learnt, too, in view of acquiring a larger human stature through social interaction and research. I believe, this is the right way of living and promoting solidarity, integration and harmony as citizens of one nation and of one world society.

The 'International Mother Language Day of UNESCO is a golden opportunity to consider all the languages of the world as a 'divine gift to the humans' and the 'shared heritage of the human society', starting with one's own mother language. Doing so is a sure way of developing a sense of esteem and respect for all the languages of the world, along with an interest and commitment to learn at least some of them. Such a positive outlook to language will certainly contribute to growing in the larger and higher dimensions of life, as civilized human beings, and thus to making a more harmonious society for one and all.

The author is Director, Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies, New Delhi, and has been committed to interfaith relations, national integration and social harmony, for the past over 40 years. He contributes to the above cause through lectures, articles, video messages, conferences, social interactions, views at TV channels, and the like. He can be viewed at 'www.mdthomas.in' and 'ihpsindia.org' and contacted at 'mdthomas53@gmail.com'.

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Kanpur Citizens For Harmony, Farmers' Support



KANPUR (7th February): Under the banner of the Kanpur Nagrik Manch (KNM or Citizens' Forum) about 350 citizens, including a large number of women, gathered to counter communal propaganda and to support the farmers' agitation.

The gathering took the form of a two hour silent expression of human solidarity at the Gandhi statue in Phoolbagh, the central park of this city of five million. It was organised by chhotebhai and Suresh Gupta, the Convenors of the KNM. Several religious leaders, social organizations and political parties participated.

The largest contingent was of the Sikhs, led by Sardar Harvinder Singh Lard of the Guru Singh Sabha. It was obvious that they felt deeply hurt at being portrayed as Khalistanis and terrorists in the light of the formers' agitation in and around Delhi. Despite being a Sunday, the Christian community was also well represented; led by Revs K.K. Anthony and Chinappa of St Patrick's Church, Noel George, President of the Kanpur Catholic Association, Cornelius Kujur and youth leader Praveen Dungdung. Revs Jitendra Singh and D.S.Johnson of the Pastors' Association also brought sev-

eral of their congregation.

The neo-Buddhist team was led by Dhanirao Bodh of the Dalit Panthers; the Gandhians by Deepak Malviya, Jagdambabhai, Durgesh Misra and Swami Amodanand, and the Muslims by Drs Khan Ahmed Farooq, Minhaj Jafri and Abdullah Faiz.

Political leaders present were Comrade Subhashini Ali former MP of the CPM, sitting Samajwadi MLA Amitabh Bajpai, Arvind Raj Swaroop of the CPI and Madanlal Bhatia of AAP. Since the Congress party had another programme at the same time it went largely unrepresented. Subhashini Ali concluded the meeting with two minutes silence for those 200 farmers who had died during the course of the agitation and the singing of the national anthem.

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Liturgy is the Whole of Christ!

Pope Francis at his general audience on 03 February 2021 said, that it was essential for Christians to participate in the Liturgy and Sacraments to encounter the Real Person of Jesus!

“Every time we celebrate a Baptism, or consecrate bread and wine in the Eucharist, or anoint a sick person, Christ is present! Christianity without Liturgy is Christianity without the Whole of Christ! There is nowadays the temptation to emphasize one's own individuality over the spiritual importance of public Liturgical rites. However, the Liturgy is the foundational act of the Christian experience. It is an event, a presence, and an encounter with the Living Christ!”

“When the first Christians worshiped, they did so by actualizing the gestures and the words of Jesus with the light and the power of the Holy Spirit! This helped them to celebrate Mass, and to pray as a community with one accord, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus!” (cf. Acts 1:14).

“The Second Vatican Council represented a pivotal point in this long journey. It reaffirms in a complete organic way the importance of the Divine Liturgy! Christians find that Jesus Christ is not an idea, but a Living Person, and His Mystery a historical event!”

“St. Paul writes, ‘I therefore urge you brothers (and sisters), by the mercy of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God. This is your spiritual worship ... This is the will of God, what is good and perfect.’” (cf. Romans 12:1-2).

—Dr. Hazel Colaso,
Memphis, TN. USA.

Very Many Exciting Moments Of Valentine's Day.



This Valentines , Gift your loved ones a gift of togetherness and timeless love

Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14. It is a festival of romantic love and many people give cards, letters, flowers or presents to their spouse or partner. They may also arrange a romantic meal in a restaurant or night in a hotel. Common symbols of Valentine's Day are hearts, red roses and Cupid. Expensive restaurant bookings made a month in advance, the last-minute rush to buy gifts and the demands of trying to plan the perfect romantic evening are all part and parcel of that large marketing event we know as Valentine's Day. Sure, if you boil the day down to its basics, it's a time when you and your partner can get together and spend some quality time.

The Hindu culture contradicts many of the western world's ideals. Valentine's Day celebrations are known to clash with India's conservative religious background. ... Just like most people in the world, many men and women of India, particularly young couples, celebrate Valentine's Day in a big way. Valentine's day is a great day for lovers to celebrate their love. According to history it's a western festival but now people are celebrating it in India also. Political parties which issue a ban on Valentine's Day every year, with due respect to them in a very simple way.

We are adopting a theme to celebrate Valentine's day every year. It is indeed a great feeling to celebrate Valentine's day with your beloved wife by going to eat out to McDonald's and have an ice cream and spend the night out in a wonderful way. It is indeed a day of roses. The fragrance of red roses gives an auspicious start to a hectic day. We live in Rose of Heaven and our mind mingle around the nicety of mankind/woman-kind and the meaningful life lived by us. Lotus can be a substitute to Red Roses

but lotus is not easily available.

Lego games are part and parcel of valentine's day celebrations to begin with. Building a relationship is hard work, so take a break and build stuff with Lego. The building block company's games have been consistent with every release, featuring easy game play and a zany sense of humour. A bright colored attire, a pleasing manners and the mind to forget the worries and live carefree life is the order of the day. Mind is a monkey and so it fritter around to have fun and frolic after all. The best way to greet our office friends with a pink rose and reveal the importance of extending a loving hand to the poor and downtrodden people. There lies the real enjoyment and it is worth a living.



C.K. Subramaniam

Relationships with your father or mother, wife or children even with friends blossom into a new world in this fantastic period. There is no need to worry about lost relations but it is a day to renew old relationships and establish new relationships. It is indeed a playful day. We forget about the old enmity and are desperate to form a frantic one. The love game starts with " Love All". The red roses are handy to handover and get the best out of it. It is needless to say that the unscrupulous elements try to play dirty games on that day and try to make it a fateful one. We are not following Western culture blindly. We are adopting the cream of the theme to our advantage.

Love is blind is true as far as the saying goes. But the fact that both the young and the old couples need a special day like Valentine's day to express their love for each other. On this particular day oldies and the youngsters feel that it is their prerogative to celebrate this day in a simple way. At the same time a certain section of society and a certain section of the people take a different stand and they have other ideas. It's time to keep the mind-body connection-

-the relationship between stress and disease. Among other things, one of the best things that a man could do for his health is to be married to a woman whereas for a woman, one of the best things she could do for her health was to nurture her relationships with friends but it was serious thought.

Women connect with each other differently and provide support systems that help each other to deal with stress and difficult life experiences. Physically this quality "girlfriend time" helps us to create more serotonin-- a neurotransmitter that helps combat depression and can create a general feeling of well being. Women share feelings whereas men often form relationships around activities. There is a tendency to think that when we are "exercising" we are doing something good for our bodies, but when we are hanging out with friends, we are wasting our time and should be more productively engaged-- not true.

My love for newspapers blooms on Valentine's Day. My love for newspaper vendors goes a long way in the last 25 years. When I meet newspaper vendors and the newspaper media unite us with each other. We in India love to celebrate all the festivals in general and Valentine's day in particular. There is nothing wrong in following Western culture, so long as the spirit of the India custom is well and truly maintained within the stipulated limit. We Indians love simple living and high thinking. There is no harm exchanging greeting cards, gifts or flowers. Society has to undergo positive change without making a big hue and cry. This year's valentine's day promises love and affection. Further this Valentine's day, gift your loved ones a gift of togetherness and timeless love.

In Solidarity With Agitating Farmers And Human Right Activist

The Bombay Catholic Sabha
Committed to a better tomorrow, today



CONSTITUTION OF INDIA PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN, SOCIALIST, SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure all its citizens:

JUSTICE social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; And to promote among them all:

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

26th January, 2021, Republic day of our Country, on a call from the Principal Office Bearers, the members of The Bombay Catholic Sabha were on Highways, Roads and streets, expressing solidarity with the Farmers agitating against the three farms legislations passed by the Central Government, recently, and also in support of Civil Right and Human Right Activists, in prison, charged for their alleged involvement Bhima Koregaon case, including Rev. Fr. Stan Swamy, who had devoted his whole life for the welfare and mitigating hardships of poor, Adivasis, Tribal and vulnerable sections of the society in Jharkhand.

The solidarity event was organized in over 30 places in Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai holding out banners, placards and posters to express our solidarity. It was heartening that at quite many places the local parish priests and religious, including sisters and people of other faith, joined the solidarity event held between 9.30 am and 11 am. It was most satisfying that Bishop Alwyn D'Silva stood in the sun and also spoke to the TV channels, along with Vice President of the Bombay Catholic Sabha, Robert D'Souza, Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Parish Vikhroli Rev. Fr. Cajetan at Eastern Express Highway. The solidarity event was held following all Covid -19 norms and protocols. The Bombay Catholic Sabha expresses its gratitude to the Police Authorities for

their cooperation, although at some places, the local police stations were apprehensive.

The Bombay Catholic Sabha also participated in a nation wide video messaging program conducted by All Indian Catholic Union, wherein messages of support were recorded and sent to



agitating farmers expressing solidarity with their fights against farms laws. It is ironic that the community for whose benefits the farm laws are made; themselves claim the laws to be Anti-Farmers and draconian. The Govern-

ment too by offering to keep the laws in abeyance for 18 months and admitting that portion of the laws need amendments has acknowledged that the laws are flawed. However, it is sitting on high pedestal of 'ego' before the agitating farming community. The Bombay Catholic Sabha strongly believes that if the people for whose benefit the laws introduced, feel that they are draconian, the same should be repealed. The Sabha humbly call upon the Central Government to withdraw the same and bring in laws that really assist 'basic farming community' to become economically stronger and prevent farmer suicides, rather than the laws which farmers clearly see as ones which are heavily leaning towards Corporates.

As for the Civil Right and Human Rights Activists languishing in jails under UAPA, for their alleged links to Maoists and their alleged anti-national activities, the Sabha asks a simple question; if the government and law enforcing agencies do have all evidence to prove their guilt, why not 'fast-track' these cases and bring them to justice. Even our highest Court has not come out with flying colours in living upto its own philosophy that 'jail is exception bail is the norm' for an under-trial. Sadly, dealing with principle of personal liberty, while in some cases the Apex Court has asked 'is it not travesty of justice to deny bail pending trail?' the same Supreme Court does not apply the same yardstick to others, including senior citizens, physically infirm and those suffering from grave diseases. The Bombay Catholic Sabha demands that the cases against Civil Right and Human Right Activist and all those in jail under UAPA be fast tracked and in the meantime pending trail they be released on bail.

Raphael D'Souza,
President, The Bombay Catholic Sabha



Eat To Live Rather Than Living To Eat



The difference is, Eat to Live vs. Live to Eat. and perhaps that is why the French are so slender as a people. They aren't living to eat, but eating to live--it's something they do because they have to, not something they do for the sake of pleasure.

Those who "Live to Eat" view food as something more in their life than just fuel. It can mean comfort, family, friends, happiness, lifestyle or stress release. When food takes on greater meaning than its nutrients we start running into troubles. Those who 'live to eat' may find making healthy, positive eating changes very challenging. To them, it's more than just food but it is about what food means to them.

The key is striking the balance that allows us to enjoy food when we want while being mindful of and listening to our natural hunger signals. We should choose nourishing, healthy foods whenever we can because we know there will be special occasions when we will choose not to and instead will indulge and enjoy it. It's not about restriction and it is about balance.

More than just eating, we should pay heed to the fact that wastage should be avoided at any cost. Live and let others live is applicable to food also. We should share our food and see that more salads and fruits consumed can make your food schedule more meaningful. Cricketers keep a strict schedule of their eating habits. Alan Knott the English wicket keeper was a fitness fanatic as he was practising yoga for his regular fitness time table. He used to fill his stomach with water and

then eat less to maintain his physical fitness.

I have seen how food can negatively affect the lives of people. Too much of anything can be bad, moderation is important in all aspects of life. It is okay to enjoy food when you are eating, but eating to live a happy healthy life is very important for not just your health, but for the health of those around you. What I am trying to say here is that eating to live does not mean you have to eat or not eat any particular food.

It means that your food should be meant to an end not your ultimate goal and concern.

Your food should be your friend that supports your journey whatever that journey is. Your food

should support your happiness and well being, not steal from it. Your food should make your life more enjoyable and less stressful not the other way around. Food should give you energy to achieve your goals, to help you become the best you can, it shouldn't steal your energy and focus. Food should be natural and nurturing like sleep: you want to sleep and get rest – you go and sleep, have a nap, you want to eat and give your body nourishment – you should go and eat the food that is nourishing for your body and soul, easy to digest, get and prepare without stressing out about it.

Honestly the attitude of "I eat to live

" is very unhealthy because our culture revolves around food and food after is one of the simplest ways to enjoy life. Just because you enjoy eating and seek pleasure from food doesn't mean you will be overweight and look at Europeans especially Italians. The key is to enjoy food but not stuffing food. The whole diet mentality is causing us to overeat due to emotional deprivation and cause us to be more overweight. The concept of eat to live is very much acknowledged and explained by dietitians instead of intuitive eating. Intuitive eating is not about eating whatever you want whenever you want but it is about learning the balance between loving, enjoying food and not using food to numb your feelings and maintain a healthy natural weight. Health is wealth and we live to eat to maintain our body and keep fit throughout during the pandemic and after. There lies the real success.



Jayanthy Subramaniam

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What the Deaf heard!

An Old Parsi Bawa goes to an Audiologist for his hearing problem.

Audiologist gives him a nice powerful hearing aid.

A month later the old man goes back for check up.

The Audiologist asks him how is the hearing now.

He says it's marvellous.

So your family must be very pleased says the Audiologist.

Old man answers : Haven't told the family about my hearing aid.

I just sit and listen to everyone's conversation.

In last one month I have changed my WILL 5 times.

Dorab Bawa wants a Divorce!

Dorab Bawa wanted a divorce.....

He tells the judge,

"I just can't take this anymore.

Every night my wife is out, until way past midnight, just going from bar to bar."

Judge asks, "What is she doing?"

Dorab Bawa replies, "Looking for me."

Dorab Bawa says his wife's cooking is tasteless!

Dorab Bawa came home from office, cleaned himself and sat for dinner, after having first bite he scolded his wife that food is tasteless.

His wife got up, called the municipal corporation doctor and told them that her husband doesn't have taste...

Municipal ambulance came and took him away and now he is in 14 days quarantine...

#Covid19 #Corona Virus

Dorab Bawa's Corona Test



Dorab's Friend: Dorab where were you?

Dorab: Went to Doctor to test for Corona.

Dorab's Friend: Then did you do it.

Dorab: Are you mad He said Rs. 5000/-.

Dorab's Friend: Did you pay?

Dorab: No, I sneezed on his face. Now he's gone for Corona test. If he comes -ve , mine too will be -ve.

And they said Corona has broken our spirit

How I made 20 million dollars!

Every morning, the CEO of a major bank in Manhattan went to the corner where a shoeshine man was always there. He used to sit on the chair, read the Wall Street Journal, and the shoeshine man gave his shoes a shiny, great look.

One morning, the shoeshine man asks the CEO:

What do you think of the stock market situation?

The CEO arrogantly asks him:

Why are you so interested in this subject?

The shoeshine man replies:

I have twenty million dollars deposited in your bank and I am thinking about investing part of the money in the stock market

The CEO of the bank asks:

What is your name?

He replies: John Smith H.

The CEO arrives at the bank and asks the Manager of the Major Accounts Department:

Do we have a customer named John Smith H.?

The Customer Service Manager for Major Accounts replies:

We certainly do, Sir! He is an extremely esteemed customer! He has twenty million dollars in his account.

The CEO leaves the bank, approaches the shoeshine boy, and says:

Mr. Smith, I would like to invite you to be our guest of honor at our board meeting next Monday and tell us your

life story. I'm sure we will have a lot to learn from you.

At the board meeting, the CEO introduces him to the board members: We all know Mr. Smith, who makes our shoes shine like no one else. But Mr. Smith is also our valued customer, with twenty million dollars in his account. I invited him to tell us the story of his life. I'm sure we can learn a lot from him. Please, Mr. Smith, tell us your life story. Then, Mr. Smith began to narrate his story:

I came to this country thirty years ago as a young immigrant from Eastern Europe and with an unpronounceable name. I left the ship penniless in my pocket. The first thing I did was to change my name to Smith. I was hungry and exhausted. I started to wander in search for a job, but without success. Suddenly, I found a coin on the sidewalk. I bought some apples. I had two options: eat the apples and quench my hunger or start a business. I sold the apples for 50 cents and bought more apples with the money. When I started accumulating dollars, I managed to buy a set of used brushes and shoe polishes and started cleaning shoes. I didn't spend a dime on fun or clothes. I only bought bread and cheese to survive. I saved penny by penny and after a while I bought a new set of brushes and shoe polishes in different shades and colors and increased my clientele. I lived like a monk and saved a penny after penny. After a while, I managed to buy a chair so that my customers could sit comfortably while I cleaned their shoes, which brought me more customers. I didn't spend a dime on the pleasures of life. I kept saving every penny. A few years ago, when the corner shoeshine colleague decided to retire, I had already saved enough money to buy his point, which was a better place than mine.

Finally, three months ago, my brother, who was a drug dealer in Chicago, passed away and left me twenty million dollars....

.Clearly, this is just a campaign to promote reading so that you can #StayRelevant in the ever changing times !

Reading stimulates the mind and imagination, makes us travel to other places and even helps communication.

CATHOLICS STILL VISIT THE DIVINE MERCY CHAPEL THE POWER OF FAITH IN ACTION

by Melvyn Brown

Over the past months, devotees, members, religious and priests still visit Divine Mercy Chapel at Calcutta. Many come to ask AFJ Founder and his companions to pray for their pious petitions. And faith does indeed, move mountains, as it has been observed by Melvyn Brown when humble petitions are answered and trust rewarded in the name of Jesus Divine Mercy.

Large classic paintings of our Lord, His Mother Mary and popular saints adorn the walls of the modest chapel.

Fr. Francis Rozario was moved at the display of the imposing paintings in golden frames. Devotees have prayed and left their requests in trust and faith that Our Lord Divine Mercy would help them.

A Sister from the congregation of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate expressed her thoughts that the chapel assists one to pray in peace and in the



quiet of the atmosphere. (See picture).

The notice still remains on the front door next to the holy water font: CHAPEL CLOSSES from 12 Noon to 4 p.m. The AFJ Companions have seen and reported of Catholics when passing the Chapel turn, bow and make the Sign of the Cross.



Sannas

Ingredients:

- 2 cups parboiled rice
- 1/2 cup grated coconut
- Coconut water (as required)
- 3 tbsp granulated white sugar
- 1 tsp yeast
- 1 tsp salt (as required)
- Oil (for greasing sanna molds)

Instructions and method:

1. Keep ingredients ready. Wash the rice and soak it overnight.
2. Next day, drain all the water from the rice. Grind the rice finely into a thick batter using coconut water. Grind the coconut finely and add it to the rice mixture.
3. Add the yeast and sugar. Mix well.
4. Allow it to ferment for about 3 hours until you see the mixture rise and bubbly. Now, add the salt and mix well.
5. Keep your steamer ready with water. Grease your sanna molds with some oil. Fill the sanna molds with batter, filling them half way.
6. Place the molds in the steamer. Cover the steamer.
7. Steam them for 12-15 minutes on medium high flame.
8. Unmold the sannas and place them in a muslin cloth. Cover them in the cloth until ready to eat. It tastes good with sorpotel. It can also be eaten plain.



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The Carpenter's Workshop

Short Story

The carpenter's workshop was a miniature replica of what a 2 AD shop in Nazareth might have looked like. Only this was Calcutta 2019, and the shop was at the back of a three storied building. A pious carpenter lived with his young widow sister, who was only seventeen. The elderly man made ladders and post-boxes for a living.

A six years old boy who lived with his rich parents on the second floor was their only visitor for most part of the day, every day. The child spent many happy hours in the shop and loved to hear the girl tell him stories while she cleaned the shop and cooked the meals.

The boy observed that the carpenter would say his prayers during the course of the day. The girl read the Bible often whenever she had the time, while a small white dove would fly around the shop without creating the flapping sound of his wings like most birds do.

"Aunty, a very bad man comes to see my father and he makes a lot of angry noise in the house. He is a very bad man." The boy said looking sad.

"Don't worry child. Your parents will know what to do." The girl would console him.

At that time in the city it was announced that for the coming elections, people who lived in the outskirts and the suburbs would have to go back to their homes to cast their votes.

On hearing this, the carpenter and his sister decided to return to their village

in Kamarati. They told the small boy it would take only four days to vote and return to the city. The first day passed by with evening and the night sneaking its way in the darkness to the next morning.

The next day the sun rose in all its pride and glory, painting the eastern sky with its breath of crimson, and the plains below in depths of flaming orange light. The birds were the first to welcome the blaze and blitz of the first rays of light as it touched the fields bathing with fresh air and new life for all God's creatures.

The little boy had no idea of time and with the passing of the day he would dash downstairs racing to the back of the building thinking the workshop would be open. When the boy ran out of the wide passage he felt a firm grip on his arm as a wet cloth was thrown over his face and he fell asleep instantly.

"Take the boy in your arms to the railway station and keep him with you in the village," the man snapped at the old woman who looked like a destitute. "I will call you on the mobile once I make a deal with this child's stubborn father and mother." The man spoke in a gruff voice.

"Don't forget my share in the deal, Sir."

The boy's parents were worried not finding their son in the house. He was nowhere to be found. Neighbors, friends and the local people went from place to place calling out to the six years old child, asking passersby if they had seen a small boy wearing a blue shirt and a half-pant.

The next morning, the old bedraggled woman and the boy arrived at the village. She took the boy's hand and led him towards a crowded roadside market.

Suddenly, the boy saw the carpenter and his sister in the distance. He called out to them, again and again.

Hearing the voice of the boy the carpenter turned around and saw the old woman dragging the boy away. The carpenter stood his ground and simply looked at the woman who let go of the boy's hand and fell on the road in a sudden spasm of pain.

The carpenter calmly took the boy's hand and walked to his own cottage that looked like something out of this world.

"Come, tomorrow I will cast our vote, and then we will take you home." Smiled the carpenter.

The next day the carpenter kept his word, and the boy found himself standing on the front doormat of his home in Calcutta.

"Go, meet your parents. We will go and open up the workshop and tidy up the house".

The parents could not believe that their son had come home safely, and after hearing the story from the little boy they all rushed down and to the back of the building.

"Son, where is the carpenter's workshop?" Asked the boy's father with a grin.

There was no workshop anywhere only the blank wall of the building. The little boy was at a loss for words.

"Come, my son," said his mother with a laugh, adding "It was your mind playing tricks with you."

The boy said nothing. As for the kidnapper, he never returned to trouble the boy's father, thanks to the pious carpenter.



BY MELVYN BROWN

With Love: To the ones who deserve all our love

A close acquaintance of mine once told me, you write very well and in fact all my family members love to read your writing but why do you so often write about your parents? She further continued by saying to me that I need not have to exhibit my love for them by writing about them and it was enough if it was in my heart and that I should concentrate writing about other serious issues prevailing in the society.

I choose not to reply and yes, this article can also be considered has a subtle reply to the rather profound question she thrustured at me.

They say our talents are giving by God and what we do with it is the gift we are giving back to God. What better way to use God giving talents to express our love and admiration for our parents?

I particularly love to write about my parents, because of the upbringing, guidance and support I have received and have been receiving from them.

My very birth was a result of their sacrifice. I remember my grandmother always telling me, how when my mom conceived, she had to undergo tremendous struggles, yet despite of the poverty and the pain my parents continued to love me and protect me in womb despite a few doctors suggesting termination.

I remember how my dad and mom chose to eat radish and beets every single day due to lack of resources and bring in a little meat and keep it aside for me so that I could eat it.

I remember how dad and mom struggled at their work places, working in shifts just to put me in the best school and assure that I received the best education.

I remember how my parents encouraged every talent of mine without in-

terfering and influencing my thoughts to fulfil their dreams.

I remember how they made our little house into a beautiful home with their love and fun.

This write up is not just dedicated to my parents but to all those parents who silently work every day. Swallow every hardship, tackle every insecurity, wipe every tear, forget every aching knee just for the happiness of their children and expect nothing in return except for their love and time.



by Sonal Lobo

I still remember when I was barely 10 years old, I had penned my first write up. I had submitted the story in school and it was published in a newspaper. I remember the day, when dad and mom rejoiced and we're filled with pride. Even today after

most 20 years, my dad and mom never fail to congratulate me even if it's the silliest of articles. Their appreciation and encouragement have helped me to cope at those times when I have felt extremely demotivated and decided to stop writing.

I first wrote about my parents when I was in college and even to this day, I remember those tears in my dad's eyes out of pride and happiness and that's when I decided I would write about them whenever and whichever possible ways, because that's the only way I could express my gratitude to them for all that they have done for me.

Many of us are blessed with innumerable talents, but how much time do we take to use those talents to bring happiness to our parents. Each of us are busy striving to exhibit our talents to the world, which is wonderful. But have we spent a little of our talents to help our parents relax and unwind?

Recently my parents stepped into 33rd year of their married life. Their

marriage and life have been exemplary. Most of us are blessed to have wonderful parents in our life, when we are young, we are with them but as we grow up and branch out with our families it's important that we spend some precious moments with them and see them in gratitude.

Yes. No parents expect anything in return. I have hardly heard my parents talk about their struggles and have asked me something in return for the same. But, aren't we supposed to express our gratitude for all that they have done for us?

I have attended a few funerals, where children come on stage and cry and talk about their dead parent and express gratitude. I have always wondered why couldn't they do the same when they were alive and let them know how much they meant to them.

All of us expect appreciation at work place, we expect certificate of appreciation in competitions, we expect I love you messages from our spouses and happy Birthday wishes from our relatives but why is it so hard to tell a THANK YOU to our parents?

A thank you need not be just a word it can be though our gestures. A surprise dinner with them, a holiday with them. A pair of new clothes for them. Accompanying them to the doctor's appointment. A phone call every day. There are plenty of ways where we can express our gratitude and love.

Has I express my gratitude and say thank you to my parents for the wonderful life they have given me through my writing, I encourage each one of you, take a little effort today to let your parents know that you truly acknowledge their efforts and love them for what they did, are doing and will do.

Most importantly remember your children are watching you. You reap what you sow.

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

7172. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1992) Ht. 6' 1", Wt. 90 kgs, Fair, Edn. Graduate, Diploma in Social Communications in Sophia and then done a Fellowship with Piramal House of Leadership. Working with an NGO - sports foundation. Contact email : florencemendonca@rediffmail.com

7146. MUMBAI : East Indian RC Bachelor, (Born in July 1988) Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 79 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. (Mech), + PG course in Finance, working as a Asst. Manager in MNC. Contact email : lenin.pdsouza@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

7113. POONA : Tamilian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1982), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working in Logistic Co. in DUBAI. Contact email : shantasam1955@gmail.com

7185. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1984) Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working for Bank. Contact email : spydee321@gmail.com

7159. MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1982) Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 65 kgs, Ethical, Healthy, Simple, Sober, Wheatish, B.E. Software Engineer, works @ Mumbai, 9224335003, mariosofttech@gmail.com seeks matrimonial alliance from Mumbai based Catholic Spinster. Please exchange relevant information.

7144. POONA : Goan RC Bachelor, (Born in October 1985) Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn.

Hotel Management Graduate, working as an Executive. Contact email : merrolmenezes@gmail.com

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

7180. U.K. : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1982) Ht. 6', Wt. 77 kgs, Fair, Edn. Chartered Accountant, Profession : Director Insurance Company. Contact email : russ_dsouza@yahoo.com

7101. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in April 1988), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters in Logistics doing part time MBA. Working as an Asst. Manager. Contact email : gracion.moras@gmail.com

7175. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1989) Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 74 kgs, Wheatish, Edn. B.Sc (H.C.M.) Hotel and Catering Management, 2nd Photographer/Merchandise Sales Dept., Contact email : osbertag-neloalmeida@gmail.com

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

7168. USA : US Citizen Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1985) Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 73 kgs, Fair, Edn. M.Sc., working for a Global Pharmaceutical Company. Contact email : lspinto84@gmail.com

7025. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1992), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 56 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. (IT), working as a

Software Developer. Contact email : kevin92ster@gmail.com

7165. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1979) Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 63 kgs, Fair, Edn. B.Com., Post Graduation in Supply chain & Ship Management, working as an E-commerce online support. Contact email : examiner4@yahoo.com

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

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

6968. DUBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1991), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate in Commerce. Working in Dubai since 2014 in Indian Consalate Office. Designation Senior Customer Executive. Contact Email :

shalenedsouza4@gmail.com

5996. MUMBAI : RC Bachelor (Born in November 1974) / 5'8", B.E., working in Senior position reputed IT firm. Seeks alliance from R.C. spinster educated good family background Pl. reply with photograph and details to keithcardozo@hotmail.com OR **9820338755**

6424. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1991), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., well employed, working as Sr. Customer Care Executive. Contact email :

gerardd754@gmail.com

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7182. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1992), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., C.A., working as Asst. Manager in TATA Company. Contact : email : matrimonialp27@gmail.com

6860 MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1991), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.M.M. (Mass Media), working for IT in MNC. Contact email : lgp1891@gmail.com

7070. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1992), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 48 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., CS., working as a Company Secretary in Private Firm. Contact email : smile9920@outlook.com

6032 DUBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1976), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 41 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., working as a Secretary. Contact email : track_1976@ yahoo.com OR 9730454857

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. Contact email : prislobo10@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

7014. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1992), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 45 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MMS (Finance) working as a Finance Executive in Limited Company. Contact email : eva_hpereira@rediffmail.com

7081 MUMBAI : Goan Roman

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

carlferns93@gmail.com

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

7095. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1992), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com + Import Export Certificate Course, working as a Billing Assistant in Well known Hospital. Contact email :

perpetualdias7@gmail.com

7186. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1991), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 40 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., working for an MNC. Contact email :

dyna911@gmail.com

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

joafaria@yahoo.ca

7166 MUMBAI : Mangalorean Christian Parents seek alliance for their daughter, (Born in May 1992), Ht. 5'4", having completed her BCAF, presently working with MNC in Mumbai. Contact email : ste004ffy@yahoo.in

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

Mob: 7021135272

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

7107. MUMBAI : Tamilian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1990), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Brown Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as a Commercial Executive. Contact No. 8108216595 email : jkanth74@gmail.com

7124. CANADA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1993), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.M.S., M.B.A. Operation, working as a Coordinator in Shipping Company. Contact email : carrel.dsouza@gmail.com

7106. AHMEDNAGAR : Goan Roman Catholic Divorcee, (Born in January 1986), Ht. 5' 3", Fair Complexion, Edn. High School, Contact email : anthonyfernandes9850@gmail.com

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

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

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Traditions and LENT

Traditions are beliefs, behaviour or folk custom passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. According to tradition, Shrove Tuesday comes before Ash Wednesday. The word Shrove is derived from shrive, referring to confession of sins as a preparation for Lent, a usual practice in Europe in the Middle Ages. It also marks the final day of austerity of the Lenten fast. Shrove Tuesday also has many customs pertaining to food. Fat Tuesday, or Mardi Gras Day is a chance to indulge before the start of Lent. The tradition dates back to 600 AD, when all animal products were consumed of their supply of butter, milk, and eggs before Lent.

In some parts of England people make and eat stacks of pancakes. In the United States they have pancake races, children especially enjoy running down the streets carrying a frying pan with a cooked pancake and flip it as they run. In New Orleans, Brazil, Venice and a few cities in France, parades featuring elaborate costumes, masks and flower-covered floats are held on the streets. In Finland they eat buns called laskiaispullat on Shrove Tuesday and call it Laskiaisen

The word Lent is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words **lencten**, meaning "Spring," and **lenctentid**, which literally means not only "Springtide" but also was the word for "March," the month in which most of the period of Lent falls. Lent became official in the Church in A.D. 313. "The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent are the recalling of the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. Both should be given great emphasis in the liturgy and catechesis.

Ash Wednesday is a Christian holy day of prayer and fasting. It is preced-



ed by Shrove Tuesday and falls on the first day of Lent, the six weeks of penitence before Easter. Lent is a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice and good works in preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection. Lent in the Christian tradition is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is also a season of reflection, it is a time set aside to be quiet, thoughtful and inward looking. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days.



by:
Dr Jeanette Pinto

People should spend more time in prayer, give alms to charities and sacrifice or give up some of the things they might do for pleasure. Christians fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday with only one simple meal during the day, without meat. They refrain from eating meat on all Fridays in Lent. Many eliminate a food or food group for the entire season, saving rich and fatty foods for Easter.

Some symbols of lent are 1. **Ash** – Wednesday, is the day when a priest places ash on a worshipper's forehead in the shape of a cross; symbolizing both death and repentance. 2. **Fish**: Why fish? Because Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent are meatless days. 3. **Incense**: It is a symbol of prayer, and as in Ps (141:2) '*Let my prayer be incense before you; my up-lifted hands an evening sacrifice*'.

Lent is not a Catholic thing, unlike Easter, it's not a celebration. Lent

is observed by Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Lutherans, and Methodists. The importance of Lent as a religious observance in the Christian world, is the season to observe and commemorate the **passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ**, the son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. It is an opportune time to reflect on what it means to be a follower of Christ.

Lent lasts for forty days, that's how long Jesus wandered in the desert, fasting, while he resisted Satan's temptations. It is an opportunity, during these forty days, to be like Jesus. We too can resist temptations, try not to commit sins, review and repent and use this time to become holy and come closer to God.

What spiritual exercises can we do and practice this Lenten season? Do we have to fast from food or do we give up other stuff like watching TV, porn videos, or texting mobile? Form healthy habits that nurture and sustain your growth as a person. Is the Sabbath just an Old Testament thing? In that case should it not be on Saturday? Why then is this part of the Ten commandments? What's the difference between minimalism and simplicity? What does the Bible say about simplicity and how might that uniquely challenge us as a people who have all we need? Enjoy God's love for you in community prayer. Surely, you, can draw close to God during this special time and have a greater sense of His purpose for your life. Experience Lent this year like as never before!

Christian Identity in Indian Cinema

by Dr. Mona Jacqueline Mendonsa. Mangalore.



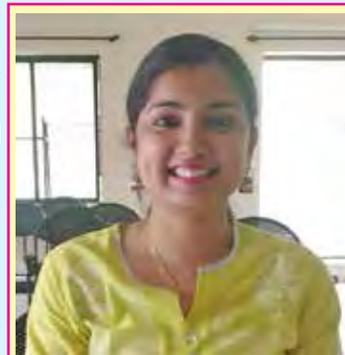
India being a diverse and large country to contest in the movie business, with a history of over a century now, has been successful in grabbing a huge audience both nationally and internationally. The cinema here has evolved over the years is phenomenal and this transformation is surely very much due to the influence of the contemporary outlook. Time and again it has borrowed ideas and concepts from cinema across the globe and in this process it recreated unique characters which later on got stereotyped and was dominant till late 1990's. One interesting aspect is featuring and casting characters identifying with Christian backgrounds, supporting the protagonist (hero/heroine) who is as always from a conservative community with known culture and tradition. Meanwhile a minor character is seen more uncultured, lacking good values, promiscuous, tarnishing the local values with their seemingly western practices and the like. Though in the 21st century several conditions have levelled this out.

As a school going girl watching Hindi movies every Friday on 'DDone' Channel was a fascinating experience and I presume that all kids born around the 1980's could easily relate to this. More than a cinema I prefer to call it an adventure. Firstly, having been deprived of entertainment (audio-visual) which for the new generation is difficult to imagine and secondly, Bollywood cinema particularly movies which were made between 1960's and 1980's projecting romance, emotion, glamour, crime in an extravagant manner made me feel uncomfortable. Having no other choices I had to stick on to it just to kill time. Gradually over a period I

was truly puzzled watching some of the negative characters frequently, with western or alien names who often added too much colour on screen but at the same time failed to receive any kind of love or appreciation from the audience. repeatedly one could note the same model continued and I understood that Robert, Anthony, Akbar, Peter, Anwar, Jamal, Ali, John and so on were all not so good in life.

Looking at the iconic Bollywood Villains of all times Prem Chopra, Ranjeet, Sudir, Pran, Amjad Khan and so many other could be seen in movies which were released between 1960 to 1984, as dons, diamond smugglers, drunkards, night club owners, band musicians at hotels/clubs, who were not just manipulative but also womanizers whose moves and methods were questionable. For instance, Prem Chopra, in 'Poonam ki Raat'(1965) as Peter, Sudir, in 'Hare Rama Hare Krishna'(1972) as Michael, and as Lawrence in 'Chuppa Rustam' (1973). Ranjit as Peter in 'Raampur ka Laxman'(1972) and 'lootmaar' (1980), And the veteran actor Pran in 'Jonny mera Naam' and Micheal D'Souza in 'Majboor' (1974). And Amjad Khan as Robert in 'Charas' (1976) and' so on. The super stars of those

times too have tried to fit into these negative characters once in a while in the name of breaking the monotony, for instance, Shammi Kapoor in 'Teesri manzil' (1966) and Dev Anand, in 'Prem Pujari' as Peter Andrew, (1970), are a few pointers.



The Author : Dr Mona Jacqueline Mendonsa, A young history scholar, with current interest in Heritage sites and oral traditions, hailing from Bantwal. She has a Masters in History from Mangalore University, started her teaching career at St. Agnes College (Autonomous) Mangalore , now in Carmel College, Modankap. A research scholar at Karnataka Theological Research Center (KTC) Mangaluru was awarded Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree by Kannada University Hampi. Widely known for her multi pronged history and cultural activities, hosts programmes on Daiji-world TV. .

Introduced by : Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

These characters registered in my mind deeply, it left unpleasant emotions making me constantly think that Christian men were no less than a threat to this society. And one such question was why Vijay/Kumar (common character names) are always the 'good'? And why is Robert always 'Bad'? Though I was quite young, I disliked watching those negative characters of Villains in particular with Christian names with a crucifix around the neck, a big scar on the face which reminded him for having history in crime and the tremor in his eyes which was enough to scare any viewer.

Similarly, female characters with alien names like,

(Contd.. on p. 20)

(Contd.. from p. 19)

Julie, Mary, Haseena, Lucy, Ameera, Jameela, Rita, and so on failed to be very good characters because these characters featured in the iconic movies were of no prominence. For instance, Helen is represented as a glam Queen of 1970's who is not just an item dancer but also bold, independent, outspoken. Bindu, Aruna Irani, Jayashree on the other hand, as Christian women, in some of the iconic movies are shown to be continuously trying to seduce the protagonist or indulging in crime and at the same time her ways are mysterious and suspicious. She finds pleasure in constantly being the vamp, interfering in the romantic love life of the protagonist. These characters are also shown as ambitious whose dream is to make a name and fame for herself, often



Iconic dancer of Indian cinema:
Helen

ity stream in India. Among Christian characters more popular were Catholic Christians from Goa. Though it's wrong to bring one ethno-religious community and represent it to the entire minor community, Bollywood mov-

doing odd jobs most commonly secretly in the office or bar or love interest of the don.

Now looking back I am able to analyse the movie which through new roles provided a glimpse into life of the minor-

ies have been doing it for a long time. So the question remains, how these ideas are adopted, could their roots be traced to Goa, which was the bastion of the Portuguese in India. Characters from Goa with Portuguese surnames are Roman Catholics, forming a strong link to a specific culture and history, location, and religion. And later on as the whole community across India was quick in grabbing the colonial heritage and branding themselves as westernized it set a stereotype that remained for several decades. 'Amar Akbar Anthony' where superstar Amitabh Bachchan played Anthony and hence there was acceptance and validation received from all corners. So it is evident that the film industry time and again misrepresented by stereotyping the Christian community. And the unrealistic portrayals of gray characters are highly biased and such stereotypes have to be discarded, as the writing on the wall now proves.

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