

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

Vol.30 Issue No.13

(Total Pages 20)

Mumbai, 29 March -4 April, 2021

Rs. 10

A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

Why do priests 'leave'?

... Reports say he was a popular priest, speaking forcefully on social issues. So, what went wrong? What has prompted him to do what he has done, why? Whatever concerns he had as a principal, as a priest, would they now be addressed by a political party? Of course, only he can provide the answers. **A news report on the internet asks, 'Who should be blamed for the loss of a very competent and promising priest, for whom thirty pieces of silver was more preferable, than to stick to priesthood.'** It's unbelievable! Yes, as people are saying, a competent priest is lost to Calcutta Archdiocese! Understandably, a large number of people are upset at this unexpected turn of events. **One of the parishioners is reported to have called him "the Judas of the Catholic community."** Well, I am no judge, God is the ultimate judge. We need to place our trust in Him. In the meanwhile, it would help if the Church would be proactive and look into the concerns of the priests & parishioners of various other dioceses in the country, before they explode into a storm...

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... Rodney Borneo and Varghese Palappallil may well be the proverbial wolves masquerading in sheep's clothing. And yet, their cases are symptomatic of the malaise or, rather, the sinister virus that has obviously crept unnoticed into certain echelons of the priesthood, be it in Calcutta, Kerala or Bombay, in India or Asia or anywhere in the rest of the Catholic world. **Priests are known to leave the priesthood for varying reasons, the most poignant of which being the quality of vocations that the Church has for some time been getting...**

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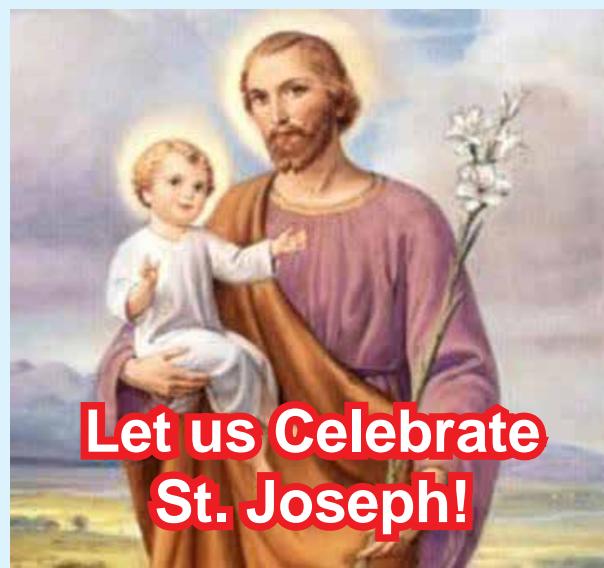
... To recap, Borneo was the "very popular" principal of a prestigious Catholic school in Calcutta. He resigned to join the BJP and blamed his Archbishop Thomas D'souza for not addressing his grievances that necessitated this drastic move. The other incident is when Varghese allegedly physically assaulted his Bishop Pius D'souza at his dining table, accusing him of being against him in a sexual abuse case. Varghese later denied the assault.

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Let us Celebrate St. Joseph!

Let us Celebrate St. Joseph! on his Feast Day (19 March) and on every single day of this year, dedicated to him. In his Apostolic Letter 'Patris Corde' (With a Father's Heart), Pope Francis recalls the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church and to mark this occasion he has proclaimed a 'Year of Saint Joseph', beginning 8 December 2020 and concluding on 8 December 2021. Pope Francis says "*I would like to share some personal reflections on this extraordinary figure, so close to our own human experience. For, as Jesus says, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt 12:34). My desire to do so increased during these months of pandemic, when we experienced, amid the crisis, how "our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people, people often overlooked. People who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines, or on the latest television show, yet in these very days are surely shaping the decisive events of our history. Doctors, nurses, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caregivers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests, men and women religious, and so very many others. They understood that no one is saved alone.*" We celebrate St. Joseph by internalizing the spiritual wealth of 'Patris Corde'.

Let us Celebrate St. Joseph! On the Feast of St. Joseph in 2013, Pope Francis began his Pontificate. At the Inaugural Eucharist, focusing on St Joseph, Pope Francis said, "*In the Gospels, St Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great*



Let us Celebrate St. Joseph!



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH
SJ

tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak, but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness." He added, "that exercising the role of protector as St Joseph did, means doing so discreetly, humbly and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he finds it hard to understand. The Gospels present St Joseph as a husband to Mary, at her side in good times and bad, and as a father who watched over Jesus, worried about Him and taught Him a trade. St Joseph responded to his called to be a protector by being constantly attentive to God, open to the signs of God's presence and receptive to God's plans, and not simply his own." As we cel-

ebate St. Joseph, let us thank God, for the precious gift of Pope Francis to the Church and to the world!

Let us Celebrate St. Joseph! In 'Patris Corde', Pope Francis says, "*Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.*" He goes on to share

seven significant 'fatherly' dimensions which St Joseph radiates: a beloved father; a tender and loving father; an obedient father; an accepting father; a creatively courageous father; a working father; a father in the shadows. Celebrating St Joseph means making a meaningful and concerted effort to emulate some of these qualities in our own lives.

Let us Celebrate St. Joseph! The foster-father of Jesus has always been referred to as a 'just man'. Right from the moment, Mary was betrothed to him, St. Joseph was confronted with a host of issues. He had to make very difficult decisions; every decision of his would impact on Mary or Jesus or on both them, in a profound way. But he did so with a great sense of prudence and responsibility and surely, after much discernment. The Biblical 'righteousness'(justice) was his forte; he was imbued with a tremendous sense of justice. Our world today is plagued with several injustices and the victims of these injustices are always the poor, the marginalized and the vulnerable of our society. Celebrating St Joseph today, means we have to be visible and vocal in taking a stand against the injustices of our time.

Let us Celebrate St. Joseph! Pope Francis has never stopped reminding the world that the Holy Family: Joseph, Mary and Jesus were refugees. When the child Jesus was in danger of being killed by King Herod. Joseph took the babe and Mary and fled into Egypt; there they found refuge, safety and security. Joseph experienced and understood the plight of refugees. A hallmark of the papacy of Pope Francis has been his consistent concern for refugees and migrants. He has been urging all to wel-

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Vol.30 Issue No.13 March 29- April 4, 2021 Rs.10/-

99, Perin Nariman Street, Fort, Mumbai - 400 001.

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E-mail : secular@sezariworld.com / seculardivo@gmail.com

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Subscriptions Rate:

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come, protect, promote and integrate refugees and migrants. All around us there are migrants, refugees, others. We have seen what happened to thousands of migrant workers all over the country, when the lockdown was imposed, a year ago. Celebrating St. Joseph means checking our own attitudes: how do we treat the 'outsider'; someone who is not like us? Are we inclusive enough?

Let us Celebrate St. Joseph! Pope Francis often refers to Joseph as a 'dreamer' capable of accepting the task entrusted to him by God. In one of his earlier homilies he said, "Christians, especially young people, should follow the example of St Joseph who was not afraid to listen to his dreams, like when he was told in a dream not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife and again when he was told to flee with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. When we dream great things, beautiful things, we draw close to God's dream, the things that God dreams for us. May he give young people – because he, too, was young – the ability to dream, to risk and to take on difficult tasks that they have seen in their dreams." Pope Francis has also been sharing a very personal secret. "I would like to share with you something very per-

sonal. I like St Joseph very much. He is a man of strength and of silence. On my desk in my room, I have a statue of St Joseph sleeping. While sleeping he looks after the Church. Yes, he can do it! We know that. When I have a problem or a difficulty, I write on a piece of paper and I put it under his statue so he can dream about it. He now sleeps on a mattress of my notes. This means please pray to St Joseph for this problem. That is why I sleep well: it is the grace of God!" Celebrating St Joseph means that we too are called to dream of making our world a more humane, just, free, equitable and fraternal one. When St Joseph awakes, he actualises his dream; we are called to do likewise.

Let us Celebrate St. Joseph! Just before Christmas 2017, in a homily at Casa Santa Marta Pope Francis said, "St. Joseph gives us three key lessons as we walk with him to Bethlehem. Jesus' father on earth knew 'how to walk in darkness', 'how to listen to the voice of God', and 'how to go forward in silence.' Then speaking of Joseph's struggle upon learning of Mary's pregnancy, he continued, "Joseph fought within himself; in that struggle, the voice of God [is heard]: 'But get up' – that 'Get up' [which is heard] so many times in the Bible at the beginning of

a mission — 'Take Mary, bring her to your home. Take charge of the situation; take this situation in hand, and go forward.' Joseph did not go to his friends to be comforted; he did not go to a psychiatrist so that he could interpret the dream. No... He believed. And he went forward. He took the situation in hand. What was the situation? What was it that Joseph had to take up? Two things: *fatherhood, and mystery*." To truly celebrate St Joseph today we need to embark on a similar journey: to walk in darkness, to listen to the voice of God, and to go forward in silence. It is not easy- but it is the way of the pilgrim, the path of discipleship!

Let us Celebrate St. Joseph! As we pray today and every day, in the words of Pope Francis, *Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man.* *Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.*

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

As a true deshbhakt, I want to alert the central government that the country is on the verge of breaking, facing another partition!

Sikhistan In Making?

Could it be that farmers' aandolan at Delhi borders give rise to the creation of Sikhistan? Fears are expressed. The Kisan agitators are mainly from Punjab and Haryana. The farmers are on roads for last 4 months facing cold and heat day and night! They have reached a hopeless condition. Last week 40,000 women left their homes and families and have gathered at the borders to take over the leadership of the aandolan, simply because they have understood that the three farm laws are a 'death warrant' to farmers! The central government has stopped all dialogue with them for last 2 months.



**Fr. Michael G.
Vasai**

ing for Pakistan. In 1970s there was a big upheaval in Punjab for Khalistan! In 1980s Operation Blue Star and in its violent aftermaths popularized the demand for Khalistan among many Sikhs dispersed globally. Involvement of sections of Sikh diaspora provided the diplomatic and financial support. It also enabled Pakistan to become involved in the fueling of the movement. Sikhs in UK, Canada and USA arranged for cadres to travel to Pakistan for military and financial assistance. Some Sikh groups abroad even declared themselves as the Khalistani government in exile!

Theatre association) had organised in Madhya Pradesh a Naatya Mahotsav. One of the play was entitled as "Jaat hi puchho Sadhu ki". The Bajrangdal took objection to the word 'Sadhu' and the entire Naatya Mahotsav was cancelled! In fact the play has nothing to do with Sadhu; it is a story of a student who is struggling to get a job!

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS ARE STIFLED

The RSS is planning to bring about AKHAND BHARAT on Hindu religious basis. The multi-religious fabric of our country will never allow that to happen but on the contrary such efforts will break the country into pieces! The government is becoming undemocratic, Hukumshah! Former Finance Minister Shri. Yashavant Sinha when recently joining TMC in Kolkata reiterated the slogan: All democratic institutions have been stifled. Even Supreme Court is failing to deliver justice. In Goa a government servant was directly appointed as the Chief Election Commission. Modi's picture was printed on every Corona Vaccine certificate! The world is taking note of the Indian Tanashahi! Recently the English parliament discussed the recent deteriorating the political situation and disapproved of our government!

Agitations against privatisation are on the rise in Visakhapatnam and many other cities of India. If the crores of unemployed and desperate youth join the farmers, may even give rise to real seditious activities! Beware Modiji!

For airing such views may I be considered a Deshdrohi, Anti-National? God forbid! In fact as a true Deshbhakta I stand to protect the unity of the country, one nation, Akhand Bharat! I want to warn the government at the centre and avoid creation of another partition! May the government humbly take back 3 farm-laws, which were passed undemocratically in Lok-Sabha.

Inquilab zindabad!

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General Absolution during the pandemic

With Easter around the corner, it's time for reconciliation and confession. My personal view is that face-to-face confession should be avoided in Mumbai and other Covid hot spots in Maharashtra, as Covid-19 cases are increasing alarmingly. It will be well nigh impossible to adhere to social distancing norms and other Covid protocols. The Confessor will be at high risk of contracting the virus with close exposure to so many persons. The penitent too will be at risk, to a lesser extent. It will not be possible to have a coherent dialogue with masks on both sides. Besides the chair or kneeler will have to be sanitized for every new penitent.

I am of the opinion that in covid hotspots, a half-hour online Reconciliation Service may be held followed by a General Absolution. Presently we do have Spiritual Communion, which was unheard of hitherto. So General Absolution should not be seen as an preposterous idea and may be considered as a viable option during the pandemic. In any case I do not expect the usual number of people to turn up for confession in church. Hence, for the benefit of the others and senior citizens, children and the sick, reconciliation with General Absolution may be considered. Besides, there are many who have not made a confession for years or even decades and for them General Absolution will be a real Godsend. And believe me, such persons are much, much more than we would like to believe. For them it will be a fortuitous spiritual windfall.

—Prof Robert Castellino

Church's no to same-sex marriages

Refusal by Vatican's 'Congregation for the doctrine of the faith' to bless same-sex unions and accord them sacramental recognition on the grounds that 'God cannot bless sin', comes as a huge setback to the thousands of gay Catholics all over the world who are in the forefront of their agitation with demands for recognition of same-sex marriages by the Catholic church. Even the ultra-orthodox Catholic country of Ireland has opted for same-sex marriage by means of a national referendum along with other Catholic countries where gay and lesbian marriages are legalised. It is also a huge disappointment because the church which recognises the dignity of homosexuals and lesbians, is also expected to recognise same-sex marriages, since persons with homosexual orientations are also blessed by God. However, to most Catholics the decision by the church is no surprise, knowing very well the orthodoxy of the Vatican over the past years, and Pope Francis' rigid defence of heterosexual marriages and repeated reference to Genesis as a bedrock for the belief that it was God's wish to see the fulfillment of his creation through the loving union between man and woman.

— A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim, Goa

**Let Bangla
remain 'Sonar'!**

Orlem Malad

The farmers in aandolan have entered Pashchim Bangal election campaign. They are making propaganda not for any party but only against the BJP. 'Vote anyone but to BJP!' Today all should consider BJP as one common enemy, enemy of the democracy! The latest amendment Bill brought in Lok Sabha which aims at taking away all authority of the elected state Government in Delhi and placing it in the hands of Lieutenant Governor, a stooge of the Central Government! 'Government is Lieutenant Governor'! This is one more bold and shameless attempt in ending democracy in the country! Therefore every 'Deshpremi' citizen should endeavour every where for the defeat of BJP, the real Deshdrohi party! In West Bangla, the alliance of the Communist and the Congress Knowing that in Bangla the real fight is between TMC and BJP, should make sure that BJP does not come to power! To defeat BJP at times they should be soft on TMC. Sweden based Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) declared that in india today

democracy has come down to 53rd number in the world. Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) has deemed us as only 'Elected Autocracy'! The Washington Post has published an article with a title "Modi's Vehement attack on Opponents!"

Let Bangla remain 'Sonar' to show to the world that we Indians are serious about saving democracy in India.

Inquilab zindabad!

—Fr. Michael G.,
Vasai.

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Lent And The Many Facets Of Hypocrisy!

It is ironical that at a time when activists and non-activists alike cutting across all boundaries are condemning the unfair arrest of genuine representatives of social justice and equity like Jesuit Father Stan Swamy and others, a priest of the Catholic Church in India has not merely quit the principalship of a premier Catholic educational institution in the Archdiocese of Calcutta but his principles, too as is evident from the fact that he has quit the priesthood itself before entering active politics by joining the very political party (on 9 March 2020) that has been the cause of so much injustice, despair and unrest across the country ever since it first came to power at the Centre and in several states of the Indian Union—perhaps to help the BJP fulfil its grand promise of depositing a minimum of 15 lac Indian Rupees in the bank account of every citizen of India by advising its government on English medium education

in India! His Archbishop, the Rt Rev Thomas D'Souza, in a circular dated 10 March has officially informed those concerned in the Archdiocese of Calcutta that the deserter has ceased to function as a Roman Catholic Priest with immediate effect.

Traitors v/s Virus!

Significantly, we are in the midst of the Holy Season of Lent when non-virtues like betrayal, denial, desertion and the like are dwelt upon during our preparations for the Easter Triduum as also in the midst of concerted efforts at recovering from the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, more than the Church, it is now the BJP itself that needs to be wary of this ex-patre for who knows how he might betray (deservingly of course!) the trust the party has apparently reposed in him by admitting him into its cadres, considering the fact that his resignation had at the time of his joining the



by Ladislaus L
D'Souza

BJP not been accepted by his boss and that he himself had not yet formally handed over charge of his office as Principal to anybody. Just callously walking out of the very institution that had probably made him what he is today—such irresponsible behaviour! A starker example of the dog biting the very hand that feeds it would be difficult to come by.

As though Borneo's stunt wasn't despicable enough news of a priest assaulting his bishop in Ajmer has sent shockwaves across the Catholic Church in India. The reason? Father Varghese Palappallil, whose sexual abuse case is currently pending in Rome, could not digest Bishop Pius Thomas D'Souza's unwillingness to appoint him anywhere on account of the case. The Bishop has promptly informed the priest and all the bishops of India apart from all others concerned that citing the Church's "*Iatae Sententiae penality*", Palappallil had incurred automatic excommunication by his act of physically assaulting his superior, a Bishop (some reports are using the term 'suspension'). A clear case of poor upbringing—implicitly a spoilt brat!

And then of course there's the **news of the two warring factions of an Oriental Church in Kerala cozying up to the top honchos of the anti-Christian communal outfit, the RSS, ostensibly to see whose side the pro-Hindu fanatics will take on the issue involved before throwing their respective church's weight behind the BJP in the forthcoming State Assembly elections in Kerala!**

Methinks, with three examples of traitorship emerging so closely on each other's heels, the Church's cup of woes cannot but be overflowing this Season of Lent!

Why do priests 'leave'?

Rodney Borneo and Varghese Palappallil may well be the proverbial wolves masquerading in sheep's clothing. And yet, their cases are symptomatic of the malaise or, rather, the sinister virus that has obviously crept unnoticed into certain echelons of the priesthood, be it in Calcutta, Kerala or Bombay, in India or Asia or anywhere in the rest of the Catholic world. **Priests are known to leave the priesthood for varying reasons, the most poignant of which being the quality of vocations that the Church has for some time been getting**

The Late Gispert Rodray* fell in love with his cousin whom he was counselling in relation to her marital problems and married her, but gamely broadcasted that he left the priesthood because of the politics rampant in the church—a case of love in times of war?! Paul Varkey* called it quits in the very first year of his ordination, married a girl from the very parish of his posting and not many months later, brazenly walked into the same parish church for some function with a heavily pregnant wife! When asked by a parishioner on his last day in the parish as to apparently sudden development, he is reported to have shamelessly said, "I always wanted to marry Celine*. But I also wanted to try out the priesthood," thereby trivializing the very concept of 'vocation'. Equally trivializing is his own contention that even while still a seminarian, he moonlighted in nightclubs as an organist! What is most galling is that his first (and only) posting after his ordination was precisely in the parish where his girlfriend resided! Was it oversight? Or an act of collusion? Attaguy! He had all his dreams fulfilled, and how! First 'Reverend Father' through priestly ordination and then 'Dada' through marriage, the only one of the seven sacraments he has yet to receive being the Anointing of the sick! Sick in the head

(Contd.. on p. 7)

(Contd.. from p. 6)

you bet!

Tip of the Iceberg....

In a report on the 'Mattersindia' portal (10 March 2021) Father Sunil Rosario, another priest of the Archdiocese of Calcutta, states matter-of-factly, there were matters of deep pastoral concern "**in pastoral care. Unfortunately, the archdiocese has no forum where such controversial matters can be dealt with diligently, by all diocesan clergy. Whatever forums exist they are 'Top-down' model that is under control.** Rodney, being a local vocation, became a victim of a structure that lacked timely response to his growing depression and indifference.

"**There is no machinery that can protect the interest of the local clergy. Why would a local vocation resign from the post of principal? There could be others who are in similar situation of administrative inaction. Those who are working hard not only in giving quality education but improving its revenue, should also be protected, promoted and supported at all cost.**"

Could what Father Rosario says be implicit of the state of affairs in the Church not merely in Calcutta but across the subcontinent? One is inclined to think so. For take the case of Father When-and-why* who, during his fund collection drive at a prominent pilgrimage centre for a new church on the outskirts of the diocese was heard complaining bitterly to a few lay sympathizers: "The place where we presently have our Masses is strong RSS territory and we live in dread of their tactics. I have told the Archbishop so many times but he has not bothered to come even once to take a look at the situation." What the archbishop was supposed to do, i.e. *provide armed protection to Reverend Father, or go to the RSS Headquarters in Nagpur to negotiate some sort of a deal, or move Reverend and his growing parish to archbishop's house* is not known! But the truth remains – "**no forum where such controversial matters can be**

The Church & Politics

The Election scene in West Bengal is hotting up. Political parties are raising the pitch, they are getting aggressive. West Bengal is known for violence however, in the present situation violence seems to have taken a turn for the worse. No less than the chief minister of the state, Mamata Banerjee has been badly injured, left with a broken leg. However, it beats one's imagination as to how such an incident could have occurred in the first place, inspite of the high-profile special security & the local police being in attendance. A thorough probe would be necessary and who will gain mileage out of this incident remains to be seen. **I am no fan of Mamata Banerjee but her optimism & confidence is noteworthy - she'll be back for the poll campaign in a few days, she says, and use a wheelchair if needed.**

Large scale defections have taken place in the past during previous elections and West Bengal is no exception. Several leaders have deserted the ruling party (Trinamool Congress) and jumped on to the opposition bandwagon. But what is shocking is that a priest of the Calcutta Archdiocese, Fr. Rodney Borneo, principal of Loyola School, has put in his papers and joined active politics with an opposition party. **One is at pains however, to understand why he would have taken the extreme step of resigning as principal of the school and what is worse, joining a political party.**

Reports say he was a popular priest, speaking forcefully on social issues. So, what went wrong? What has prompted him to do what he has done, why? Whatever concerns he had as a principal, as a priest, would they now be addressed by a political party? Of course, only he can provide the answers. **A news report on the internet asks, 'Who should be blamed for the loss of a very competent and promising priest, for whom thirty pieces of silver was more preferable, than to stick to priesthood.'** It's unbelievable! Yes, as people are saying, a competent priest is lost to Calcutta Archdiocese! Understandably, a large number of people are upset at this unexpected turn of events. **One of the parishioners is reported to have called him "the Judas of the Catholic community."** Well, I am no judge, God is the ultimate judge. We need to place our trust in Him. In the meanwhile, it would help if the Church would be proactive and look into the concerns of the priests & parishioners of various other dioceses in the country, before they explode into a storm.

**Melville X. D'Souza
Orlem, Malad West**

dealt with diligently... - no machinery that can protect the interest of the local clergy." Add to all this instances of alcohol addiction, suicides, corruption, vindictiveness, linguistic divisiveness, murder and what not among clergy and religious, and we realize with a thud that the Rodney Borneo issue is merely the tip of the iceberg!

Introspection – the need of the hour

Whether the Church in India would be able to face the consequences and stay afloat if she suddenly found herself heading straight into the iceberg itself, maybe only time will tell. Would that She, reading between the lines in the writing on the wall, took due cognizance of its implications and, after due introspection, act before it is too late!

*Name changed for obvious reasons

EASTER : Festival Of Joy And Hope

Easter is the most important feast day of the Christian calendar though Christmas — the feast which commemorates the birth of Christ — is celebrated with greater pomp and show all over the world. Easter is the first and perhaps the only feast the early Christians knew till about the end of the 2nd century. The joy of Easter involves the greatest mystery of Christian faith — it is the day on which Christ conquered sin and death and rose alive in glory from the tomb where he had been buried on Good Friday.

Easter invariably falls on a Sunday — the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox. The equinox is the time when the sun crosses the equator and makes the day and the night of equal length. In the first half of the year this usually occurs about March 21; so, Easter cannot come earlier than March 22 and later than April 25. **This year, Easter falls on April 4.**

Origins

The word 'Easter' is believed to have been derived from the name of the goddess of spring, Eostra. A festival was celebrated in her honour every year in April. With the coming of Christianity the old gods were set aside. Instead, this festival came to be celebrated in commemoration of the resurrection (rising from the dead) of Christ. The coming of spring with its bright sunshine and beautiful flowers has always been the cause of great joy. No wonder then that this festival celebrating the sun's reappearance from its wintry grave has been transformed into the Christian feast of the rising of Christ from the dead.

Celebrations

Easter celebrations begin and reach their zenith during the vigil service on the Saturday (after Good Friday) night

during which the blessing of the "Paschal Candle" takes place. Decorated with five balls of incense (these signify the five wounds Christ was inflicted on the Cross), the Paschal Candle represents the risen Christ. A new fire is kindled and blessed to light the Paschal Candle on which is also engraved the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet — alpha and omega — meaning thereby that Christ is the beginning and the end of everything. All the people gathered light their candles from the huge Paschal Candle, thus proclaiming that Christ is the Light of the World. The Paschal Candle is then carried in procession to the side of the altar where the priest blesses fresh water and baptises those who have been preparing themselves to receive the Christian faith.

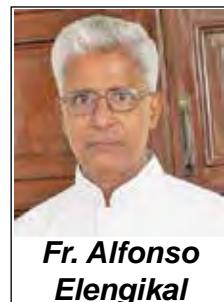
Customs And Traditions

There are many customs and traditions that have come to be associated with Easter. The giving of coloured eggs on Easter is one such custom. Not only are eggs a symbol of new life, but the early Christians were happy to see eggs once again at table after the long fast of Lent (season of fasting for forty days) during which they were not permitted to use eggs. In order to achieve complex designs, the

egg, contents drained, are first dipped in wax. After cutting a design in the wax with a needle, it is placed in cold dye. The dyed part is then re-covered with wax and another design is etched and dyed. These eggs are then taken to church to be blessed on Easter Sunday. During the Easter season, churches are generally decorated with the white flower known as the Easter Lilly, the elegance of which adorns the altar, and its sweet aroma fills the entire atmosphere.

In Europe, Easter decorations and paintings often include the figure of a rabbit known as the Easter rabbit. Some connect it with the spring goddess Eostra herself, while others narrate a story to the effect that a group of children saw a hare running from a nest of coloured eggs and so assumed that it had laid those eggs. This presumably is the reason why children decorate their Easter egg baskets with the figure of a rabbit.

The customs and the modes of celebrating Easter may vary from place to place. But Easter always remains essentially a feast of joy and hope for Christians everywhere; because it reminds them that Christ has conquered sin and death, that they are no more slaves to the forces of darkness, but children of God and heirs to the kingdom of God.



**Fr. Alfonso
Elengikal**



Prayer to St. Expedite for solving a financial crisis

I call forth the Power and the presence of **St. Expedite** in my time of financial trouble. I offer my body, heart, mind and soul upon your altar of light. I have faith and trust and complete confidence that you will be my strength in this time of need. Quickly come to my assistance.

(State Your Petition)

My financial need is urgent. Be my Light and Guide in this situation so that I may live with peace, love, prosperity and abundance and in the Praise of God. Amen. (Promise Publication)

—John D'Souza, Andheri

US Prez Joe Biden connects Nagpur Family

It is worth knowing, US President Joe Biden has old connections in India; Pointedly, in the 'orange city' of Nagpur not far from Mumbai - the centerpoint of India.

On his very first visit to India in 2013, US President Joe Biden indicated that distant descendants of his family were living in 'Mumbai'. Later, in Washington, he explained that after becoming a Senator in 1972, he had received a letter from one of the 'Bidens' in India and came to understand that his "great, great, great, great, great grandfather" George Biden was a ship captain in the East India Trading company in 1800s.

Leslie Biden and Arthur Biden are the contemporary Nagpur link; Leslie had written to Joe Biden in April 1981 and an earlier letter that Prez Joe Biden had received in 1972 was also written by Nagpur-based Leslie Biden, who lives with some of his grandchildren in Nagpur, and declares that their family has been living in Nagpur, since 1873. Leslie Biden in Nagpur and was managing the Bharat Lodge and Hostel, and Bharat Cafe in Nagpur, before he died in 1983. While reading the 'Illustrated Weekly of India' weekly issue of March 28, 1981, Leslie came across an article about the then US senator Joe Biden and decided to write a letter to the then senator. Joe Biden replied to Leslie through a letter dated May 30, 1981, said he was pleased after getting the letter from India and also discussed the Bidens."

In a 2015 address in Washington, Biden claimed that one of his ancestors, George Biden, was a captain in the East India Trading Company and possibly married an Indian lady. After retirement, he had decided to settle in India. Biden said, "Five people from the Biden family live in Mumbai." Joe Biden said that someone had given him the phone numbers of the Biden family living in Mumbai. As per Tim Willasey,

a visiting professor at the King's College, London, Joe Biden's ancestors worked in the East India Company in the 19th century. Christopher Biden became a well-known figure in Madras (modern Chennai) for many years and he did settle. The professor adds that Christopher Biden died in Madras (Chennai) and is commemorated by a plaque in the Anglican Cathedral there.

So, it is not only Tamil Nadu's daughter Kamala Harris with her love for Tamil roots that has Indian connections. The US President Joe Biden too has roots in India. Recently it has been reliably said that around the world there are at least 200 leaders in key positions in various countries of the world - that is surely food for thought.

- Compiled from various sources
by : Ivan Saldanha-Shet.



Leslie Biden and his wife Genevieve (In Nagpur)



The Biden's from India and abroad in Nagpur attend a family wedding, January 2018.

The Blame Game

The Blame Game, and shirking responsibility for one's acts, is as old as the hills. When God questioned Adam, he blamed Eve, who in turn blamed the serpent (cf Gen 3:12-13). Their son Cain also sought to deflect responsibility for his brother's death saying "Am I my brother's guardian?" (Gen 4:9).

This passing the buck is also found at the time of Jesus' trial. Pilate, on coming to know that Jesus was from Galilee that was Herod's jurisdiction, "passed him over to Herod who was also in Jerusalem at that time" (Lk 23:6-7). Herod sent him back to Pilate and the Chief Priests also forced Pilate to make a decision. Unable to withstand social pressure Pilate, who had just been boasting of his power (cf Jn 19:11), now chose to literally wash his hands off his own decision. "So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said – I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern" (Mat 27:24).

It is easy for us to sanctimoniously condemn Adam, Eve, Cain, Herod and Pilate. How different are we? This question came to my mind when I read in Matters India about the recent developments in Calcutta and Ajmer. Rarely have I seen so many comments trending on the portal. The majority were critical of the two priests, Rodney Borneo in Calcutta and Varghese Palappallil in Ajmer.

To recap, Borneo was the "very popular" principal of a prestigious Catholic school in Calcutta. He resigned to join the BJP and blamed his Archbishop Thomas D'souza for not addressing his grievances that necessitated this drastic move. The other incident is when Varghese allegedly physically assaulted his Bishop Pius D'souza at his dining table, accusing him of being against him in a sexual abuse case. Varghese later denied the assault.



by chhotebhai *

Through my sources, some of whom have requested anonymity, I have obtained the "official" letters from both these bishops. Matters India initially reported that Varghese had been excommunicated, but later corrected the report to say that the priest had only been suspended. What is the truth behind these incidents? More importantly, what lessons are to be learned?

It is not my intention to blame anybody, neither the concerned bishops, nor their priests. I have taken great pains to gather first hand information and also to obtain a studied opinion on Canon Law from Rev Dr Girish Scaria Ofm Cap, who has a doctorate in Canon Law from Rome.

First Calcutta. According to Rev Francis Rozario of Calcutta Rodney was a gold medallist in psychology and counselling. He was facing "pressures and inconveniences" in his functioning as Principal.

He quotes an unnamed source (who I happen to know) that the archbishop was responsible for this as he didn't heed the cry of the priest. That person subsequently confirmed this to me. Another source told me that maybe the archbishop resented the priest's popularity as he was often on TV shows and the print media. Earlier he had even accompanied Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Bannerjee to Rome for Mother Teresa's canonization. I was also informed that while this crisis was unfolding the archbishop was attending a gala event at a Rotary Club!

The official communiqué from Abp Thomas is his letter No RCAC/OFFICIAL -1/2021 dt 10/3/21 signed by both himself and the Chancellor Rev Dominic Gomes. It inter alia states that the priest's resignation has been accepted and "After his decision to give up Priesthood (sic) and join the BJP on 9th March 2021 Fr Rodney Borneo ceases to function as a Roman Catholic priest with immediate effect". Dr Scaria

confirmed to me that this action was in accordance with Canon Law. I quote: "Clerics are forbidden to assume public office whenever it means sharing in the exercise of civil power" (Can 285:3); and "They are not to play an active role in political parties or in directing trade unions" (Can 287:2).

Now to Ajmer. Here again Bp Pius has issued a letter dt 10/3/21 addressed to Rev Varghese himself. It too is counter-signed by the Chancellor Rev Nelson V. It states that the bishop was assaulted by Varghese in the refectory of the Bishop's House Extension on 7th March, an act witnessed by Rev Henry Moras, also of the diocese. It says that as per provisions of Canon 1370:2 (I had quoted it earlier) Varghese had incurred a latae sententiae interdict and suspension ... which includes suspension from all priestly duties and priestly ministry, celebration of Eucharist, sacraments, sacramentals, and to receive sacraments ... from the very moment of the physical assault". Scaria clarifies that the canonical word interdict means prohibition. So Varghese is prohibited not just from priestly ministry but even from reception of the sacraments. In Hindi we would call this "hookah paani bandh"!

a sexual assault case, by virtue of which he was not allowed to function as a priest since 2015, and the bishop was complicit in this act. As per my sources Varghese allegedly sexually assaulted a married Protestant lady M ... G (name withheld to maintain the victim's privacy), who has since migrated to the UK.

The case now gets curioser. I leave readers to draw their own conclusions. The alleged victim keeps sending emails to the diocese asking it to take action against Varghese, even though she herself has not filed a First Information Report (FIR) against him. She also failed to appear before the enquiry committee set up by the diocese to investigate the matter. Perhaps this is one reason why the matter is still hanging fire.

(Contd.. on p. 11)

On the other hand, despite the public scandal, when Varghese returned to the diocese, he was appointed as a chaplain to a convent in Vallabhnagar. Last year he was transferred to Mt Abu but he refused to accept the transfer orders. Till the time of interdict the diocese was also giving him his priestly stipend on par with other priests.

After the alleged assault Bp Pius was constrained to file an FIR against Varghese because the latter had threatened to return after two days. Earlier Varghese had also filed several FIRs against the bishop for defamation etc.

So who is to blame in these cases, the concerned bishops, priests, or both? As I said at the outset, I am not interested in a Blame Game, or taking sides, more so since I myself am far removed from both scenes and am relying on purportedly trustworthy information. I am more concerned with trying to learn some lessons from these unfortunate incidents.

The first lesson seems to be the disconnect, or lack of communication, between the bishops and their priests. I have long advocated the establishment of a Grievance Redressal Cell in every diocese. The CBCI must act to establish them without delay.

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Secondly, bishops should not consider their dioceses as their personal fiefdoms. It is for this reason that I strongly oppose bishops having a "Coat of Arms", a relic of medieval European principalities. Bishops should not become permanent institutions. They should be transferred every ten years.

What of school principals, especially of the elite English medium ones? They are powerful and influential and this can go to their heads, especially if they don't have a deep spiritual life. They are usually "Masters of all they survey". In religious orders a principal may next get posted to the kitchen to peel potatoes. Not so with diocesan priests. Once they become principals they can move in only one direction – up! That is their downfall. School principals also need to be transferred after six years, lest the grass grow under their feet. This may not always be possible in Govt aided schools where such appointments are confirmed by the Govt. Perhaps it is time to appoint lay persons as principals. Their spouses will ensure that they don't have a bloated ego!

Next comes the matter of priestly celibacy. Jesus was clear that this was a gift, not the norm (cf Mat 19:11). Unfortunately we have made the exception the norm. The growing clerical sexual abuse cases have been the biggest scandal in modern times. Dioceses have either gone bankrupt or face a major exodus. This issue again needs to be addressed head on. It can no longer be put on the back burner.

I hope and pray that these reflections will be received in the spirit of concern and love for the church with which they are written, for the Blame Game will get us nowhere.

- The writer has developed these thoughts at length in his recent book The Jerusalem Code, a road map for the reform and renewal of the church.

How the sun got its brightness

The sun was once very dull and grey. He wondered how he could become noticeable. He thought: "I will need to be bright. I can steal Agni's fire and be brighter than anyone."

So one fine day, when Agni had gone out for a walk in the garden, he snuck into his home. Of course you may wonder as to how he got past the guards. He was so dull that he was literally invisible!

He went to the source of Agni's power and absorbed it all and turned bright.

Unfortunately, Agni returned just at that moment and demanded an explanation.

After the sun told him everything, he took pity on him and said, "You may keep my powers, I will eventually get them back. But for your misdeeds, you will be so bright that no one will be able to see you directly in the eyes."

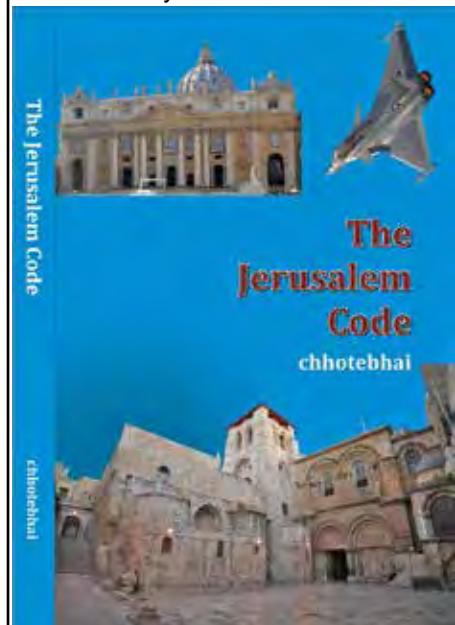
When Agni saw the sun looking sorry, he added: "...but you will light up all the three worlds and be helpful as well."

And so the sun continues to shine bright on us.

— sent by: Jubel D'Cruz

The Jerusalem Code

by Chhotebhai



For your copy in Mumbai - Mangalore
Contact: Tel.: +91 9820485389

Just for laughs

Pramod: Good that I found you, Avinash. You see, I left my wallet at home and am desperately in need of Rs 100.
Avinash: That's all right, friend! After all, a friend in need is a friend indeed. Here, take these five rupees and go home by bus and bring your wallet.

"Three Wishes"

A nursing assistant, a floor nurse and a charge nurse from a small nursing home were taking a lunch break in the break room. In walks a lady dressed in silk scarves and wearing large polished-stone jewelry. "I am Gina the Great," stated the lady. "I am so pleased with the way you have taken care of my aunt that I will now grant the next three wishes!" With a wave of her hand and a puff of smoke, the room was filled with flowers, fruit and bottles of drink, proving that she did have the power to grant wishes before any of the nurses could think otherwise.

The nurses quickly argued among themselves as to which one would ask for the first wish. Speaking up, the nursing assistant wished first. "I wish I were on a tropical island beach, with single, well-built men feeding me fruit and tending to my every need." With a puff of smoke, the nursing assistant was gone.

The floor nurse went next. "I wish I were rich and retired, and spending my days in my own warm cabin at a ski resort with well-groomed men feeding me cocoa and doughnuts." With a puff of smoke, she too was gone.

"Now, what is the last wish?" asked the lady.

The charge nurse said, "I want those two back on the floor at the end of the lunch break."



"The Recruiting Game"

A skilled nurse died and arrived before St. Peter, who explained, "We have this little policy of allowing you to choose whether you want to spend eternity in heaven or in hell." "How do I know which to choose?" She asked. "That's easy," said St. Peter. "you have to spend a day in each place before making a decision."

With that, he put the nurse on an elevator and sent her down to hell. The elevator doors opened and the nurse found herself in a sunny garden, where many former friends and colleagues warmly greeted her. She had a great time all day laughing and talking about old times. That night, she had an excellent supper in a fantastic restaurant. She even met the devil, who turned out to be a pretty nice guy. Before she knew it, her day in hell was over and she returned to heaven.

The day in heaven was okay. She lounged around on clouds, sang, and played the harp. At the end of the day, St. Peter came and asked for her decision. "Well, heaven was great and all," the nurse said, "but I had a better time in hell. I know it sounds strange, but I choose hell." With that, she got in the elevator and went back down.

When the doors opened, she saw a desolate wasteland covered in garbage and filth. Her friends, dressed in rags, were picking up garbage and putting it in sacks. When the devil walked over, she said to him, "I don't understand. Yesterday, this place was beautiful. We had a delicious meal and a wonderful time laughing and talking." The devil smiled and said, "Yesterday we were recruiting you.

Today you're staff."

"Differences Between Graduate Nurse and Experienced Nurses"

A Graduate Nurse throws up when the patient does.

An experienced nurse calls house-keeping when a patient throws up.

A Graduate Nurse wears so many pins on their name badge you can't read it.

An experienced nurse doesn't wear a name badge for liability reasons

A Graduate Nurse charts too much. An experienced nurse doesn't chart enough.

A Graduate Nurse loves to run to codes.

An experienced nurse makes graduate nurses run to codes.

A Graduate Nurse wants everyone to know they are a nurse.

An experienced nurse doesn't want anyone to know they are a nurse.

A Graduate Nurse keeps detailed notes on a pad.

An experienced nurse writes on the back of their hand, paper scraps, napkins, etc.

A Graduate Nurse will spend all day trying to reorient a patient.

An experienced nurse will chart the patient is disoriented and restrain them.

A Graduate Nurse can hear a beeping I-med at 50 yards.

An experienced nurse can't hear any alarms at any distance.

A Graduate Nurse loves to hear abnormal heart and breath sounds.

An experienced nurse doesn't want to know about them unless the patient is symptomatic.

A Graduate Nurse spends 2 hours giving a patient a bath.

An experienced nurse lets the CNA give the patient a bath.

Pollution Out of Control



India recently earned the dubious distinction of having the most number of polluted cities in the world. A study undertaken by the Swiss organisation, IQAir, revealed that 22 of 30 world's most polluted cities are in India, in the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020'. This is an indictment of the environmental policies followed in our country. The report further states that Delhi is the worst polluted city among the 22 cities in India. Delhi has always been known for its poor air quality, especially during the winter.

As per the Motor Vehicles Act, a 'Pollution Under Control' (PUC) test is performed on vehicles to check if their emission of smoke, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and other pollutants discharged into the air are under the limit. So, where do we stand today? It seems like it is '**pollution out of control!**'

While on the issue of environment, there was some encouraging piece of news. The environmental group EARTH5 have been educating the 5000 odd residents along the Mithi river in Mumbai with regard to waste management thereby, succeeding in diverting huge amounts of waste going into landfills and helping to keep the Mithi river from further pollution. Educating the masses with regard to matters of environment is what is required rather than undertaking mindless beach clean-up drives which is nothing but a waste of time, effort & money, yielding no results.

All of us need to take this issue of pollution and the environment seriously or else we have only ourselves to blame for the resultant damage to the environment. We are signing our own death warrant!

Melville X. D'Souza
Orlem, Malad West



Ingredients:

250 gms any digestive biscuits
100 gms butter, melted
1 vanilla pod
600 gms full fat soft cheese
100 gms icing sugar
284 ml pot of double cream

For the topping:

400 gms punnet of strawberries, halved
30 gms icing sugar

Method:

Step-1:

To make the base, butter and line a 23-cm loose-bottomed tin with baking parchment. Put the digestive biscuits in a plastic food bag and crush to crumbs, using a rolling pin. Transfer the crumbs to a bowl, then pour over the melted butter. Mix thoroughly until the crumbs are completely coated. Tip them into the prepared tin and press firmly down into the base to create an even layer. Chill in the fridge for an hour or two to set firmly.

Step-2:

Slice the vanilla pod in half lengthways, leaving the tip intact, so that the two halves are still joined. Holding onto the tip of the pod, scrape out the seeds using the back of a kitchen knife.

Step-3:

Place the cream cheese, icing sugar and the vanilla seeds in a bowl, then beat with an electric mixer until smooth. Tip in the double cream and continue beating until the mixture is completely combined. Now spoon the cream mixture onto the biscuit base, starting from the edges and working inwards, making sure that there are no air bubbles. Smooth the top of the cheesecake down with the back of a dessert spoon or spatula. Leave to set in the fridge overnight.

Step-4:

Bring the cheesecake to room temperature about 30 minutes before serving. To remove it from the tin, place the base on top of a can, then gradually pull the sides of the tin down. Slip the cake onto a serving plate, removing the lining paper and base. Purée half the strawberries in a blender or food processor with the icing sugar and one teaspoon water, then sieve. Pile the remaining strawberries onto the cake, and pour the purée over the top.



by Jubel D'Cruz

What's So Good about Good Friday?

by Don Aguiar.

Why do we call Good Friday "good," when it is such a dark and bleak event commemorating a day of suffering and death for Jesus?

It is a significant day for the Christian community since it commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Judas betrayed Jesus, and Christians believed that Jesus came back three days after being crucified, on the day known as Easter. The word 'good' in Good Friday means pious or holy.

Good Friday is celebrated in memory of Christ's Passion, crucifixion, and death. The most important Good Friday symbol is the crucifix, or cross, which represents the way in which Jesus died.

For Christians, Good Friday is a crucial day of the year because it celebrates what is believed to be the most momentous weekend in the history of the world. Ever since Jesus died and was raised, Christians have proclaimed the cross and resurrection of Jesus to be the decisive turning point for all creation. Apostle Paul considered it to be "of first importance" that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and was raised to life on the third day, all in accordance with what God had promised all along in the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3).

On Good Friday we remember the day Jesus willingly suffered and died by crucifixion as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins (1 John 1:10). It is followed by Easter, the glorious celebration of the day Jesus was raised from the dead, heralding his victory over sin and death and pointing ahead to a future resurrection for all who are united to him by faith (Romans 6:5).

Still, why call the day of Jesus' death "Good Friday" instead of "Bad Friday" or something similar? Some Chris-

tian traditions do take this approach: in German, for example, the day is called Karfreitag, or "Sorrowful Friday." In English, in fact, the origin of the term "Good" is debated: some believe it developed from an older name, "God's Friday." Regardless of the origin, the name Good Friday is entirely appropriate because the suffering and death of Jesus, as terrible as it was, marked the dramatic culmination of God's plan to save his people from their sins.

In order for the good news of the gospel to have meaning for us, we first have to understand the bad news of our condition as sinful people under condemnation. The good news of deliverance only makes sense once we see how we are enslaved. Another way of saying this is that it is important to understand and distinguish between law and gospel in Scripture. We need the law first to show us how hopeless our condition is; then the gospel of Jesus' grace comes and brings us relief and salvation.

In the same way, Good Friday is "good" because as terrible as that day was, it had to happen for us to receive the joy of Easter. The wrath of God against sin had to be poured out on Jesus, the perfect sacrificial substitute, in order for forgiveness and salvation to be poured out to the nations. Without that awful day of suffering, sorrow, and shed blood at the cross, God could not be both "just and the justifier" of those who trust in Jesus (Romans 3:26). Paradoxically, the day that seemed to be the greatest triumph of evil was actually the deathblow in God's gloriously good plan to redeem the world from bondage.

This, the calamitous day is celebrated as Good Friday. ... That terrible Friday has been called Good Friday because it led to the Resurrection of Jesus and his victory over death and sin and the

celebration of Easter, the very pinnacle of Christian celebrations.

The cross is where we see the convergence of great suffering and God's forgiveness. Psalms 85:10 sings of a day when "righteousness and peace" will "kiss each other." The cross of Jesus is where that occurred, where God's demands, his righteousness, coincided with his mercy. We receive divine forgiveness, mercy, and peace because Jesus willingly took our divine punishment, the result of God's righteousness against sin. "For the joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2) Jesus endured the cross on Good Friday, knowing it led to his resurrection, our salvation, and the beginning of God's reign of righteousness and peace.

The Bible says about Good Friday - He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. " "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." "We may say that on the first Good Friday afternoon was completed that great act by which light conquered darkness and goodness conquered sin.

Good Friday marks the day when wrath and mercy met at the cross. That's why Good Friday is so GOOD.

In 'Fratelli Tutti', Pope Francis writes: "The parable of the Good Samaritan is clear and straight forward, yet it also evokes the interior struggles that each of us experience as we gradually come to know ourselves through our relationships with our brothers and sisters. Sooner or later we will all encounter a person who is suffering. Today there are more and more of them. The decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project. Each day we have to decide whether to be Good

(Contd.. on p. 15)

Sling & Stones

By Father Austin Norris

Our universal experience seems to goad us on to any venture, only we have everything in place and we areon our marks, get set, and ready to go! We think that preparation is a must and it certainly is - look at all the professional courses and coaching centres that promise you instant success and glory. It is as if any venture worth its while is a doomed failure minus proper preparation and planning.

But when we look at Sacred Scripture another picture emerges. And that is so largely because of the God or faith factor. Look at the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish - a mere five loaves and two fish transformed into a massive Feast for thousands (Mt 14:21)! So too the "seven loaves and few fish" (Mk 8:1ff)! Surely a tale out of fantasy to the faithless, but a miracle beyond doubt to the faithful!

A further look at the title of this piece refers more pointedly to the incident of David and his battle with Goliath. The terrorized and humbled Israelites are at the mercy of the Philistines. Up steps up a little lad – puny to say the least! Worse still, as he prepares to engage the giant, our hearts sink at the thought of the uneven contest. But

(Contd.. from p. 14)

Samaritans or indifferent bystanders" Or passers-by.

While world leaders dialogue and build bridges worldwide, can't you and I sincerely strive to be Good Samaritans, not indifferent bystanders, not passers-by, as life swiftly passes by, by following the example of Jesus Christ as we move into Good Friday the day when he died on the cross for humanity so that he could save us from our sins?

wait, let us look at the preparation of little David, who is to take on the invincible giant champion of the Philistines!

The stark and evident contrast between the two "warriors" is to be seen to be believed. The boastful Goliath is clad from head to toe with heavy battle armour, not forgetting his weapons of choice - sword and shield! The tale of David is almost a joke. He prefers a sling and five smooth stones (1 Sam 17:40ff). With sure and certain confidence in his steps and a stout heart he moves ahead to meet up with the enemy of Israel. In his heart David has a "secret weapon": his unfailing trust in Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, whom he invokes as the one who leads and takes the battle to the enemy. More so because the Philistines have insulted Yahweh, belittling his people Israel!

While on the one hand Goliath boasts in his raw human strength, David boasts in the power of the Lord; Goliath boasts of his weaponry, David goes in humility in Yahweh's name; Goliath rants and raves, David walks in quiet confidence calling on God's name. While there is wild cheering from the army of the Philistines, there is probably quaking fear and the whispering of a silent prayer from the cowering Israelites. While Goliath in his towering physical presence dwarfs those around him, David in his diminutive frame seems to pale into insignificance; but wait! The tables are set to turn shortly and quickly with a gruesome beheading of the expected hero and the triumph of the almost certain "dead victim". Such is the power of the sling and stones. But not without absolute faith!

Ever so often in life, we imagine that we have little or nothing and yet when we make an offering of the little we have, IN THE NAME OF GOD AND FOR HIS PURPOSE, miracles happen, beyond our wildest imagination.

Refer to the "jawbone of an ass" incident in the life of Samson (Judg 15:16) and in the self-appropriation of the Curé d'Ars, of this quotation to himself.... *"Father Rector, in the book of Judges, Chapter 15, we have the narration of how God made use of Samson to kill a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass to save the people of Israel. If with the useless jawbone of an ass God could do that wonderful deed, how much more can He accomplish with the whole of an ass like me!"*

In the final analysis, one can with faith and confidence say, that with the Lord, we have what we have and can have more; without the Lord, what we have will never be enough and we will fail. Suffice it to hum that familiar song:

*"Without him, I could do nothing,
without him, I'd surely fail;
Without him, I would be drifting,
Like a ship without a sail!
But with him, I can do all things,
and with him I cannot fail,
and over the stormiest ocean,
In perfect peace I'll sail!"*

Thanksgiving

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be Praised Adored, Glorified and Loved today and everyday throughout the world, now and forever.Amen!!



Ask St. Clare for three favours two impossible and say nine Hail Mary's and the above prayer for 9 days with a lighted candle and publish on the 9th day your request will be granted no matter how impossible it is

—Felix Pereira,
Navi Mumbai

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

7203. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1985), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn.B.E. MBA, working for International Company. Contact email :

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spydee321@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

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

7202. MUMBAI : Keralite Syrian Catholic Bachelor (Born in May 1973), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 73 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., English Literature, Profession : Consultant Administration. Left Hand & Leg is weak due to earlier motor bike accident.

Contact Email :

josephmullakara1973@gmail.com

7118. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in January 1981), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 87 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate, working in Doha Metro, in Doha Qatar. Contact email :

josephfernandes10@yahoo.com

7112. MUMBAI : Converted Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1970), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 80 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn.B.Com., & Masters in International Journalism (UK). Looking

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for a bride below the age of 42 years (below 40 - 42 years) who is willing to raise a family. Contact by email : decemberwedding08@yahoo.com

7119. KUWAIT : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1989), Ht. 6', Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. F.Y. B.Com. + 2 yrs Hotel Management Diploma. working in Kuwait. Contact email :

fernandes.clayton@rocketmail.com

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

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

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

7196. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor (Born in March 1981), Ht. 6', Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., HR Professional. Contact email :

denstun@hotmail.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

7188. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor (Hearing Impaired) (Born in September 1989), Ht.

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5' 9", Wt. 62 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. HSC., Dip. in Computer Hardware. Working as a Cashier. Contact email : clifford9948@gmail.com OR 9920331773

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

7164. MANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1984) Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair, Edn. ITI Course, working as a Techincian. Contact email :

rajesh.ds15@gmail.com

7183. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1991) Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 86 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. PGDM and BMS., working as a Relationship Manager. Contact email :

ritadhawan10@gmail.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

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

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

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7208. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1987), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 78 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BE, IT, working as Product Marketing for an e-commerce beauty Company. Contact email : temp123fab@gmail.com

7199. BANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1990), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 53 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Master's in Mass Communications (NTU, Singalore) working as a Senior Manager of Corporate Communications in **SINGAPORE**. Contact email : mafern.2121@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

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

6033 ABU-DHABI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1979), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A. Eng., Literature, working as a Copy Editor. **Contact email :** barretto.lorraine@gmail.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

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

Contact email : cecrc19@gmail.com

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

7134. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1992), Ht. 5', Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Modification and Writer. Contact email : jacklinemascarenhas@gmail.com

7162 MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1993), Ht. 5'5", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., working as a Secretary. Contact email : t.banze@rediffmail.com

7131. DUBAI : Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1990), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Tan Complexion, Edn. T.Y. B.Com., working as a Manager. Contact email : rebecca.raj06@gmail.com

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

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

7094. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1991), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 52 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, M.Com., working as a Business Analyst. Contact email : roschelle256@gmail.com

7120. CANADA : Goan Roman Catho-

lic 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 Canida Government. Contact email : joafaria@yahoo.ca

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

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

7090. QATAR : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1988), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 54 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., worked for Bank in Mumbai, currently working as a H.R. in International School in Qatar. Contact email : loretta6479@gmail.com

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

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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Save Sparrow



A little sparrow once with zest,
Built a small but beautiful nest.
She thought it was sound and strong,
And did not even guess anything would go wrong.

But one day, down poured the rain,
And her efforts went in vain.
Her dreams were destroyed and so was her nest,
She did not know what to do next.

She was hurt by the fury of nature,
But decided to take a step towards the future.
She built another nest,
With equal hope and zest.

Her first nest was good,
But in its place now stood
A more beautiful home,
That was built not with twigs but with hope.

— C.K. Subramaniam

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Thus spoke that 'Lotus'!

As I was walking in a park slowly,
I reached a pond and saw in it a lotus;
And started admiring its beauty!
Then that lotus spoke to me thus :

Welcome friend, you who admire my beauty,
I have bloomed here in purity,
In the waters of God's mercy,
So I proclaim His endless bounty!

He has made me bloom here,
I am India's "National Flower!"
I reflect His beauty and fragrant radiance,
Attract and direct all to His presence!

I rise above the mire, tho' in it I was born,
Reject its filth, make way to other flowers;
Together we grow and take turns -
To tell all, "In Him we have grown!"

Tho' born in water, it doesn't sink me,
I rise above it, and always shine;
If it falls upon me, I push it down -
For, natural oil of grace is upon me!

Often you too become the centre of attraction,
But in God's heart you must remain!
Like letting water fall down, all evil forsake -
Then He will protect you for His own sake!

When the water rises up, I raise myself,
When the water goes down, I too go down;
I turn to the Sun and joyously smile to myself -
As the Sun moves, I turn in that direction!

You too will have ups and downs,
Yet, remain firm, unaffected and free;
Look up to Him for strength and grace
Live and move with Him and be free!

—Sr. Marie Ange B.S.
Bethany Convent

Thanksgiving



Thanks to Divine Mercy, Our Lady of Vailankanni, Our Lady of Perpetual Succor and St. Anthony

—Ms Mercy Pereira, Thane

Easter: The Greatest Christian Festival

Easter celebrates the Resurrection promised by Jesus. Christ is truly God, the Messiah who had by his suffering and sacrifice redeemed the world and conquered death, giving us his victory.

For over two thousand years, Easter and Roman Catholic hegemony has been the focusing subject of Christian history, dominating all other faiths across nations in a quest to bring about change in visions, and belief.

Saint Augustine wrote, "Faith maintains this principle and we should believe it: Neither the soul nor the human body suffers complete annihilation; the wicked rise again for punishment...while the good rise again for everlasting life. (De Doctrina Christians 1,21).

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord gives every human being the gift of everlasting life. The true message of Easter is that almighty God lives.



BY MELVYN BROWN

"Anyone who even begins to grasp what this means also knows what it means to be redeemed". (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI).

We marvel at the words of Saint Paul in his First letter to Corinthians: Our present perishable nature must put on imperishability and the mortal nature must put on immortality. (1 Cor. 15:53).

Christ rose from the dead Not as a man, but as God. The Resurrection is the greatest gift to the Christian faith, without it Christianity would have been one of the many religions in the world with the single aim like all the rest to save souls.

Jesus stood in chains during his passion, before the Sanhedrin waiting for their decision, when two false witnesses came forward and declared "This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days." (Mat.26:61).

This was the moment when the grain had to die for the Resurrection. This was the hour when the seed for salvation and redemption had been sown. The Lamb of God was being prepared for the time to win over death and gain victory for all mankind if they believed.

Even in a society as "self-conscious" about its respect for other people Easter has carried a simple truth: that God came down to earth as man, conquered all sin, and paved the way for mankind's redemption, if only they believe in Him.

Easter openly reveals the Son of God to be God himself. No sage, saint or prophet could go beyond the threshold of death and return. Christ did, through His resurrection at Easter. Christ kept his word as he mentioned earlier in his ministry; rebuilding the

temple in three days.

Jesus rose from the dead; Not as a man, but as God. A window to forgiveness opened, salvation was now available to those who trust in Him. Easter was, is and always will be for God's greater glory.

The Church is optimistic and does not force conversion, nor does it condemn others who refuse to listen or to change. It has moved down the centuries as an everlasting festival in celebration of the power and Glory of God in the miracle of Easter. Easter is the door to heaven.

Above all, Easter is God's love for mankind. Consider the faith we live in, cherish, believe and have: the history, heritage, and the trust. We plead for sins of others. We weep for the false doctrines taught to innocent men, women and children.

Each time, with faith and trust in our Lord, Creator and Master we turn our cheek to those who take our silence for weakness. They have come to the point of destroying each other in their own views of faith and belief.

God is just. He will save anyone who believes in his own religion, provided he has not heard of Christ and the Christian faith.

Christ gives His maximum love for those innocents who live in a sinful world. Two thousand years ago men heard the Word and understood and changed; kept changing at the risk of losing the sense of stability in their lives, their families peace and their fortunes – the apostles of that era did not expect to find 'specimens' like we have today.

The fact remains that the savior is God, redeemer, friend and father to those who turn to him. Easter is the essence of God's glory.

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