

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

Celebrate
the **RESURRECTION**

Easter - The Promise of Light and the End of Darkness

by Don Aguiar

To quote George Eliot – the right to rebellion is the right to seek a higher rule, and not to wonder in mere lawlessness. St Joseph rebellion was grounded in concern for obedience, respect, freedom and democracy. He carried it out with dignity, grace and I might add based on memes some he shared, some serious artistic concern.

St Joseph was at the service of entire plan of salvation. He listened to the angel, believed, waited and took **Mary** as his wife or else **Mary** should have been stoned to death. Because of St Joseph we have Jesus as our saviour, **Mary** our loving **Mother** and the hope of salvation – the promise of light and the end of darkness - **EASTER.....**

Among the numerous festivals celebrated in Christianity, Easter stands out. It signifies hope – bringing the promise of light and the end of darkness, the beginning of a spiritual renewal.

It is a commemoration of the task performed by God when humanity suffers due to spiritual ignorance and sorrow. God, the father, incarnates Christ in this world, ends the suffering of his children, and ushers in a world of peace, bliss, beauty and plenty.

Easter celebrations are a universal festival

and a medium of spreading peace on earth and goodwill to all – it is the harbinger of a new season of hope, goodwill and warmth, bringing down the curtain on cold winters. Hope, goodwill, warmth and peace breathe new life into Christians as they usher in a new season of Easter.

Easter renews life in Christianity, and so does a divine springtime rejuvenate mankind. As natural seasons follow in planned succession, so do spiritual seasons. Whenever man is lost in the mire of materialism, God the Father rises in the garb of a new manifestation to generate a new spirit in man and guide him back to the path of spirituality.

History records that during man's darkest hours Moses and Christ, appeared to lead him out of his gloom and depravity, and instil in him noble and sublime attributes. As long as man has followed the fresh guidance and obeyed divine laws of successive manifestations, he has progressed, and his life has been fruitful. These periods have been the summer seasons of unprecedented advancement, enrichment, and the establishment of glorious civilisations.

And when man has veered from righteousness, he has brought on the risen Christ. These spiritual seasons conform to our Yugs (a period of time). God's manifestation ushers in the season of truth or sincerity and of flower-

(Contd.. on p. 3)

Democracy on test?

US Human Rights Group – Freedom House, in its global survey, has stripped India of “free” status. The Gandhi family scion – Rahul Gandhi was quick to compare Indian democracy with that of former Iraq and Lebanon. While it may be unfair to compare India to these two erstwhile regimes, the democracy in India is not what it should have been considering that we are otherwise a vibrant nation. Since there is nothing like a perfect democracy anywhere, various parameters are factored by such agencies to determine how successful or otherwise a nation is as compared with other countries which claim to be democratic in their governance. We may dismiss the findings but unfortunately, the world may not.

The EAM S. Jaishankar took umbrage to this saying India does not require any certificate. He felt that agencies involved in this type of exercise have an agenda to show India in poor light. I wonder if other big nations would react likewise. When you show disdain for their findings, you are falling into their trap assuming that they actually have an agenda. Every country has its own take on such findings but it cannot be selective. Either you accept the findings by such agencies across the board or reject them in totality. We cannot accept the results only which put us on the pedestal. That would show that we are fishing only for compliments while rejecting any adverse findings. Such an attitude will show intolerance which is, again, against democratic values. Some people simply show us the mirror and it is up to us to stand in front of it or move the mirror away. By the way, Moody's says India will grow @11% in 2021. Mantriji, do we reject this saying they have an agenda or simply lap it up as it suits us?

Some of the findings by various organizations, which have a bearing on governance, do not actually show India very high in their rankings. Happiness index puts India on 139 out of 149 nations. In press freedom we rank 142 while on Human freedom it is 111. In World gender gap – 112 out of 153 and on Global peace 139 out of 163. Unrelated to democracy indexes show – Hunger 102/117, Human Development 131, Economic freedom 105, Environment 168. Being the world's largest democracy, India is bound to be under constant watch. Nobody speaks of say

IEWS on NEWS

Pakistan because as a nation, it is nowhere. When you are under constant watch, you become more conscious and try to remain on the right side of international opinion. If India has to play a dominant role in the comity of nations, we must be ready for close scrutiny. We cannot be sensitive to every assessment that is published.

While we can publicly denounce agencies which tell us that all is not well, we need to take note of what countries like America [our friend] have to say. Bob Menendez Chairman of US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in his communication to the Defence Secretary Llyod Austin, had asked him to candidly put across to his Indian counterpart and Officials, America's concerns – in recent years, rising anti-Muslim sentiments, the CAA, suppression of political dialogue, arrest of political opponents in J & K, use of sedition laws etc; have resulted in US Human rights group Freedom House stripping India of its 'free' status in its yearly global survey. The concerns of the Senate's committee are crucial for their administration. It cannot be brushed aside. Wonder how S. Jaishankar responded to Llyod Autin who said he raised the issue while MEA denies it. Somebody is lying. Did the EAM tell Austin that we do not need his certificate? Joe Biden is no Donald Trump and traditionally, the Republicans have been more India friendly than the Democrats. Add to this is the discussion in the British Parliament on farm issues and that in Canada as well. Publicly, the Indian government may brush these observations aside, but privately they will have to take a serious note and consider appropriate course correction.

API Sachin Vaze – a de facto Commissioner?

Everybody has forgotten about the main issue of the gelatin sticks outside Ambani abode. The entire focus has shifted on the Mumbai Police high profile API Sachin Vaze and CP Param Bir Singh. It is hard to digest – how an ordinary API wields so much of power without a Godfather in the Government. It appears that senior bosses were scared of him. Perhaps he dictated terms to his superiors. It gives a feeling that he de-



by Marshall Sequeira

cidied which cases he should handle. Again, strangely he reported directly to the Police Commissioner [CP] ignoring 6-tier-hierarchy and the CP was 'comfortable' with it. In the Antilia case since he was directly involved, he has been arrested. The NIA has nailed him in Hiran murder as well. An API has a fleet of top-end cars, parks a Merc outside CP office. He has a note counting machine in his Merc and huge cash amount. He is suspected to have stayed in a five Star Hotel Suite with fake ID just before the Antilia case. This suite was booked for 100 days for an API. Who paid for it? Then he says Anil Deshmukh the HM asked him to ALSO collect 100 crores a month for him. This means he was collecting money for either himself or the force. The CP has knocked the doors of the court. He complains that the HM dealt with Vaze directly overlooking half a dozen seniors. He had no problem himself dealing with Vaze ignoring his seniors. The Uddhav government is in a huge mess. Anil Deshmukh has put the whole Agadhi in a corner. Sharad Pawar's attempt to save the HM backfired. It now transpires that the HM travelled to Mumbai from Nagpur on 15th February which Pawar had stoically denied. This has given the BJP a huge advantage.

The CP was aware of the diktat of the HM to collect 100 crores and he did nothing about it and on the contrary, wittingly or unwittingly encouraged Vaze who it is believed terrorized the hoteliers to dish out huge protection money and the note counting machine was necessary just for that. He had no time to count the huge cash manually. Was the CP aware that Vaze was collecting money even before the HM asked him to do likewise for him? The entire Police system is rotten. Sharad Pawar, for the first time is on the back foot. Will Narendra Modi now expedite the police reforms? No excuses. He can do it just as he did in the case of farm laws without proper consultations with the States.

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(Contd.. from p. 1)

ing faith, and light at the end of darkness, followed by declining fervour of mortality leading to darkness. Having suffered the woes of darkness, the travails of purgation and cleansing, mankind prayerfully awaits the dawn of truth or sincerity and of flowering faith, and light at the end of darkness.

God has not forsaken His creation. The winter season of materialism will assuredly be dispelled by the rising of the promised Messiah or the risen Christ. The differently named avatar of the Holy Scriptures – Messiah, Christ-returned – is destined to appear at the preordained time and place.

Christians believe the promised manifestation has appeared and all scriptural prophecies are fulfilled. Today the rapidly globalising world is gradually veering towards Christian teachings on human rights, gender equality, disarmament, universal peace, and a world government.

We need to start taking personal responsibility and living our faith now. We do not have to wait for permis-

sion. The Church is vaster and much more diversified than we sometimes want to acknowledge.

There are places in almost every diocese in the world where divorced and remarried couples are warmly welcomed to receive the Eucharist. And there are places where gays, lesbians and transgender persons are welcomed just as openly. There are also priests who are more than happy to bless their unions. These people and these places exist, even if they sometimes fly under the radar.

But one often gets the impression that too many Catholics are reluctant to do anything unless they get permission from a prier or bishop, or unless the Church gives official approval.

It is sad how many cradle Catholics who grew up loving their Church have walked away because someone inside the faith community - almost always an authority figure - hurt them in some way. **So what can we, those who let the Church down, say to God our Father?**

But sincere Christ followers, from every background of race, religion and nationality, claim they have not con-

verted to Christian faith having abandoned ancestral beliefs. They state they have investigated and recognised in Christ fulfilment of prophecies of the respective scriptures.

We now live in complicated times. The world bustling with creativity. But the dark shadows of authoritarianism are also hovering over us, putting us all in often uncomfortable and sometimes dishonourable positions.

Is the Christian community a semblance of the destined Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam of our sages? The answer is in the Holy Scriptures and not as Mahatma Gandhi said or as one notices by the semblance of the Christian community.

The world as we know it today, could seldom be darker than it is, with the suffering of all creatures, and Mother Nature, nearing the breaking point. There could not be a more opportune time for God to arrive and end the miseries of His children. **He has definitely performed this task to end the period of darkness in every cycle, otherwise Easter would not be commemorated every year.**

A New Awakening

While Kerala and Bengal top the list of states with the highest level of political consciousness amongst its people, Goa has come across as that state where all of a sudden it's the 'people's voice' that has begun resonating in the corridors of power.

A sustained campaign against three infrastructure projects announced by the government has brought a newfound solidarity among its populace.

As issues that assail Goa, the ruling dispensation has not been able to address fears of pollution caused by coal handling and apprehensions over the future of the biodiversity of the region.

In the scrapping of the ambitious IIT project at Melaulim and thwarting attempts to come up with the Yacht Marina project at Nauxim, the locals have made it abundantly clear that any 'development' that is not in the interest of Goa, and the Goans, will be opposed tooth and nail by them.

Awakening to their true political role, there is a strong indication that Goans have now begun to realize the folly of putting their entire trust on representatives whom they elect to power term after term only to be let down by them time and again.

While an Opposition that had become inconsequential on the face of the saffron blitzkrieg in the state can take solace from the issues raised by the people for its sustenance, the fact remains that the Opposition credibility is at its lowest ebb ever.

Not that the ruling front has been an epitome of confidence for the people either!

Most of the ruling party legislators are facing flak from the locals for their

indifference to various issues that plague the state. More than the indifference, it is their endorsement of the headstrong stance of the government in bulldozing through with unpopular proposals which has invited public ire.

It is said that credibility hinges on perceptions of competence and trustworthiness. But these have been traits which many of our political leaders sadly lack!

While many of the ruling party MLAs are caught between the devil and the deep sea fending off queries on their stand on the controversial projects, it is their integrity that has become susceptible to public lashing.

When people's representatives themselves are not in sync with the people they represent, the question of reliability just does not arise.



by Pachu Menon

The 'new awakening' is thus all about asserting people's power and ensuring that the government thinks twice before embarking on unpopular ventures detrimental to the cause of Goa and its people.

With a slew of protests by locals against every developmental work envisaged, there is a feeling that Goa these days is in the grips of a hostile wave which will ultimately deny the state the progress essential for maintaining its place in this fast evolving age.

Are Goans only protesting for the sake of protesting, as the government of the day claims! What are the locals gaining by going full-throttle against seemingly impossible projects which seeks to transform the region through the believable ways of an obstinate administration!

Smitten by the love for their land and its rich legacy, it is the new face of the modern day Goan that the govern-

ment has had to content with in the past few months.

Mining and tourism have been touted as the economic mainstays of the state! But all these years, if mining cost the state its valuable treasure trove of natural resources; rampant and unsustainable tourism sounded the death knell for whatever else was left of pristine Goa of yonder.

After the mining disaster, even if tourism has been flaunted as that lifeline which could get the state economy back on tracks, what is the local presence in the 'industry' and what has been its contribution to the so-called 'vastly improving' tourism scenario!

As inheritors of a denuded region, the sons of the soil are left wondering what great catastrophe has befallen their beloved Goa that they are now as good as aliens in their own land.

Real-estate lobbies that comprise of mostly land-sharks from outside the state who have been sold large chunks of prime property in Goa are apparently calling the shots, and if this trend goes on for a few more years, Goa will be that land which will be typically bemoaning the absence of Goans.

Has the susegado culture been Goa's undoing!

Sitting back and mutely watching vested interests plundering the land in the company of our highly vaunted political class, it is a wonder that their blood did not boil over at these atrocities.

It is in this perspective that the latest rounds of stand-off between local residents and the government authorities needs to be seen.

The new generation of Goans are angry, and how!

Upset with a system that has never had the interests of Goans at heart, we now have a determined few stepping forward to change the course of

(Contd.. on p. 5)



Divine retribution or a warning?

At the start of the pandemic, it was feared that the third world countries would be devastated. It was feared that due to overpopulation, cramped housing and poor nutrition these countries would witness the most number of covid cases and deaths. It was also thought that developed countries, would not be unduly affected by covid cases and deaths.

One year past and just the opposite has happened. Experts are perplexed and cannot explain this phenomenon. High income countries in Europe and North America have suffered most, while low income countries in Africa and Asia have escaped

with minimal damages. Even within countries where economic disparities are glaring, like India, it has been observed that the poor living in slums and villages have escaped largely unscathed. Perhaps Covid should be seen as a divine retribution or God's way of warning us against rampant economic inequalities, between rich and poor countries and also between rich and poor people within a country. The time has come for the rich to correct the gross inequality and injustice prevailing. And in doing so the rich must not think that they are doing charity but reparation.

—Prof Robert Castellino,
Orlem Malad

On General

(Contd.. from p. 4)

history – the future that is!

A culmination of decades' long frustration and disappointment at being ignored at every step of their distraught existence thus has Goa seeing the 'evolution' of a few revolutionary outfits which are determined to restore the self-esteem of every Goan.

Enough of playing around with our sentiments, they seem to cry in unison!

Moreover, a feeling that the new corps of activists do not crave a political future and are a definite part of the agitations purely for selfless interests gives the public that much more confidence in the crusades against the inconsistencies of this government.

Rather than treat these protests as a

means to vent their anger against the imperiousness of the government, people should be viewing the opportunities as means to regain their lost pride.

It is difficult to say whether the renewed zest for bringing about palpable changes in public perceptions vis-à-vis the political consciousness among Goans will have any bearing on the municipal polls.

The seeds of thought have already been sown though!

These public protests are hence ideal platforms for self-respecting Goans to come forward and collectively assert their might for their land, the land of their ancestors - for safeguarding and preserving it for posterity!

Absolution during pandemic

This with reference to the letter 'General Absolution during the pandemic' by Prof. Robert Castellino (Secular Citizen, March 22). In this connection, It is important to read what our Holy Father, Pope Francis, had to say during his interaction with a group of dedicated Catholics, who expressed concern over their inability to fulfil their Easter duties by confessing their sins to a priest, because of the pandemic. "If you are unable to find a priest to confess your sins, then do what the Catechism says: Speak to God. He is your Father. Ask for pardon and forgiveness. Tell Him the truth and confess your sins with an act of contrition. Promise Him that you will confess your sins later, but ask for pardon now. You will return to God's grace immediately". The question of general absolution therefore does not arise for repentant sinners who are unable to confess their sins to a priest due to the pandemic.

Secondly, priests are seldom to be found in the confessional even before the pandemic. I remember a priest telling me in the confessional not to make it a habit of coming to confession often. The pandemic has served as an excellent excuse to justify their failure to perform their priestly obligations and pastoral duties. Most of them are happy to keep their churches closed for most of the day, because of which it is hard to see any priest around the church premises or even get him to administer holy communion to the sick. Providing up and down transport is a must, even for walking distances. This is the sad state we have come to. Let us not look for alibis and put the blame on the pandemic.

— A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim, Goa

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A former Christian bureaucrat enters Tamil Nadu politics to cleanse the system

By Fr. F. M. Britto

Resigning from the Tamil Nadu bureaucracy, a Christian, who has been admired for his honesty, has entered into electoral politics, by fielding youth, to crusade against corruption.

Ubagaram Pillai Sagayam told the media on March 15 that he would not be contesting the 2021 election directly. But he would campaign for 36 youths in the upcoming Tamil Nadu assembly elections, including the 15 candidates of the Tamil Nadu Ilaingar Katchi (TNIK), (Tamil Nadu Youth Party), a political party formed by youth after the 2017 Jallikattu (Bull controlling) protests.

He also revealed that his unregistered Sagayam Arasiyal Peravai (Sagayam's Political Forum) will field 20 candidates in alliance with the Tamil Nadu Ilaingar Katchi and the Valamana Tamizhaga Katchi (Prosperous Tamil Nadu Party). Once it gets its formal recognition, he said, he will officially launch his party and will explain its ideology.

These young candidates included engineering and MBA students, advocates and a doctor. He clarified that that he would expand this initial step into a larger people's movement and his team will contest in all the 234 assembly seats in the future.

Justifying fielding the young candidates, he said, "A few youngsters told me that they can do something for society only if young people like them get a space in the political arena. So considering that I have fielded them."

Due to his anti-corruption activities, the former IAS official had been punished with 25 transfers in his 27 years of public service. Finally Sagayam had been demoted and was kept for six years in the insignificant post of the vice-chairman of the Science City, Chennai. Due

to that the 57-year-old had applied for voluntary retirement on October 2, 2020 from government service, three years before reaching the retirement age.

Since he resigned from the government service a few months prior to the state polls, it was speculated that he might enter into electoral polls. In 2016 he had stoutly declined the request of the hundreds of Ezhuchi Tamilagam Youth to enter politics to cleanse the system.

But on Feb 21 he announced to the media at Chennai's Adambakkan in the presence of hundreds of his fans about his entry into electoral politics. He told his followers to remain simple and honest, breaking the barriers of caste, religion and hero worship in politics. He told them to love and serve especially those who are low in the society and to have empathy, sacrifice and dedication.

He said their alliance will support secularism and is against anti-secular governance. Their governance will be based on the principles of love, morality and justice and will fight against corruption, he said.

"The people who love this land should form organisations and work to stop environmental exploitation by big companies and people with political power. When the rights of women are squeezed, we should also voice out for them," he added.

He said, "There is untouchability, so we should create organisations to abolish them. We should also function for the farmers who are backbone of our society. So apart from the electoral politics, let us work for the people."

Though the village farmer's son had started his career as an employee



Ubagaram Pillai Sagayam

of the Union Government, soon Sagayam left it to serve the people of his Tamil Nadu state. As Madurai district collector, he came into spotlight for his probe into illegal granite quarrying, in spite of threats to his life.

To fairly conduct the 2011 Legislative Assembly election in Madurai, the Election Commission posted him as the ex-officio District Election Officer, a constituency where allegations of bribery had surfaced. For conducting fair polls, Sagayam was awarded an appreciation certificate by then chief election commissioner.

As the district revenue officer cum additional district magistrate in Kanchipuram, he sealed the Pepsi bottling plant and forbade its sale since dirt was found in several bottles. Since it created erosion and flooding, Sagayam took on the sand mafia for unauthorized mining of sand from the Palar River bed. He declined to rescind his order, though he was threatened of physical violence. "Standing up against corruption is not for a season. Nor it is a fashion. It is forever," he had then said.

Recognised as a friend of the poor, Sagayam had also started Uzhavan Unavagam (Farmers' Food Court), where farmers could sell their traditional dishes. He was also heading the Trust Makkal Padhai (People's Path) to reform the society. He had helped to rehabilitate the three grandchildren of the freedom fighter V.O. Chidambaram, who were in abject poverty.

Though Sagayam has been appreciated for his relentless campaign against corruption in public life, observers wonder how his candidates will win the electoral battle against the powerful politicians. They also fear whether his candidates will split the votes, causing victory to the wrong political parties.

Easter Traditions and Easter Eggs

Easter is one of the most important festivals of the Christian community which is observed either in March or April. On this day, Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ after His death by crucifixion, which is believed to have happened during this time around 30-33 A.D.

Easter always falls on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25. It marks the end of the forty days period of Lent, a period during which the Christians observe fast and penitence in preparation for Easter which begins on Ash Monday and ends on Easter Sunday.

The week prior to Easter is of great importance in the Christian tradition. The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday and the last three days before Easter are Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Have you ever wondered why the Easter egg became such an important part of Easter? Have you wondered where the tradition of colouring eggs came from?

Many ancient cultures such as the Hindus, Egyptians and Persians believed that the world began with a giant egg. For these cultures, the egg came to symbolise new and emerging life that has been around for billions of years. The egg is a symbol of life and rebirth for cultures all around the world. Many of our accepted Easter customs have their roots in pagan traditions as well. Since Easter always falls in the spring, many cultures celebrate Easter as a time of renewal after a long dark winter. It is believed that our pagan ancestors derived the word 'Easter' from the pagan goddess Eostres, the divinity of the radiant dawn of upspringing light. Spring is the time of the growing sun and new birth. So naturally, the egg has evolved as a symbol of spring's arrival.

In the Christian tradition, the Easter egg represents Christ's rising and His



emergence from the tomb. The Mesopotamians were the first Christians to colour their eggs using red dye to represent the blood of Jesus Christ.

Ancient cultures used a variety of colours derived from the natural dyes in plants to colour their eggs. In some cultures, flowers or leaves were placed onto the shell before dyeing to create beautiful patterns. Eastern European countries used beeswax to create designs before colouring the eggs to create intricate patterns.

In the Christian tradition, during the 40 days of Lent, people did not eat meat or eggs. By the time Easter came, Christians were ready to celebrate by colouring and feasting on their eggs. There was also an over abundance of eggs as the hens continued to lay them during Lent when the Christians were abstaining. Therefore, many of the customary Easter dishes such as egg breads were used for celebration.

Eggs are not the only symbol of Easter. Bunnies, baby chicks, and lily flowers all symbolise rebirth and have become a part of our Easter celebrations over the centuries. The Easter bunny arose as a symbol of fertility due to their prolific production of offspring. Baby chicks represent rebirth as they crack from the stillness of their shell to an explosion of life. Lilies are one of the first flowers to bloom in the spring bringing colour and the renewal of life to the world.



by Jubel D'Cruz

New Book Launch On Saint Joseph



Saint Joseph is the protector of the Christ child and the official protector of the Catholic Church. "He was the first to encounter the blood of the Lamb", said Fr. Orson M. Wells during the launch of the new book, Consecration to St. Joseph by Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC., at Pauline Book and Media Centre, Kolkata.

Sr. Marisa, DSP, welcomed the gathering and thanked them for having come to be part of the event.

Sr. Sophia, DSP, Superior of the Community read a Gospel passage where the angel appeared to Joseph. Fr. Neethi, Assistant Parish priest of St. Mary's Church said a meaningful prayer on the function.

Fr. Orson Wells, Parish priest of Our Lady of Valankani Church, Picnic Garden graced the occasion and released the book. Fr. Wells presented the first copy of the book to Sr. Rita, Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, Lavinia House.

In his concluding address Fr. Orson said that devotion to St. Joseph comes mostly from the religious sisters. He urged those present, "if you want to go to Jesus, pray to St. Joseph."

*From AFJ News Service
-Melvyn Brown, AFJ.*

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DEFIBRILLATOR -

What is the need for AEDs in public spaces?

4 to 6 minutes of suffering cardiac arrest is a major factor for 95 per cent of sudden cardiac deaths. A person suffering from cardiac arrest except for timely administering of cardiopulmo-

Emergency services in India unfortunately are known to take way more time than they should and therefore, first-aid tools have a crucial role to play for saving lives. With a large population size and densely crowded public spaces, there are strong indicators for growing incidence of sudden cardiac events in the country.

This makes installation of AEDs in public places important and they should be placed alongside fire-extinguishers or at similar locations. In large buildings, possibly every floor can have an AED, in markets, malls, and public places, they could be placed centrally and at entry and exits. The device may be installed at security guards rooms and surveillance centres as well.

In recent times the incidence of deaths due to sudden cardiac arrests outside home is increasing. Various Indian cities need to install Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public spaces to address this issue. Automated External Defibrillators or AEDs are portable electronic medical devices to detect life-threatening cardiac activity such as irregular heartbeats and pulse lessness. It can revive the heart by defibrillation or application of electricity to restore effective cardiac rhythm.

Cardiac arrest is taking place in Gym or while he was playing squash in a health club. The doctors feel that a chance to survive happens if only there had been a defibrillator in the gym. It's a small portable device that saves lives. Timely aid could save many lives and the objective of installing the AED was to empower a common man to do his bit to save a life. An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) costing Rs. 1.5 lakh to save the lives of those who suffer from Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) was installed at the Airports as part of the project to



save a life. The machine was installed at the security check area in the departure areas in the airports across the country. One in 2000 Indians per year dies due to SCA.

Timely aid could save many lives and the objective of installing the AED was to empower a common man to do his bit to save a life. Everyone was aware of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), which is an aid given physically while Ventricular Fibrillation is done using a device. The device would generate an electric shock to the heart muscle to reverse the effects of ventricular fibrillation.



C.K. Subramaniam

In the absence of a trained medical professional, AED can be used by an ordinary educated person, as it is equipped by simple audio and visual commands. During a cardiac arrest, the heart stops functioning due to problems in the electrical system of the heart, disrupting the pumping action. As a result the blood flow to the brain and other parts of the body stops, within seconds, a person drops down unconscious and has no pulse, and within minutes, a person suffers death.

It is estimated that the failure to administer life-saving defibrillation within

nary resuscitation (CPR) and AEDs, there remains no other way to save the life. It can revive the heart by defibrillation or application of electricity to restore effective cardiac rhythm.

Apart from a few initiatives, India is largely unaware of the need for installing AEDs at strategic locations in public places. The changing health scenario is causing a rethink and up gradation of such standards worldwide, and India needs to learn from the US, the need to make this device readily available. Keeping the trends of public health in mind, the union and state governments need to lay guidelines for installation of AEDs.

Government should make installing AEDs mandatory in railway stations, airports, metro stations, and bus terminals. Security staff and emergency service personnel should be trained to administer first-aid services, including CPR and AEDs. AEDs should be installed in traffic police vehicles and patrolling cars, and such officials should be trained to operate AEDs.

Stitch in time saves nine is true and AEDs serve the purpose of application of electricity to restore effective cardiac rhythm and save life with timely intervention.

Twelfth Of March: Gandhi & Grande

Twelfth of March has two significant anniversaries!

Ninety-one years ago, in 1930, Mahatma Gandhi began his famous protest, the Dandi March, not far from the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to protest the tax salt imposed by the British! It was a Civil Disobedience movement – a real 'satyagraha' in every sense of the word. In this long arduous march of 390 kms. to the shores of Dandi, Gandhi was accompanied by people from all walks of life and from all corners of the country. It took twenty-four days for the group to arrive there on 5 April.

On arrival at Dandi, Gandhi in an interview said, *"I cannot withhold my compliments from the government for the policy of complete non-interference adopted by them throughout the march I wish I could believe this non-interference was due to any real change of heart or policy. The wanton disregard shown by them to popular feeling in the Legislative Assembly and their high-handed action leave no room for doubt that the policy of heartless exploitation of India is to be persisted in at any cost, and so the only interpretation I can put upon this non-interference is that the British Government, powerful though it is, is sensitive to world opinion which will not tolerate repression of extreme political agitation which civil disobedience undoubtedly is, so long as disobedience remains civil and therefore necessarily non-violent It remains to be seen whether the Government will tolerate as they have tolerated the march, the actual breach of the salt laws by countless people from tomorrow."*

Gandhi was also prophetic and speaking of the India of today! When a group of farmers from Gujarat, supported by several organisations and several concerned citizens of Gujarat, wanted to take out a 'kisan tractor rally' today, in their tractors from the same place (as Gandhi did in 1930) and towards

Dandi, all the concerned protestors were placed under house arrest and the rally was not allowed to take place. Shabnam Hashmi, an activist, through a live video-recording (which is going viral) has detailed the way this rally was stopped. People from all over the country have condemned this anti-democratic move. Strangely enough when the Government is hypocritically trying to score 'brownie points' on the Dandi March! Even the British colonialists did not stop Gandhi's 'Dandi March' in 1930!

Forty-seven years later, in 1997, on this day, in faraway El Salvador, Jesuit Fr. Rutilio Grande was gunned down by the military junta of his country. Grande had identified himself totally with the poor and oppressed people of El Salvador and was a visible and vocal critic of the fascist policies of the Government



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ

A month before he was assassinated, on 13 February 1977, Grande preached a sermon that came to be known as 'the Apopa sermon', denouncing the government's expulsion from the country, of a Colombian priest Fr. Mario Londono, who served the poor. In strong words, an action that some later believed led to his murder, Grande said, *"I am fully aware that very soon the Bible and the Gospels will not be allowed to cross the border. All that will reach us will be the covers since all the pages are subversive – against sin, it is said. So that if Jesus crosses the border at Chalatenango, they will not allow him to enter. They would accuse him, the man-God ... of being an agitator, of being a Jewish foreigner, who confuses the people with exotic and foreign ideas, anti-democratic ideas, and, that is, against the minorities. Ideas against God, because this is a clan of Cain's. Brothers, they would undoubtedly crucify him again. And they have said so"*.

Grande had a long-standing friendship with a diocesan priest Oscar Romero; the latter was known for his conservative ways. The poor and exploited of the country were Grande's major con-

cern and he left no stone unturned to highlight their plight and to make their struggles his own. Unlike Romero, Grande did not hesitate in taking up cudgels against the powerful and other vested interests. Romero was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador just three weeks before the brutal death of Grande. The murder of his friend was a terrible shock to Romero. At his funeral mass, Romero in his homily said, *"the government should not consider a priest who takes a stand for social justice as a politician or a subversive element when he is fulfilling his mission in the politics of the common good."* He also said openly and emphatically, *"anyone who attacks one of my priests, attacks me. If they killed Rutilio for doing what he did, then I too have to walk the same path"*. True to his words, he walked that path! From that day onwards, Romero immersed himself totally in defending the rights of the poor and oppressed of his country. He never looked back – till his own assassination on 24 March 1980! Romero is today a Saint of the Catholic Church and Grande is on the fast track to becoming one.

Both Gandhi and Grande have much to teach us today. They worked for the freedom of their people. They took a visible and vocal stand to defend the rights of the poor and the marginalised. They did not hesitate in taking a strong stand against the fascist and anti-people policies of the Government of their day and to voice their dissent. Because of their prophetic courage, they had to pay the price: both laid down lives for a cause, a greater good.

In the wake of what is happening in our country today – we are called to emulate Gandhi and Grande! We need to come out and engage in civil disobedience, take a non-violent stand for justice, truth and peace and ensure that we cry halt to the rot that has taken over our beloved motherland! We need to join in the protests of the farmers and others like the Adivasis and Dalits who want to live a more dignified life! Above all, like Gandhi and Grande we need to believe that with truth we will overcome and only the truth will set us free!

Twelfth March is a significant day – let not its importance be lost on any of us!

Bells, Shells, Still Not Well

by *chhotebhai*

This is being written on the first anniversary of another of those dramatic announcements by the pseudo sage on the stage. It was on this day last year that he did another “surgical strike” on the public, on the lines of notebandi and GST. All for dramatic effect and electoral advantage.

He announced a “Janata curfew” for 22nd March 2020, from dawn to dusk, followed by the “lockdown” from the 24th. We were told to ring bells and blow shells in the mistaken belief that it would drive away Corona. The dotting, not doubting, public obliged the Emperor who had no clothes, because they too had been stripped bare of their daily essentials.

True to the script, the Tabligi Jamaat (read Muslims) was blamed for the pandemic. I had heard Dr Harshvardhan, the Union Health Minister, saying on TV that India had information about Corona as early as January 2020. I myself had organized a meeting of the Indian Catholic Forum in Kerala in the first week of February. We had to cancel it, literally while some were boarding trains to attend, because the Kerala Government had issued an advisory against Corona.

So why did the Emperor allow Rome to burn for 2½ months, before the sudden lockdown? Obviously he had to fête his friend Trump, whose sarkar did not return to power. He had to wait for the celebration of the Holi festival, and for the riots in Delhi, purportedly instigated by his camp followers. The time was now ripe for another surgical strike that he executed with aplomb.

Never mind the unimaginable hardship that the people faced, epitomized best by the desperate migrants on the road. At that very time my son was cycling from Goa to Kanpur (2500 kms), tracing the footsteps of great great grandfather, who did that journey with a caravan of 300 bullock carts in circa 1854-57. He cycled over 250 kms on the last day to reach home on the 23rd night. Had he been one day later, he would have been stranded on a high-

way without food, water or shelter.

The story of millions of Indians, suddenly confined to their homes, may not have been so dramatic, but was definitely more traumatic. No food, no money, no work, no medicines, no space to even stretch cramped limbs, or to wash clothes. If the emperor could twiddle his thumbs for 2½ months could he not have given such a vast country a week’s notice, for people to make necessary contingency plans? Could he not have allowed migrants to return home by train, bus or plane? It would have detracted from the intensity of the strike. That was not to be. Dramatic effect over ruled plain common sense.

Had the intervening period been used for arranging PPE kits, ventilators, hospital beds and sanitizers, it would have made sense. Nothing of the kind was done. The nation’s health system was taken completely unawares. To cover up the gross failure there was more drama – showering of petals from helicopters, and lighting of lamps at a fixed hour, to drive the Corona demon away. Obviously nothing worked. There was no way that we could use the punch line of “The Three Idiots”, that “All is Well”. We ended up like idiots anyway.

One year on, the vaccination drive is on. There was initial resistance, because of the mistaken notion that the pandemic was done and dusted. The Chief Minister of U.P. had the audacity to tell people in Kerala that they should learn from U.P. about health. He conveniently forgets that his State has among the lowest percentage rates of vaccination and highest percentage rates of wasted vaccines.

Having been a senior citizen for over 10 years I was entitled to be vaccinated. However, since I was responsible for about 50 workers I tapped my

sources in the health department to get them vaccinated, as most of them were frontline workers. To no avail. I reconciled myself to getting my own vaccination done. Here’s where the story changes slightly.

A friend of mine did my registration with my Aadhar Card. In a couple of minutes I got an appointment at the Kanshiram Hospital, based on my place of residence. I left work for my “appointment”. My wife, also a frontline worker with special children, chose to join me, even though she didn’t have the previous appointment.

The hospital was a newly built up, very spacious and clean. I expected to see a big banner for the vaccination centre. There wasn’t. Senior citizens had to climb to the first floor. I expected to see a spacious well demarcated area, as repeatedly shown on

TV. Nothing of the kind. There were three poky rooms, with no sanitizers, social distancing or provisions for checking one’s temperature or blood pressure.

I went to my allotted room for my appointment. Another rude shock. Never mind your appointment. Just stand in line like everybody else. I got my shot in the arm, followed by my wife who had no appointment. Again in a matter of minutes I got a notification on my ordinary keypad phone that I had been successfully vaccinated. I was given a certificate that stated that I had Covishield, the Astra Zeneca vaccine. There was no recovery room, just a couple of benches scattered around. I sat to look at my Covid Passport. Lo and behold, it had no Government stamp or signature. All it mentioned was the date for my next dose, and an emergency number, in case of need. My personal details were left blank with a by line stating that the beneficiary should fill in his own personal details. There was no mention even of my gateway to heaven, my Aadhar Card number.



(Contd.. on p. 13)

The Crown of Thorns

had lost all its original thorns. It now consists of a bundle of reeds, bound together by gold wire to symbolize the lost thorns.

The term 'Crown of Thorns' evokes only one powerful image, which according to the New Testament - a woven crown of thorns placed on the head of Jesus during the events leading up to his crucifixion. Nobody in the history of the world has ever worn a crown of thorns except Jesus. It was one of the instruments of the Passion, employed by Jesus' captors both to cause him pain and to mock his claim of authority. It is mentioned in the gospels of Matthew ("And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee and mocked him, saying, "Hail, Kind of the Jews!" 27:29), Mark (15:17) and John (19:2,5).

The Roman soldiers after they had mercilessly scourged Jesus, threw a purple robe on him, and then they pressed a crown of thorns into the flesh of his head mocked him: "King of the Jews", and led him roughly to climb Mount Calvary, or Golgotha.

From fragments of historical evidence regarding that purported Crown of thorns, it was venerated at Jerusalem in the first centuries of the common era. There is no mention of the crown made by St. Jerome who lived in Jerusalem in early 5th century. Historian Francois de Mely refers to the transfer of the Crown from Jerusalem to Constantinople in the Byzantine Empire between the fourth and tenth centuries. Earlier in the meantime a number of thorns disappeared as they were given away.

Mention is made of Emperor Justinian who gave a thorn to St. Germain, Bishop of Paris (preserved at Saint-Germain-des-Pres), Empress Irene in 798 or 802 sent Charlemagne several thorns which were deposited by him at Aachen (8 thorns were at the consecration of the basilica of Aachen). Four thorns were given to Saint-Corneille of Compiègne in 877 by Charles the

Bald. Hugh, the Duke of the Franks sent one to the Anglo-Saxon King Athelstan in 927 (Malmesbury Abbey) Interestingly, one thorn was presented to a Spanish princess about 1160; and another was taken to Andechs Abbey in Germany in 1200. Then while it was at Sainte-Chapelle, several of the crown's thorns were removed and presented as gifts from the Kings of France to important personalities of their times, one among them being Mary Queen of Scots. There is also one at the Jesuit Stoneyhurst College chapel, housed in a reliquary. The British Museum also claims to have a piece of the relic in - The Holy Thorn reliquary.



by:
**Dr Jeanette
Pinto**

At the time of the Crusades, in 1238, the Crown of thorns appears as a deal proposed by the Latin Emperor Baldwin II of Constantinople, who was in need of money. The French King Louis IX, purchased it from Baldwin II. On August 19, 1239, the relic of the Crown of thorns arrived in Paris. King Louis who was a devout man took off his own crown and royal robes, and walked barefoot behind the relic as it was carried to the unfinished Sainte Chapelle, the chapel of the French kings. That chapel was completed in 1248 and then it was housed as Louis' collection of Passion relics, thereafter kept in the Louvre Museum.

When the French Revolution occurred in the late 18th century, many treasures of the Church were lost. However, Napoleon saved the Crown of thorns and it was kept at the National Library until 1804. At that time, Christ's crown was returned to the Archbishop of Paris and, on August 10, 1806, was placed in the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris. It remained there until 15 April 2019, when a fire touched the Cathedral. By this time, the crown

The thorn is one of the most ancient symbols in the world; together with the Rose, it represents pain and pleasure. Here the thorn denotes sin, sorrow and hardship. The Crown of thorns is an emblem of Christ's passion; one of the objects at the centre of salva-

tion history. By wearing the crown of thorns, Jesus became the victim of God's righteous anger, intended for sinners only (you and me). Because of our sins, our conscience will always prick our guilty souls with sharp thorns. This is the price we pay for disobeying the eternal living God.

The wise reflections of St. John Chrysostom, an early Church Father teach that thorns and thistles were intended to prick the sinner's conscience: "when God said to our fallen parents: Cursed is the earth in thy work; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." (Gen 3:18) It signifies that the conscience shall never cease producing sins which will sting and prick the guilty soul.

Our sins are really Jesus' Crown of Thorns. Jesus by consenting to take these sharp thorns upon His adorable head, removed the malediction and changed it into a blessing for mankind. By this our Lord Jesus Christ diminished the quantity and the intensity of our temporal sufferings; and through His blessing, grace and example, he rendered all our labours and toils into meritorious works of eternal reward.

Today, the relic of the Crown of thorns is publicly displayed in the Notre Dame cathedral every Friday of Lent, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and all day on Good Friday. During the rest of the year, the relic is placed out for veneration at 3 p.m. on the first Fridays of each month. At other times, it is kept in the Cathedral's treasury. The Knights of the Holy Sepulchre have been entrusted as its guardians.

Laugh-A-Thon

Advertisement in a long island shop:
"Guitar, for sale..... cheap.....
no strings attached".

Advertisement in a hospital waiting room:
"Smoking helps you lose weight.
One lung at a time!"

On a bulletin board:
"Success is relative. The more the success, the more the relatives".

When I read about the evils of drinking,
I gave up reading.

Wife (to husband): Honey, who is Alarm and why does she call you every morning at 5.45?

My grandfather is eighty and still doesn't need glasses.
He drinks straight out of the bottle.

You know your kids have grown up when ---
Your daughter begins to put on lipstick
or when your son starts to wipe it off.

Sign in a beer bar:
"Those of you who are drinking to forget, please do pay in advance".

Sign on the noticeboard of a driving school:
"If your wife wants to learn to drive, don't stand in her way".



Behind every great man,
There is a surprised woman.

The reason men lie is because women ask too many questions.

Laugh and the world laughs with you,
snore and you sleep alone.

The surest sign that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe is the fact that It has never tried to contact us.

Sign at a barber's saloon:
"We need your heads to run our business."

Laughter makes you happy. It works faster than alcohol.

--- Contributed by: Jubel D'Cruz,
Dombivili, Mumbai

Funny Riddles

1. What do you call a bee that comes from America?
A. USB
2. What do you call a woman who drinks only one cup of tea in a day?

- A. Jaswanti
3. Why don't people clap in Afghanistan?
A. Because of 'Tali-ban'
4. How do you ask your 'Maasi' to take a dip in water?
A. Dip-lo-macy
5. How do you say "she is calling a cab" in one word?
A. Vocabulary
6. Which Pakistani cricketer does not have a date of birth?
A. Umar Gul
7. What do you call a fat girl waiting at the bus stop?
A. Motivating

--- Contributed by: Jubel D'Cruz,
Dombivili, Mumbai

"Differences Between Graduate Nurse and Experienced Nurses"

A Graduate Nurse thinks people respect Nurses.
An experienced nurse knows everybody blames everything on the nurse.

A Graduate Nurse looks for blood on a bandage hoping they will get to change it.
An experienced nurse knows a little blood never hurt anybody.

A Graduate Nurse looks for a chance "to work with the family."
An experienced nurse avoids the family.

A Graduate Nurse expects meds and supplies to be delivered on time.
An experienced nurse expects them to never be delivered at all.

A Graduate Nurse will spend days bladder training an incontinent patient.
An experienced nurse will insert a Foley catheter.

A Graduate Nurse always answers their phone.
An experienced nurse checks their caller ID before answering the phone.

(Contd.. from p. 8)

I noticed that most people just walked away after getting shot in the arm. I chose to sit out the mandatory 30 minutes. I then noticed a huge banner on the wall, giving credit for the vaccination camp to a Minister of the BJP! This was highly objectionable. A minister or a political party cannot claim credit for a national programme that involves everybody from health workers to vaccine manufacturers.

I felt like an idiot, because all was not well, despite the bells and shells. I withhold further comment till I get my next shot next month.

• *The writer lives in Kanpur where his experiences are based.*

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- A popular and healthy South Indian dish

To make puttu, you will need Puttu Kudam. Puttu Kudam is a puttu maker or a puttu vessel. It consists of two parts. The base part is for heating water. The top cylindrical part is for steaming the puttu.

Puttu can be served with kadala curry or even with vegetable or potato stew.

Ingredients:

You will need:

- 2 cups of rice-pachari/rice flour or puttu podi (Use either the white rice flour or the red rice flour).
- 1 cup freshly grated coconut
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup or enough water to moisten the flour

Method:

1. In a heavy skillet, dry roast the rice flour over medium heat, stirring continuously. After about 5 minutes, remove from the stove/gas and let it cool.
2. Add salt to 1 cup of water and wet the puttu podi/powder, a little at a time, and mix well till you reach breadcrumbs consistency (Note: The rice flour mixture should be wet but not lumpy. The right consistency is reached when you press a little flour in your fist and it forms a shape and does not crumble off).
3. Now fill your puttu kudam with water till it is two thirds full. Place on the stove/gas.
4. Take the cylindrical tube part, insert the flat disk with holes at the bottom of the tube.
5. Fill half of the tube with a fistful full of grated coconut and then add the prepared rice flour till half and fill the rest of the tube with more prepared rice and sprinkle grated coconut on the top (Note: The rice flour must be loosely filled and not packed).
6. Cover the cylinder tube and place on puttu kudam once the steam starts coming out.
7. Steam for 6 to 8 minutes. When the puttu is cooked, steam will start coming through the holes on the lid. Remove the tube from the pot and open the lid. Using the handle of a large spoon, slowly push the puttu, and slide it onto a plate.
8. Sprinkle them with sugar and cut pieces of bananas.
9. Serve hot with kadalakari (black chickpea curry) or pappadam and yellow small bananas.



by Jubel D'Cruz

Another Portugese Tombstone found in Mangaluru

—*Ivan Saldanha-Shet.*

The holy week and traditional church rituals will take place, the death and burial of Jesus Christ will be mourned as per church needs. Death is the other side of the coin of life - from creation and the birth of man, millions of people have died and there is no count. As far as we Christians have existed for about 2000 years now, the memory of the dead is marked in some way, mainly with inscribed tombstones. Christ's apostle Thomas the Syrian, came to India nearly 2000 years ago to Kerala. Modern Catholicism arrived in Mumbai, Konkan and Malabar in the early 1500s AD mainly through Europe. Their forts and ships always had chapels and priests. Historians have recorded from time to time that Mangalore had a prominent fort housing the first Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, it was well known from 1568 and it was located right opposite the confluence of two famous rivers, in the vicinity of the Old Port called 'Bundar'... now a fishing hub, a short distance from the present Rosario Cathedral.

Two stones bearing inscriptions found were brought to public notice by authorities through the press on March 15, 2021. They were found while excavating the land for construction at College of Fisheries, in Hoige Bazar Campus, Bolar. It is observed, one has Kannada and other Portuguese inscriptions. The Director General ASI (Archaeological Survey of India), V. Vidya-vathi, directed a team from Mysuru led by Dr K Muniratnam, to look into it. The ASI team, on Monday March 15, 2021, did 'estampage' to obtain the exact replica of inscriptions using maplitho paper and ink; the copy is to



be preserved and published in the annual report of 'Indian Epigraphy' which will get attention from experts worldwide. The Portuguese inscription may be of 4 to 5 centuries old.

More relevant here to the Catholics of Mangaluru is the stone with Portugese 'coat of arms' and inscription. Now, a well known historian, researcher and author on this subject, Alan Machado Prabhu gave a preliminary report; he opined that it is difficult to decipher at this stage, hopefully some restoration/build up could help. Translated basically he said it reads as "This tomb is of Antonio Pereira (or Texeira) de Macedo nobleman of the house of the King our lord, captain of this fortress who was killed by the Moors in the siege ... present the 28 April..." Further, date and so on..unfortunately is not visible. Perhaps the matter will get enlightened later if an interest is exerted. The emblem and inscription are seriously eroded. The emblem compared with the previous tombstone (Mauro) found in 2009 has significant differences, it may indicate that the origin of the persons are different.

It is of rare interest that the area is part of ancient Mangaluru and close to the Mangaladevi Temple (from which early Kudla got the name of Mangala Uru) 'Allupa Dynasty' held sway here for a while. Also according to local historians this area is prominent from early 1500 AD for a Portugese Fort and settlement, in 2009 a similar Portuguese tombstone inscription was found just about 100 feet or so away, the details follow.

Portuguese tombstone of 1629 AD found in 2009:

A large fairly clear stone inscription at a spot opposite the confluence of the two rivers and the Arabian Sea, was discovered in March 2009, by a history buff, along the river at 'Haleya Kote - Bolar', in the compound housing cement godowns, between Joy Land English School and Mukhya Prana Temple just yards behind where the new stone inscriptions was unearthed now.



In April, 2009, local media published the 'discovery'. The finder brought it also to the notice of his friend, historian Alan Machado-Prabhu and others. Decoding the clear inscription with the help of international experts; the stone turned out to be the tombstone of Domingos

de Mourao Coutinho, the captain of the Portuguese fort of Mangalore, who died on April 30, 1629. "It would have been installed over his grave which in all probability located within the fort church, the 'Nossa Senhora de Rosario', which was pulled down in early 1784 AD at the start of the captivity of local Catholics by Tipu Sultan." It is seen as an existing relic of the first church and fort mapped as opposite the estuary; which about 1568 AD formed Mangalore's Rosario church history and brings it to perspective. An expert assessment of this stone is that it bears the court of arms of the Mourão Coutinho family, prominent nobles of 17th century Northern Portugal (the new stone inscription too bears a coat of arms). It is a tombstone which bears the chiselled legend "Here lies Domingos de Mourão Coutinho, Captain of Fort Mangalore. He died on April 30, 1629." It seems to have once lay within the fort of Sao Sebastio. Later this 1629 tombstone was brought to the Rosario Cathedral premises with a view of preserving it and it lies in the dust neglected now in 2021 AD.

The Redemption Goes On

SHORT STORY

When Isaac awoke the next morning he was refreshed from the long hours of prayers and meditation. Now he would plan for the coming days ahead. He felt it was time to leave the deserted village where he had fasted for nine days. Isaac was certain that he was spiritually prepared to win souls for Christ. His friends made fun of him....

Isaac left the silent and abandoned village around noon. The Corona virus had left a year back taking millions of innocent lives around the country. In his back-pack Isaac had a small piece of bread and a banana. He sat down and ate it.

Memory is a bitter sweet feeling, as if the Creator reminds us not to forget our loved ones and the moments of pain and happiness we keep in our heart. At a roadside tea shop Isaac had flashes of past moments in time, as he sipped on the hot cup of tea.

He would always think of his mother and father. She loved cooking and doing the domestic chores. His father was always tied to the business he ran from his office. But he always found the time to reach him to school and bring him back home in the family car.

Abruptly it all came to an end when the Bhopal gas leak destroyed the lives of many families in the State of Madhya Pradesh including the lives of both his parents. It was a truly tragic night of December 2nd 1948.

Isaac survived. He had been on a school excursion to a tourist spot several miles away. He was fourteen years old and would often wonder why God had saved him. He had no right to question the Lord. For the next five years Isaac found employ-

ment as a counter salesperson in a small religious book store. The book shop was thoroughly equipped with wonderful volumes on the Bible, the Life of Christ, The Messiah's mission to spread the Word of salvation, love, redemption and forgiveness.

It was the Passion of Christ that changed his life and gave him the answer to his quest why God had kept him safe from the wounds of a broken heart. The purpose of his life was discovered when he worked at the book store: Save Souls for God! Isaac was now twenty-nine years old.



BY MELVYN BROWN

A year later he decided to go to Dhannagar where Christians were suffering for their faith. Isaac resolved to spread the Catholic faith in the midst of fear and tension in the area. Moreover it was the wish of Christ to let people know of the faith in all four corners of the earth, to preach love, trust and the forgiveness of sin, and to give respect to the ideas of man in governance, and to respect the laws of God.

Isaac was a good preacher and won many large groups of followers. He prayed over the sick, the troubled and the weak in spirit. He spoke of the Messiah, His passion, death and resurrection. Isaac received seven men to be his close followers. A young woman who had been accused of stealing was disowned by her people, came to join Isaac and his companions. He accepted her into the fold for Isaac knew by the Spirit of God that she was an innocent woman.

Many people of the ruling faith in the country suspected Isaac of insurrection and planned to have him killed. But he was not afraid. They could not arrest him as he always managed to elude the police and his enemies.

From Dhannagar Isaac and his companions journeyed to Surajpore, a small town on the edge of the Lall Bhalu desert.

On their arrival at the railway station the group went to the nearest wayside restaurant to enjoy a simple lunch with a lightened heart. Suddenly, three tall bearded men came up to them and arrested Isaac taking him to the police outpost. The young woman follower stayed with Isaac during his imprisonment and the trial,

Next day.

The morning was dull as heavy dark clouds hung silently over the marketplace where Isaac was put on trial in the open, in the presence of the people. There was no trial, yet a sentence was announced, sixty lashes and a chance to be set free if he denied Christ.

Isaac was dragged to the spot where he was tied to a pillar and his shirt stripped. The whip was of leather thongs. The count began and the merciless whip tore his flesh into shreds soaked in his blood. Isaac bore the pain and grated his teeth.

Finally he was asked to deny Christ. The dark clouds rumbled and the afternoon light began to fade. Drops of rain fell on the crowd.

"Do you deny Jesus Christ as your God?" A tall dark-skinned man belted for all present to hear.

"In the name of Jesus I shall never deny my Lord and my God. I am a modern redemption man..." blurted Issac." I will die for my faith. I forgive you as my God did from the cross..."

"Then die!" shouted a fanatic from the crowd and shot Isaac in the head. He fell to the ground as the young woman rushed forward and took him in her arms wiping the blood from his face, "Master, you are now a martyr!"

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

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

6841. MUMBAI : Anglo Indian / Keralite Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1991), Ht. 170 cms, Wt. 78 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as a Sales Executive. Contact email : mrsannieroy@yahoo.co.in

7184. U.K. : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in April 1990) Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Credit Control in Private company in U.K. Contact email : troyt007@gmail.com

7130. DUBAI : Mangalorean RC Divorcee, (Born in July 1972) Ht. 5'11", Wt. 80 kgs, air Complexion, handsome, simple down to earth, Edn. B.E. (Mech.), Working as an Engineer. Contact email : francisdsouza472@gmail.com OR 00971501532702

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

7104. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1975), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 95 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. H.S.C., working as a Office Assistant. Contact email :

agnelo.nazareth1975@gmail.com

7150. POONA : East Indian RC Divorcee, (Born in November 1960) Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 69 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate Engineer from CWIT University of Pune, working

as an Engineer. Contact email : joeskf@gmail.com

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

7083. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in November 1985), Ht. 6', Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., PGDLM, PGDSM, working as PPM & Data Engineer in Shipping Company. Contact email : ryan.intermilan@yahoo.co.in

7079. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1962), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 67 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Inter MBA, working as a Manager. Contact email : archielewis.al@gmail.com

7132. MUMBAI : Goan RC Bachelor, (Born in January 1987) Ht. 5'8", Wt. 72 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.A., PG in Advy. /Graphics & Animation, working as a Graphic Designer. Contact email : dcostastephen03@gmail.com

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

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**

7077. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1987), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com.,

working as a Manager. Contact email : leroy2266@gmail.com OR Mob: 9503282306

6198. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic (Born in October 1969), Ht. 5' 10", Edn. B.Com., good personality, hailing from God fearing, cultured family, issueless, divorcee by mutual consent, working for Cruise Liner in U.S.A., as Security Supervisor, well settled in Mumbai, Seeks suitable match. Contact email : dsouzamalcolmneil@gmail.com. Phone/SMS 09480157258

6573. VALSAD : Goan / Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1986), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 68 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. Mechanical, working as a project engineer in **SAUDI ARABIA** seeks a well quified girl from a good family background. Contact email : ian.roshan.dsouza@gmail.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 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

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

7136. HYDERABAD : Anglo Indian RC Bachelor, (Born in July 1988) Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Post Graduate, having own business. Contact email : phillipctocher@gmail.com

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If not settled within a year, renew your membership atleast two months in advance to continue the service uninterrupted.

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - BRIDES

7198. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1994), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 52 kgs, Fair Complexion, smart and good looking, Edn. MBA, PGDM, working as a Financial Analyst, Amazon. Contact email : nicmacjac@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

7197. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1995), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate & pursuing MBA in Hotel and Tourism, working as a Travel Executive in Sharp Travel Private Limited. Contact email : joseph.monteiro84@yahoo.com, Mob. : 9869860580.

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

7193. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1990), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., M.A., B.Ed., working as a Teacher in **DUBAI**. Contact email : marina.rodriques1954@gmail.com

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

7195. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1990), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 57 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., well settled. Contact email : melinda.522@gmail.com OR Mob.: 9820561036

7190. BANGALORE : Tamilian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1990), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E., Electronics and communications, working as a Technical Specialist. Contact email : jmj.lionofjudah@gmail.com

7178. MUMBAI : Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in November 1988), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 65 kgs, good looking, Fair Complexion, Edn. Bachelor's in Mass Media, working as a Content Writer. Contact email : jcdc0906@gmail.com

7177. PUNE : Goan RC Spinster, (Born in September 1991), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Masters in Computer Applications. working for a Software MNC in Pune as a Tech Lead. Contact email : melitta88@gmail.com

7176. MUMBAI : Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in February 1996), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 48 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.A. B.Ed., Teacher by profession. Contact email : ektaseq@gmail.com

7171. MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1994), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as an Analyst. Contact email : patriciaswamy94@gmail.com

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

7126. U.S.A. : Mangalorean RC 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

7169. MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1992), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA in Event Management. Contact email : rosypetters74@gmail.com

7158. MUMBAI : Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in August 1986), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 64 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., working as a Patient Care Manager. Contact email : ceciliacookie@gmail.com

7189. MUMBAI : Goan RC Spinster, (Born in July 1993), Ht. 4' 9", Wt. 40 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A. B.Ed., Teacher by profession. Contact email : dcruz_liselle@yahoo.in

7156. MUMBAI : Mangalorean RC Spinster, (Born in November 1993), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA., working in an IT Company as an Executive Assistant. Contact email : mumbai.lavi@gmail.com

7153. MUMBAI : Mangalorean RC Divorcee, (Born in May 1987), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., IATA, Pursuing B.Ed., working as a Travael Consultant. Contact email : greshma.saldanha@gmail.com

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Uncovering Santa Cruz De Bidrem

David Allan Coe a well known American artist once said , *"It is not the beauty of a building you should look at; its the construction of the foundation that will stand the test of times"*. **"Santa Cruz De Bidrem"** or popularly called Hospet Church which is located 35 kilometers away from the northeastern part of Mangaluru and 6kms away from Moodabidri, is one such structure which in true sense stood tall in the time when the entire Community had to go through the dark age (1784 to 1799) resulting in the tragic episode of captivity which lasted for 15 long years. And during this tragic episode in Canara nearly 26 churches were demolishes and couple of churches were spared, one being the church of Hospet and the other was Monte Mariano Church of Farangipet.

This church was formerly called 'Bidrem church' ('Bidrem' meaning Moodabidre). And when exactly was this church built still remains a mystery. Catholic families that got displaced from Goa during the bitter Portuguse –Maratha wars during Maratha ruler Sambhaji's time, settled in these hilly terrains. They were given refuge by the Chowta Queen Chinnamma Devi II who shared business relations with the Portuguese. The first church which might have been built soon after the arrival from Goa , perhaps around 1684, are found on the slope of a hill. We find a perfectly rectangular platform which appears like the foundation of the original church. On one lower side of the slope, a retaining wall holds the platform . The upper side of this church is built on natural ground. Right in front of what must have been the altar, stays a majestic cross, elders of the Parish say that, beneath this cross, lay in rest the remains of first priest post captivity Fr. Benedict Trinidad who in 1814 demolished the old church and began the construc-

tion of the new church which was 200 yards away from the current church. In 1904 Fr. Cajetan Pereira decided to build a magnificent and beautiful new building. Renowned architect Fr. Diamanthy S.J. designed the blueprint which included spacious Gothic tower. In the meantime, Fr. Cajetan Pierra became ill and this was a major setback to the construction of this magnificent building. Therefore they had to give up with the original plan of the church, on February 7, 1909 the church was formally inaugurated by Rev. Fr. Dr. A. Cavadini S.J.

How did the church escape the attack?

Historically looking back there are so many possibilities why the oldest church (1684) was spared. One, being geographically isolated making it more secured amid thick forest and the valley, two, cordial relation between the Chawta king Chandrasekhar Chikkaraya of Moodabidri with Haider Ali might have forced the local king to intervene and stop the possible attack. Though the church escaped attack, there are records that prove that the Catholics of this region were forcefully deported to Srirangapatna by Sulthans army.

Alan Machado (Prabhu) a well known historian has identified rare baptism registrar at St. Ann's Church Virajpet where there are at least 5 entries made pertaining to Hosbet church. In his opinion, *"In March*

1784, Tipu expelled all Goan priests from Kanara. And by 1784 many captives escaped to Kodagu, they were soon joined by a Goan priest, Pe Joao da Costa who built the Church of Santa Anna which is seen even today in Virajpet. This priest maintained a record of those whom he baptised in Virajpet. The first entry is of Anna who was anointed with holy oil on January 27, 1793 and also mentions that she had been earlier baptised secretly with water in Srirangapatna by the 'meirinho' (Sacristan) of Bidrem".

The Architectural Style :

More Often architectural styles varies from place to place, building to building depending upon the cultural influences and resources available locally. But there are some basic features that are fairly universal in monumental churches built in India. Santa Cruz church depicts the blend of 'Gothic', 'Romanesque' and at the same time has modernist influences and local architectural elements which is definitely a visual treat for its visitors.

This church is a well engineered structure designed to look like a Cross in the aerial view. Two of the most predominant Gothic features are: Pointed arches and stained glass window. Even the pilasters are made to look like Ionic/Corin-

thian capitals to a certain extent. The church has high raised facades at all the 3 entrances which enhances the ethereal beauty of the church.



Dr. Mona Mendonca

(Contd.. on p. 19)

Model Bank Relocated Its Mulund Branch

Mumbai, March.22: Model Co-op. Bank Ltd. Inaugurated and blessed the new premises of their Mulund Branch on Monday, 22nd March 2021 at 10.30 a.m. The symbolic inaugural ribbon was cut by Mrs. Janet L.D'Souza (General Secretary of Mumbai Regional Congress Committee) in the presence of Rev. Fr. George Athaide (Parish-Priest of St. Pius Church, Mulund), Mr. Albert W. D'Souza (Chairman of the Bank).



This was followed by lighting of the Lamp by the dignitaries present and a blessing of the premises by Fr. George Athaide. The gathering was then addressed by the Chairman of the Bank, who thanked the customers of Mulund for their support.

The new premises are strategically located at Shop No's. 1, 2 & 3, Ground Floor, Kandoi Apartments, Nahur Road, Mulund West, the Branch is well done up, spacious and has all the amenities required for making the customers comfortable. The Branch also has a 24x7 ATM cum Cash

Recycler Machine adjacent to the Branch, this will allow the customers of the Bank as well as other customers round the clock access for cash related activities. The courteous staff of the Branch were present and were catering to the customers needs with their trademark professional, courteous and prompt service.

The event was also attended by Mr. William Sequeira (Vice-Chairman), other Directors of the Bank which included Mr. Lawrence D'Souza, Mr. Paul Nazareth, Mr. Gerald Cardoza, Mr. Abraham Clement Lobo and Mr.

Sanjay Shinde. The senior officials of the Bank Mr. Zenon D'Cruz (Officiating GM), Mr. Osden Fonseca and Mr. Naresh Thakur (AGM's) along with Mrs. Rekha Chitale (Branch Manager, Mulund Branch) and Branch staff were part of the ceremony along with a few customers. On account of Covid related protocol the event was held with a small gathering.

We congratulate Model Co-op. Bank on the new premises and we wish the Bank and Mulund Branch, in particular all the best. _ Ronida

(Contd.. from p. 18)

Altar is a attractive and lavish construction. Wood is used richly and creatively to form a vault above the main cross. Cross too is more than 8 feet high above the pedestal. The side behind the altar is designed intricately in a nearly semi-circular shape. Inside the church the baptismal font and the circular wooden stairs give a feel of the heritage that this church bears .A huge bell tower with 3 bells which were brought from Europe centuries ago is another highlight of the church. The internal height and thick walls contribute to the cool temperature that is maintained inside the church. The church has beautiful interiors, which includes wooden carvings, motives, arch, with ornamented columns on both sides exhibit best example for fantastic craftsmanship.



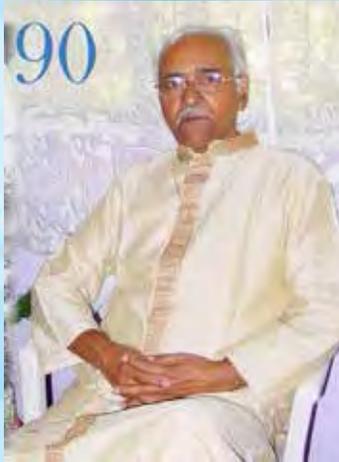
Western portico is the main entrance with a huge wooden door, artistic carvings creating a mood of entering a holy place. One has to salute the genius who designed it to look like a cross from the heavens giving both

beauty and filling the devotee with spiritual essence.

Author: Dr. Mona Mendonca is a Lecturer and Freelance Researcher(Mangalore)

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