

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

Hope for a Better Greater India is All But Gone

by Don Aguiar.

My generation of Indians has often been disappointed in our country, and we have sometimes despaired about the direction it was taking, but it's been impossible for us to stop hoping.

Our own past has trained us to see the silver lining.

Opportunities we couldn't imagine growing up in the 1970s and '80s emerged from nowhere and changed our lives, and many of us believe history will keep repeating, with the pain of the pandemic shocking the economy out of its pre-Covid-19 inertia.

But to suggest to today's rising generation that this crisis is different than others we have weathered, that the walls are closing in again, and the opportunity set for India is shrinking, perhaps for a very long time. The national dream of emulating China's rapid growth is receding — by some economic yardsticks, we can't even keep up with Bangladesh.

A disturbing arbitrariness has crept into policy-making, institutions have decayed and the economy's structural deficiencies have worsened. Animal spirits have been sucked out of all but a handful of firms. Zombie business groups are perched atop the debris of debt-fuelled expansion, waiting for politicians to signal what role they still have, if any. The defeatist slogan of self-reliance, which blighted our parents' generation, is back. Politicians are using religious discord and caste conflicts to drive a wedge in the society.

To make matters worse, India has handled the coronavirus pandemic with the same inept authoritarianism that's come to define its approach

in all spheres, economic, political and social.

With more than 9 million infections, India is the second-worst affected country after the United States. The economy slipped into an unprecedented recession last quarter.

The post-lockdown economy will simply not have enough demand to consume what can be produced. There's some attempt to reform the supply side — labour and farm markets, in particular. But not much is being done to revive demand, either in the short or the long run. Some of us are wondering if this callousness will cause India's demographic dividend.

If India stops turning inward and embraces an open, transparent partnership with global investors, hundreds of millions more would get a shot at prosperity. A stagnant world economy could tap a new source of future demand. The West might win a strong and reliable security partner in Asia. The '90s optimism will renew itself. But if India remains stuck in a middle-income trap, people will soon stop asking if it could be the next China. My generation already has.

Modi came to power promising business-friendly policies and an end to "tax terror."

The elevation of Modi in the public consciousness was a turning point in the citizen-state relationship. Unquestioning devotion was in; critical examination was out. Gone was the pre-poll promise of "minimum government, maximum governance." The dirigisme of the '60s and '70s was back. "We are now entering the politics of 'permanent revolution' Pratap Bhanu Mehta, a political scientist and commentator, presciently warned after Modi's currency ban.

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No holds barred elections

Every election in this country is becoming nastier than the previous one. Though there are elections in five states, the maximum heat is generated in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. The street fighter called Mamata Banerjee is having a running battle with the Prime Minister who is sporting a long beard nowadays. Some people say he is trying to replicate Gurudev Tagore with a view to influence the electorate. Surely it is not a part of the PM's personality like his signature jacket. All BJP leaders are sporting these jackets too as a sign of loyalty. The duel between the BJP and the TMC is turning into street fights every few days. Election related deaths in Bengal are disturbing. For the past few weeks the country's Home Minister is more into election campaigning than in his Ministry while 22 brave hearts were martyred. It is sad that loss of 22 lives was reported in a casual manner. Some channels are more obsessed with Sachin Vaze and VIPs testing positive. That is breaking news for them.

In Tamil Nadu, the contest between the DMK and AIDMK is getting murkier. Actually, the BJP has nothing at stake in that state but they are making more noise than the AIDMK. The PM targeted the son of Stalin accusing him of superseding many senior DMK leaders. Even if he did, it is an internal matter of the DMK. They were quick to retaliate saying Narendra Modi deliberately sidelined L.K. Advani to himself become the PM. That was a good punch. The iron man became a nonentity as a marga darshak never to be consulted. It is unfortunate that he never complained, at least openly. In Kerala the PM compared the CPM government with Judas who betrayed Jesus for a few silver coins while the incumbent government sold the state for gold [an obvious reference to the gold scam]. Hasn't Narendra Modi betrayed Advanji for the sake of power and then talk about respect for the elders?

The BJP has aversion to dynastic parties. Sooner or later they too will become one. If you are so averse, you should have no truck with such parties. They were all fine when they were their allies like the SAD of Punjab, Thackerays of Maharashtra. It suits their cause. This is what is called marriage of convenience. Yet the PM will dwell on the

VIEWS on NEWS

Congress, SP, DMK etc. When you repeat the same thing at every election, it shows that you have nothing else to talk about. You should be able to bring out a new topic at each election. You have nothing to show on the economic front with petrol and diesel pricing. In Assam, the BJP is facing a tough job to keep the momentum going. The mess that following that crude attempt to identify and deport the illegal migrants [ostensibly one community] has backfired and now they are going all out to gain the lost ground. In a desperate bid they are willing to admit anyone even if he is the biggest dynast so long as he can win a seat for the BJP party. Recently they have admitted one Gautam Roy with a family that has an MP, MLAs and Corporators etc. That is the level of desperation.

In the biggest faux pas, the BJP had to face huge embarrassment when the Finance Ministry announced substantial cut in the interest rates of Small Savings hitting the poor and the aged alike. In a desperate move to wriggle out of the situation, it was announced that the notification is being withdrawn and that the rates will remain unchanged for the time being [read end of this election season]. It is puerile to say that it was issued by mistake. When you issue a notification, it goes through the usual bureaucratic process. It is not something that is done off the cuff. More than anybody else, the PM and the HM were the most embarrassed people. How far the no holds barred campaign will aid the BJP will be known post May 2nd. But the CBI, ED etc did a good job. By the way if all BJP leaders follow the PM and grow beards surely it will be a step towards national integration.

What Quarantine?

The BMC must be ashamed of itself that a couple of reporters of a Newspaper had to expose the corrupt practice of letting incoming international passengers from designated countries to go home for a fee. The exposure was so thorough that photographs were provided in support where the passengers were allowed to go home through some clever maneuvering. Who was in charge at the airport handling the quarantine procedure? In this country unfortunately



by Marshall Sequeira

anything and everything is manageable if you have the money. It appears that the authorities 'trusted' their staff to do a meticulous job. If the reputation of the BMC when it comes to corruption is any indication, it will not be surprising if the whole operation 'skip quarantine' had the blessings of the people in charge at whatever level.

Passengers arriving from abroad are systematically monitored at each level and therefore it is very easy to have a fool-proof system to see that those opting for hotel quarantine are properly segregated and accounted for at the end of the day. Every passenger opts for a hotel so for each flight you know how many have chosen which hotels. Why was there no check with the concerned hotels to find out if all the passengers have actually checked in? Once you get the list of passengers at each hotel, it is easy to find out who has not checked in. If you are committed to your job then everything is possible. Was it prudent to rely solely on the feedback by the bus driver?

You have filed some FIRs. Good. But how many BMC personnel who were derelict in their duties in the whole saga have been punished? Even if this is done, is the man in charge also pulled up? No point initiating petty action and leave the big fish scot free. By the way, on the seventh day, the BMC sends someone for a final test to check if the passenger is negative to determine if s/he can go home. Did these people not find out that the named passengers are not actually in the hotel? Was this reported to the higher authorities? If this was done and no inquiry was instituted, then it means that the whole thing was done with full knowledge of those in charge. You swing into action to show that you are serious only when media exposes such lapses which you ought to have found yourselves. The Commissioner should be concerned with this. Are such escapees responsible for the new surge?

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

Mobile: +91 9820485389 / 9820473103

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

Website: www.sezariworld.com

Editor: LAWRENCE COELHO

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Since then, the government's whimsical decision-making has intensified. Don't like what a consumption survey shows? Suppress it. Getting flak for a slowing economy? Publish unbelievably rosy GDP data. Think Covid-19 could get out of control? Impose a nationwide lockdown on four-hour's notice.

"Sab chor hain" now defines most interactions. Homebuyers don't trust builders to deliver homes; financiers don't trust property developers to repay loans. The government doesn't trust either the builder or the lender. Nobody trusts politicians, though Modi, like all strongmen leaders, can elicit any response he wants from the public. During the coronavirus lockdown he asked Indians to light candles, go on the terrace and bang utensils. They did, as told.

When I was growing up, telecommunications was a government monopoly. Then came a bustling wireless market hosting a dozen operators. Now the player count is once again down to three effectively. One of them is in serious stress, and the other says it may not be able to bid for 5G spectrum next year. Another pri-

vate group is establishing a chokehold on seaports and airports, which also were once the state's preserve.

Conglomerates may also be allowed to enter banking because government-run lenders don't have capital to grow. For my generation, swapping one form of concentration with another doesn't look like progress.

The structural demand deficiency, as Rathin Roy, an economist at the London-based Overseas Development Institute, describes it, was a problem even before Modi's Covid-19 lockdown in March left millions of scared migrant workers without jobs, shelter or food. Their long, lonely journeys to the safety of their village homes revealed the shaky legs of India's urban growth story.

Creating jobs amid rising automation will require heavy spending on social security, healthcare, childcare, housing and education. Four out of five women in Indian cities weren't in the workforce even before Covid-19. China, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are all doing better.

Meaningful correction would involve more than tweaking laws. The Indian state must put limits on its powers, end its overreach and rebuild trust. It must

clarify if the goal is to remove "socialist" from the preamble of the constitution, something India's economic conservatives have always wanted, or if it is to drop "secular" Turning a 14% Muslim population into second-class citizens is hardly a recipe for peace and prosperity.

Resuscitating society's trust is more crucial now because New Delhi can't put itself back in the driver's seat. The pandemic has sapped the little fiscal strength it had. The investment-grade rating, which took the country more than 15 years to reclaim, looks increasingly vulnerable.

But trust requires honesty. Indians are surrounded by social media spin and empty slogans like "\$5 trillion economy by 2024" — from \$2.7 trillion before Covid-19. How exactly will this miracle happen? When Toyota Motor Corp. recently said it was halting expansion because high taxation is suppressing demand, ministers rushed to do damage control by calling it fake news. To acknowledge and fix shortcomings in the 2017 goods and services tax — the five-rate GST is a compliance nightmare — is to doubt Modi's acumen.

(Contd.. on p. 11)

The Lost Innocence

am today I owe to them in a big way.

Above all our parents made us a part of their struggles, we had no personalized tabs or we did not get to see mobiles but rather we were sent out to play hard, cycle, fall down hurt our knees and cry. We were left on our own to confront our friends when we fought and coming back from school did not mean just doing homework and attending a number of other classes.

Today right from the tender age of 3, children are enrolled in big schools, they are taught way beyond their capacity. To top it all they are enrolled in a number of classes leaving them no time to enjoy their childhood. Playing outside is forbidden. Visiting family and grandparents is considered to be a break in a child's routine. Every little time is spent in making them complete their homework and when everything else is done they are given screen time with no monitoring. Are we really giving it all to our kids?

I am not against big schools and quality education but what I am against is not letting our children fly out and explore. Leave your children out and let them play, when they mix with other kids from diverse backgrounds, they will learn how to handle people when they grow up. Leave your kids at your grandparent's place, they will learn to live independently and enjoy the fruit of different pampering. Give your child the freedom to choose what they want to do, if they do not want to attend a dance class don't force them, probably your son and daughter may turn out to be an artist and not a dancer. Give them space to jump, scream and paint the house walls.

Most importantly learn to say no to your kids. Today any young parent goes beyond their capacity to fulfill every wish of their kids. Whatever a child asks for, parents immediately give it irrespective of its need or not. I think it's very important for a child to get a No so that they are prepared for rejections in life. When they grow up

I remember during my school days the only entertainment that was assured to me every year was a visit to my native place twice in the year. Once during Christmas and another was during the summer vacation.

I hail from the beautiful city of Mangalore, the lushness of western ghats, the cool breeze of the Arabian oceans coupled with the tantalizing smell of freshly fried fish in the coconut oil, forced me to stand in awe of my native.

The even better and beautiful part of visiting native was the privilege guaranteed to be pampered by my Grandparents, uncles and aunts. All of us would mount up to more than 40 people when we gathered and would have the best of times.

Vacations not only meant leisure, but they also meant work. I remember we were assigned small chores by my aunt every time we stayed at Native. Small little chores included mopping a room, sweeping the garden, washing our own clothes and getting grocery from the nearby stores. Since I was always accompanied by my cousin these chores were never tasking and we loved doing everything. Right from waking up early to pluck mangoes, or stay back late to watch a little television when elders were watching.

Like any '90s kid would say, they were amazing and best days.

Compared to us I am sure today's kids are indeed blessed. Right from their birth, they are pampered, they are given a separate bedroom, their own toys and some of them are also privileged to have their own gadgets. Though all this seems really comforting, are our kids really happy?

I was just browsing through to do a little research before penning this write up and I was devastated to see so many children ending their life due to stress and pressure. It was really heartbreaking to see the interview of one of the parents who had just lost their child and the parents with tears said that they had given everything to their daughter. A good upbringing, a comforting home, all the toys and luxuries, the best school but yet she chooses to end her life.

This made me think, think hard. What more could parents have done?? After a little retrospection, I realized today most of the parents were giving their children things to give them comfort, but they were failing to give them hard life experiences which would have made them stronger.

I often hear young parents around me say, we have seen a fair share of suffering when we grew up but I do not want my child to go through the same. I have heard young parents say, I would only buy branded clothes for my child. He or she must go only to a certain school to become smart, he or she must eat only this food. They must not mingle with these sets of children.

When I hear this, that's when I begin to realize why our kids are becoming smarter but are failing to become emotionally smart. I still remember growing up, my dad and mom always discussed with me their financial struggles and pains. This made me sensible from a young age to be realistic in my expectations. I had no privilege of wearing branded clothes, but the clothes we bought from the local shopping complex were still beautiful. I was not put into an international school, but the convent school I studied in taught me life skills and what I



by Sonal Lobo

(Contd.. on p. 9)



Masses for aborted babies

Since the start of the pandemic, I've been hooked on religiously to the daily online masses of the church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour (OLPS), Chembur. Masses usually begin with the announcements of masses offered by people for various intentions, thanksgivings, month's mind, death anniversaries, souls of departed members of families, and souls in Purgatory. Of late, what has come as a shocker is the mass-offerings for aborted babies. In this connection it may be recalled that it was the teaching of the church of the middle ages that un-baptised children cannot enter into the kingdom of God. They were therefore consigned to a place called 'Limbus Infantum', on the outskirts of hell, where the fire does not reach, and these un-baptised souls continue to remain in this place forever, without any hope of deliverance.

Today, with the revised thinking in the church, the doctrine of 'Limbo' viz 'Limbus Patrum' and 'Limbus Infantum' has been jettisoned and no longer hold good. It is therefore not known why the church is accepting masses for the souls of the aborted babies. Are we slowly returning to the days of the Reformation when indulgences were freely sold by the corrupt clergy?

—A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim, Goa

Most Catholics have no time to pray

There are some people who call themselves Catholics (yes, Roman Catholics) which is a very good thing but they have no time to pray either at home or in church.

These very same people keep spending five to six hours partying every weekend but when it comes to Mass in church, they walk inside the church when the homily has just finished or during Communion time. When the priest gives a long sermon, they keep yawning and find it boring. But for weddings, they walk in at the reception hall even before the bride and the groom could enter and wait there till the wedding comes to an end.

What kind of Catholics are they?

At retreat centres like Potta and Tabor, the Eucharist is celebrated for two full hours with a very long homily. Why can't we have the same in our local churches?

I hope the Archbishop of Mumbai, His Eminence Cardinal Oswald Gracias is reading this.

— Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai

Absolutely Straight Forward

THANK YOU Ladislaus for the very hard hitting editorial in the latest issue of **The Secular Citizen**. You are a courageous man; you have not minced words; you've been absolutely straight forward without mincing any words. I love and appreciate you for what you have written. Long Live Ladislaus. God bless you.

— Bishop Barthol

Who is a True Patriot?

Your Cover article by Ladislaus D'souza in *The Secular Citizen* dated 12-18 April, "An Open Letter to the President of the Republic of India", focused on three pertinent points:

*Replacing Our Lord Jesus' Birthday on 25 December through a 'good governance day' in celebration of Atal Bihari Vajpayjees!

*Giving a free hand to cow vigilantes in lynching members of the minority community on the suspicion of buying, selling and eating beef!

*Spending millions for building a Ram Temple when billions of devotees continue to languish in the streets ...! To the above remarks, I would like to add two relevant points:

* "Is there only one leader of a nation allowing a stadium to be named after himself? My research shows only two: Saddam Hussein and Gaddafi. That is ill-omen! Modi must demand that his name be removed, and Sardar Patel's name be restored" – Subramaniam Swamy, ex BJP MP, 27 February 2021.

* "A new wave of patriotism is sweeping, the likes we have not seen before. This new cult of patriotism extends to giving certificates of patriotism – to include the right to brand others as anti-national; and those who are extra critical of it. New terms have flooded the lexicon like, TukdeTukda Gang, Khan Market Gang, Lutyens Lobby, Urban Naxal, AndolanJeevi, etc. Even our great freedom movement pales into insignificance before the bright light of this new patriotism! According to this new definition, I am not a patriot!" - Yeswant Sinha, former BJP Finance and Foreign minister in NDTV-Opinion, 10 March 2021.

—Dr. Trevor Colaso,
Memphis TN. USA.

(Contd.. on p. 7)

Creatures Of Habit

old habits.

The two exceptions are Kerala and the North East, for diametrically opposite reasons. The sari is “foreign” to the North East, and reminds them of the cultural domination of “mainland India”. Baptist and Presbyterian missionaries, later followed by the Catholics, also used western music and culture that seemed to gel with the local tribal culture. So the sari was out. What of Kerala, especially the Syro-Malabar congregations that like to assert their Oriental identity? Why then have they retained the habits of the Occident? The only plausible reason that I see is that the Oriental churches of Kerala have mistaken tradition for faith. Truly, they are creatures of habit that just don’t want to change. Aggiornamento is Greek to them, though it is actually Italian!

This brings us back to Jhansi. The nuns were in their medieval European habits. They were probably conversing in Malayalam. The postulants were from Odisha and possibly talking in their native tongue. It is possible that all four were not conversant in Hindi. If the aggressors tried to question them there is a distinct possibility of a communication gap that could have aroused suspicions. This in no way justifies the cowardly act of the aggressors/attackers. My point simply is that, from Mahatma Gandhi onwards, Hindus are not so much against Christianity as they are against its western garb or portrayal. Even Gandhiji was under the mistaken notion that becoming a Christian meant eating beef and drinking whiskey.

Traditional dress like the dhoti was jettisoned for western garb that was too closely associated with the then colonialists. Converts also changed their names, or anglicized them. In his native Gujarat, Makwana became Macwan. Many Gujarati converts have the anglicized surname “Christian”. In other places Jaikishan would become a Jackson. In Goa the Portuguese ensured that their converts who were Joshi or Prabhu now got Lusita-

Most of us are creatures of habit, and therefore highly predictable. As we grow older we tend to dig in even more, and resist change of any kind. However, security guards or forces, cannot afford to be predictable, because then their opponents will know just how and when to attack them. They have to constantly keep changing tactics, timings and their habits (routine).

The word “habit” is in the news, for an altogether different reason. It is the word used to describe the religious garb that Catholic nuns usually wear, more specifically the medieval European one. The controversy erupted when some idiots attributed the attack on the nuns at Jhansi station to their wearing “habits”. Had they been in some other form of dress more “acceptable” to the “culture warriors”, then the incident would not have occurred. Some commentators have gone to the extent of advising nuns and priests to now junk the “habit”.



by chhotebhai *

ing about the tectonic change in the way the Catholic Church perceived itself, and related to the world. Shorn of ecclesiological jargon, what we laity observed was the rapid “secularization” of the priests and religious. It was almost like they were waiting to get out of jail. Priests switched to “mufti”, usually a loose pant and shirt, with a cross stitched or pinned to their front pocket or lapel. Gradually this symbol also disappeared and the priests were indistinguishable from the laity in their clothing. The only time that they wore their cassocks is when they were celebrating Mass, or when “Father” was sitting on his Principal’s chair in school. Who would respect him if he didn’t have his distinct garb?

Some “activist” priests chose to wear a simple kurta pyjama. The only bishop I met who totally identified with the people was Bp George Saupin SJ of Daltonganj. He ALWAYS wore a simple kurta pyjama with an angocha (head cloth). He would sit on his haunches and smoke a bidi like the poor tribals that he worked with. I was alone at Jyotiniketan Ashram, Bareilly, when he came visiting. He insisted on threshing the grain with me, and making rotis on the wood fire. Our ashram had neither electricity, gas nor running water.

I hold no brief for the archaic European garb that priests and nuns then wore. They were totally unsuited to India’s hot and humid weather. With Vatican II’s thrust for a Local Church and Inculturation most women religious switched to saris. Initially they went for the saffron colour, but later morphed into a biscuit brown, while some opted for grey or white, with distinguishing borders. It is quite understandable that some elderly sisters remained more comfortable in their

This is a knee jerk reaction that merits a dispassionate study. Those of us, who lived in the pre-Vatican II era, will recall what priests and nuns looked like then. Diocesan priests were seen in their cassocks and religious priests/brothers in their habits, often black or dark brown. Franciscans wore a cord with three knots symbolizing the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. Women religious, in like manner, wore a variety of habits, some looking like butterflies. Only their faces could be seen. Many wore rosaries on their waist bands (in Indian culture a religious symbol below the waist is considered a desecration). They were often spotted walking and praying their rosary or the breviary.

Then came Vatican II (1962-65) bring-

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(Contd.. from p. 6)

nian names like Fernandes or Periera. Belgian Jesuits in Chhotanagpur gave their converts unpronounceable Latin names like Fulgentious and Hilarious. Kerala bucked the trend. George became Varghese and Anna became Chinnamma.

It is not my intention to belittle the heroic work of the foreign missionaries. At that time the church was more Roman than catholic (universal). What they did was in good faith. Yet, we need to learn the lessons of history lest we make the same mistakes.

Let me share my own experience. I was brought up in a totally westernized household and studied in a prestigious boarding school in the hills. I always failed in Hindi and got zero in Sanskrit. We were forbidden to talk in Hindi. Even today some of our Catholic schools have a signage to talk in English only. It is obnoxious. When I experienced Jesus and went to Jyotniketan Ashram, I renounced my old way of life. On my 25th birthday I took the name chhotebhai. I also opted for a cotton kurta pyjama with a wooden rosary (mala) around my neck, with a wooden crucifix.

Shortly after, I met a priest, a staunch proponent of inculturation, in Varanasi. He was in saffron robes, like a Hindu sadhu. He reprimanded me for openly wearing a crucifix. He told me that it would be stumbling block for me, a barrier with people. Forty five years later I bear witness that my crucifix, far from being a barrier, has been my visiting card, opening doors for me. After seven years in the ashram circumstances forced me to return home to look after my joint family. I then got married (wearing my mala and kurta pyjama) and have subsequently lived a secular (not worldly) life.

There have been umpteen occasions where people have immediately felt at ease, seeing my crucifix. At times total strangers have come up and venerated it. Just last month as I was sitting on a bench after my Covid vac-

ination in a Government hospital, a young man came up and tried to touch my feet (something I never allow). Some years ago when I went to jail on trumped up charges, fellow prisoners who were crypto Christians gathered around me. On three occasions I have single handedly opened up traffic jams on national highways. Far from being a barrier, it was breaking barriers.

A Hindu reformist group has asked me to preside over their annual religious congregation. Muslims and Sikhs are equally at ease with me. When I recently took human rights activist Harsh Mander to visit victims of police firing in a thickly populated Muslim area he could not help but remark on my Christian identity in such circumstances.

I do not wish to boast. My point is that if we have Jesus in our hearts then we should not be afraid of our Christian identity. I am not asking anybody to imitate me, though three of my companions did. One became the great apostle of Arunachal Pradesh, a second was murdered in his ashram in Utrakhand, and the third attracts thousands to his ashram in Varanasi.

The problem is not our external identity or appearance, but rather our internal disposition. I may here add that if I had retained my earlier western upbringing, language and name I may not have been as acceptable to people of all faiths as I now am. The vision of Vatican II was not to secularise religion but to interiorize it, and adopt the incarnational, not colonial approach. We are followers of Jesus, who spoke the local dialect Aramaic, and wore the same clothes as his contemporaries. May he continue to be our role model in the exercise of our Christian vocation. Like an alert security agency, we need to change. Merely being creatures of habit will only give our opponents a stick to beat us with.

• *The writer believes strongly in the ecclesiastical reforms of Vatican II.*

(Contd.. from p. 5)

Country under Covid siege

India is presently in the grip of a second wave of the killer Covid-19 virus and its mutating strains which have laid siege to the entire country, galloping at unprecedented speed and infecting millions, that has baffled epidemiologists and scientists, and taking the country's score to a record high of over a lakh positive cases per day. Goa which was sitting pretty during the past few months, now finds itself in the red zone, with daily cases shooting up to 527 and a positivity rate 20%. The situation in the Calangute-Candolim belt in particular, is stated to be spiraling out of control. A notable feature of the second wave, is its rapid speed and its 'cluster infections', as reported by doctors of a few hospitals in Mumbai, which is said to infect people in groups at weddings and social gatherings. Even the nationwide 45 lakh vaccinations per day has not helped to contain the rapid rise in infections and deaths in the country. The situation is indeed grim and can be best described in the words of one of Goa's leading epidemiologists viz: "We are fighting an unknown enemy blindfolded. Nobody knows what type of strains are in circulation in the state and what are its features".

—A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim, Goa.

A lesson in humanity

The li'll yellow bird, on the banyan tree
Flew to my grille, and said to me:
"Lockdown's a lesson, in humanity
When'll you set, the mynah free?"

(Note: It is not advisable to set caged birds free. They will get killed. Moral of the story: DO NOT CAGE BIRDS)

—Prof Robert Castellino
Mumbai

If one imagines that Joseph just acted on the angelic messages like a robot, it would be a wrong conception of Joseph and he would not be a suitable model for us, human beings.

A Saint With A Creative Courage

St. Joseph's year (2)

It happened on the next of the day the holy Magi visited the Holy Family in Bethlehem. Till evening Mary and Joseph were busy tiding the place. In the twilight someone called, "Joseph, Joseph!"

Joseph recognised the voice. It was Benjamin, the man who lent his cattle-shed to Joseph and Mary for the birth of Jesus. He had become friendly and helpful to the family. Joseph came to the door to receive him. He was with a friend.

Benjamin: Joseph, how are you all?
Joseph: All well, Sir. Thanks for the meal this afternoon and for offering the hospitality to our guests from the East yesterday.

Benjamin: well, that was done by my friend here, Mr. Esop. Yesterday when we saw those dignitaries from the East, I said to myself you brought dignity to our village. Anyway my youngest daughter is still blaming me for not taking you into my own house that night for delivery!

Joseph: Well, who would trust strangers in a dark night and take them in the house?

Benjamin: Joseph, I am here to alarm you further. The matter is serious. The three wise men from the East left.

Joseph: Yes, yesterday.

Benjamin: Maybe they are still on the way. Esop is a government authority. He has brought very secret news.

Joseph: What's the matter, Sir?

Benjamin: King Herod was disappointed because the astrologers did not return to give him the whereabouts of the child. He was furious. My friend here says, Herod is contemplating to

hunt for the Child Jesus and kill him. And if he doesn't find the future 'king of Israel', he is even planning to massacre all the children below 2 in Israel!
Joseph: Oh my God!

Benjamin: I am sorry Joseph, but my advice to you is, you better immediately proceed to a secret place with the child and his mother. You are a courageous man!

Joseph: I too have been contemplating quitting the place since the wise men told me about their encounter with Herod. But! Where to go, when to go and how to go in this critical situation are the questions which haunted us all night without any conclusion.



Fr. Michael G. Vasai

Benjamin: Well, Yahweh is with you! You will know better. Call me when you are leaving, we shall give you some food for the journey.

Benjamin left the crib, and Joseph and Mary discussed the question the whole evening.

I have dramatised above the situation so that we may realise the life of Joseph, not in a pietistic way but in a realistic manner, Joseph is not just a saint but a human being like us. Yes, it was not possible to find even a cattle shed that night for the birth of the Son of God. We must give credit to Joseph's courage and his communication skill in finding the manger. He won the favour of Benjamin and his family in the thick darkness of the night in a totally foreign land! And who can imagine the role of a midwife that he played to Mary that night in the manger! Let us not shy away from real human situations in the name of piety!

THE CREATIVE COURAGE

If one imagines that Joseph just acted on the angelic messages like a robot, it would be a wrong conception of Joseph and he would not be a suitable model for us, human beings. "*Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive (Patris corde)*. Benjamin left and the couple began to discuss.

Mary: Benjamin is right.

Joseph: Where can we hide the child and how long?

Mary: Outside Israel!

Joseph: Great! Shall we follow our ancestor, Joseph, who became a king of Egypt later?

Mary: Egypt? That far? How can we manage journey and the sojourn with the child so frail?

Joseph: You see this?

Mary: Cradle?

Joseph: Made of just two bamboo and some cord! It is very light to carry along. We need it, You never know how long our journey will last.

Mary: So kind of you! Where did you find it?

Joseph: In the hut next to our cattle-shed. Benjamin's servant stays there. His daughter is a year old, they do not need it.

Mary: Great! We can hang it any-
(Contd.. on p. 9)

(Contd.. from p. 8)

where even on a branch and rock the baby! Did you ask for it?

Joseph: No. I only made them realise that we need it.

Mary: So sweet of you, Joe!

In fact the couple went to bed without coming to any conclusion. And there! In a dream an Angel appeared to Joseph and said, *“Get up, take the child and his mother and go to Egypt and stay there till Herod dies!”*

The cradle story is inspired by the words of patris corde: *Joseph’s attitude encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak, for God chooses what is weak (cf. 1 Cor 1:27). He is the “Father of orphans and protector of widows” (Ps 68:6), who commands us to love the stranger in our midst.[20] I like to think that it was from Saint Joseph that Jesus drew inspiration for the parable of the prodigal son and the merciful father (cf. Lk 15:11-32).*

Patris corde highlights “the creative courage” of St. Joseph, which emerges especially in the way he deals with difficulties. *“The carpenter of Nazareth,”* explains the Pope, *“was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting in divine providence. ... He had to deal with “the concrete problems” his Family faced, problems faced by other families in the world, and especially those of migrants.”* It was a courageous migration to Egypt but creatively discovered by Joseph!

MARY AND JOSEPH

I cannot help but compare the sacrifices made by Mary and Joseph in bringing God’s plan of Incarnation in reality. Both were engaged and were planning to live a simple family life. But God upset their plans. The fiats of Mary and Joseph were costly. In fact Joseph has made greater sacrifices for the Holy Family; but he is not been honoured as Mother Mary. Humbly

and unknown, he passed his years at Nazareth, silent and almost forgotten. He remained in the background through centuries of Church history. Only in more recent times has he been accorded greater honour. Liturgical veneration of St. Joseph began in the fifteenth century. Mary has been given the titles of ‘Queen of heaven and earth’, ‘Mother of God’, etc. but Joseph had to wait till Vat II to be just included in the memory of the saints in the Eucharistic prayer! Of course even in our culture we find that mother ‘Mata’ is honoured, father is forgotten!

Pope Francis by accident brings Joseph to the level of Mary. He composed his Apostolic Letter *With a Father’s Heart* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. He says, *“Pandemic has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence, who nonetheless played an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”*

And there! Pope Francis further notes how every day, for over forty years, following Lauds Morning Prayer he has recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary. (Footnote no 10 to Paris Corde) *“This prayer”,* he says, *“expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph,”* on account of its closing words: *“My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power.”*

Does not this prayer remind us of Memorare? *“Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession, was left unaided... ”*

(Contd.. from p. 4)

getting every little thing in life that’s when they will not be able to accept a failure.

Let your child be corrected, today grandparents are not allowed to correct the kids. Uncles and aunts are condemned if they share a word of advice. Probably we must start treating our kids as kids, that’s when they can truly enjoy their innocence.

On a parting note, this is not a criticism towards any parents. Everyone at the end of the day loves their kids and want good for them. But along with providing them something good, it’s also important to let them go through a little pain which will definitely make them better people as they grow up.

A fall from the bicycle, hair filled with sand, shouting and jumping in the street corners, plucking mangoes from the trees, a nice spank from grandparents, the hidden sweet treats, their first crush etc. all these are moments they would cherish and would be much valuable to them than their toys and screen time.

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Malayalis Spirit On The Vishu Day

Vishu is one of the most popular South Indian festivals

Vishu is one of the most popular South Indian festivals and it is widely celebrated in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It is the traditional New Year for the residents of these states. The people living in this region speak Malayalam language, it is also known as the Malayalam New Year.

In Kerala, the start of the Zodiac New Year, when the sun enters into Sidereal Aries, Ashwini nakshatra—is celebrated as Vishu. It is said that what one sees when one first opens one's eyes on Vishu morning is an indication of what one can expect in the year to come. Thus in Vishu, effort is made to assure one opens one's eyes before an auspicious image—the Vishukkani. While the festival is called "Vishu" only in Kerala, across India festivals sharing the same spirit such as Ugadhi in Andhra Pradesh and in Karnataka, Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra, Bihu in Assam and Baisakhi in Punjab are celebrated around the same time of year. The Malayalam word kani literally means that which is seen first, so Vishukkani means that which is seen first on Vishu day.

Like most parts of India, festivals in Kerala are an integral part of the social and cultural structure of the state and festival time is the best time to plan one's travel to Kerala. In Kerala, every community, every religion has something to celebrate about all throughout the year. Vishu is one of the important festivals of Kerala. It comes in the month of April usually on the 14th. According to the traditional Malayalam calendar, it is the 1st day of the first month of Medam (March-April) of the New Year. Traditional rituals are followed to bring in another year of prosperity. Vishu is one of the most popular festivals of Kerala. Since it is

considered propitious to view good things on this day for year round good fortune, Vishu morning is an important time.

The heart of this festival of Kerala is the preparation of the kani, the lucky sight or gift. The custom of preparing



the kani has been followed for generations. The women take a large dish made of bell-metal called uruli, arrange in it a grantha that is palm-leaf manuscript, a gold ornament, a new cloth, some flowers from the Konna Tree, some coins in a silver cup, a split coconut, a cucumber, some mangoes and a jack-fruit. On either side



C.K. Subramaniam

of the dish are placed two burning lamps with a chair facing it. Family members are taken blindfolded and then their blindfolds are removed and they view the Vishu Kani. As in other Indian festivals, a great feast at home is the high point of celebrating Vishu in Kerala.

After visiting the family. Feast is arranged with all the Kerala delicacies, Kootu, Kari, Avial, Olan, Payasam etc

etc. Thus the 'Vishukkani' has over the years become a ritual arrangement of auspicious articles like raw rice, fresh linen, golden cucumber, betel leaves, arecanut, metal mirror, the yellow flowers konna, and a holy text and coins, in a bell metal vessel called 'uruli'. A lighted bell metal lamp called nilavilaku is also placed alongside. As Vishu ushers in a New Year dawn, people wake up to behold the ritualistic arrangement. Giving off hands to the younger members of the family is part of the celebrations.

Arranged in the family puja room the night before by the mother in the family, the Vishukkani is a panorama of auspicious items, including images of Lord Vishnu, flowers, fruits and vegetables, clothes and gold

coins. The Vishukkani will also be laden with gold-coloured fruits and vegetables, such as bananas, jackfruit, golden cucumber, etc. The akshatam, as it is full of turmeric, also is gold in colour and the reflection can be seen in the mirror. Last but not least, a spiritual book, such as the Bhagavad-Gita,



should be made part of the arrangement.

The grandmother or mother who ar

(Contd.. on p. 11)

(Contd.. from p. 10)

ranges the Vishukkani will sleep in the puja room after she is finished and then, waking during the auspicious hour of the Brahma muhurta between 4:00 to 6:00 a.m., she will light the oil-lamp wicks and take in the auspicious sight. She will then walk to the rooms where the rest of the family is sleeping and wake them. Covering their eyes, she will then lead them to the puja room, where she will allow them to take in the auspicious sight.

The auspicious start of the year, which has come to us due to the grace of beginning it with a divine vision, is not for us alone. It is up to us to spread this love, happiness and hope to the rest of society. All South Indian Festivals end with a big feast and Vishu is not an exception to this way of celebrations.

Vishu, the festival of Malayalee community is being celebrated on 14-4-2021 in a colourful way. The colourful and picture festival represents the spirit of the Malayalees in India in general and all over the world in particular. 31 types of dishes were served in plantain leaves to the members. The menu includes Tairu Pachchadi, inchi kari, Achar Naranga, Achar Manga, Dal, Nei, inchi puli, moru, Kondattam, Molaku, Ishtu, Elisseri, Chakara upperi, Varuta Kaya upperi, Pazham, Uppu, Nadan, Choru, Cheriya Choru, Mathan Puli pachchadi, Kootu Kari, Kalan, Olan, Aviyal, Thoran made of Kabej, mix thoran, Sambhar, Rasam, giant size Papadam and small one as well. All's well that ends well. A positive ending can overshadow any problems that may have preceded it. Although this phrase is the title of a Shakespeare play, it likely predates it. Vishu reveals the real Malayalis spirit and the feast on that day is really a special one. Festivities are for enjoyment and Vishu festival is not an exception to this.

(Contd.. from p. 3)

Independent voices that could challenge the official narrative are being muffled; institutions that could force the executive branch to right its wrongs have been defanged. All this runs contrary to our hopes that our media, judiciary, regulators, professional bodies and civil society groups would get stronger over time.

India's central bank has seen off two governors in the last four years after unsuccessful attempts to force bankers and their politically connected borrowers to clean up their acts. Electoral financing is now via anonymous bearer bonds, with no checks on the source. Recent judgments of the top court, as well as its dithering on important constitutional issues, have invited criticism that its approach is "more executive-like than the executive itself"

In the absence of institutional protection — not even of habeas corpus — trying to engage with the state has become a crime. Protesting peacefully, demanding rights, exposing wrongdoing by powerful people, criticizing policies have all become risky ventures.

The Indian middle class, though, may be less forgiving. In economist Albert Hirschman's framework, the "exit" from India option was only for a minority. Others had to stay, and it was their "voice" that kept alive Indian democracy.

Sadly, I don't see northern India's economic pessimism — or its caste enmities, religious hatred and deep-seated misogyny — making way for a less toxic, more aspirational politics, because I have always been secretly hopeful about India, even when criticizing its cumbersome red tape, crumbling infrastructure or clumsy policy-making.

But the 1990s dream has ended, the world has changed, and so have we.

Those of us who thought that muscular leadership would revive India's dream of mimicking Chinese-style double-digit expansion are not just disappointed. For many of my generation, our long-cherished hope for a better, greater India is all but gone. We wanted to trade some of our democratic chaos for a little bit more growth. We ended up with less of both.

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Indian Super Brain

An Indian went to Canada to enjoy maple leaves and ate Pizza at a scenic spot for lunch . . .

He ordered a 9-inch Pizza. After a while, the Waiter brought two 5-inch diameter pizzas And said the 9-inch pizza was NOT available and He was giving Him two 5-inches Pizzas instead, and that He was getting 1 inch more for free . . .

The Indian guy, politely requested the Waiter to speak to the Shop Owner.

The Indian Guy gave Him the mathematical formula to calculate the area of a circle -

Circle Area = πr^2
where ' $\pi = 3.1415926$ ',
'r' is the 'radius' of the circle . . .

And this works out that a '9-inch circle area' = '63.62 square inches',

while

a '5-inch circle area' is '19.63 square inches'

The 'two 5-inch circle areas' add up to '39.26 square inches'.

The Indian guy commented that even if you gave me three pizzas and I'll still lose-out.

How can you say you are giving me an extra inch for free . . .

The Shop Owner was speechless . . .

He finally gave the Indian Guy '4 pizzas'

You can never outsmart a Indian.

Now how to face God?

A man was crying and someone asked him why he was crying. And he said I have only one son, I have done all my possible best to educate him so that he will be a great person



and by God's grace he has been able to acquire all certificates including: G.C.E., W.A.E.C., Bachelor's, MSc. and Phd. But unfortunately he fell sick and doctors said they can't do anything about it and the only option is to die in the next 30 minutes and my son told me to bring all his certificates and I brought them. All he could say was: "Dad, these are my degrees but you never told me to study my Bible. Now I don't know what I'm going to tell God".

*Contributed by Jubel D'Cruz,
Dombivili, Mumbai*

Fair Trial

The judge declared at the beginning of trial: "Counsel for the defense has paid me \$15,000 to find for his client. Counsel for the plaintiff has paid me \$10,000 to find for hers. In order to make this a fair trial, I am returning \$5,000 to the defense."

A doctor told his patient that she had only six months to live. "Isn't there anything I can do?" pleaded the patient. "Marry a lawyer," the doctor advised. "It will be the longest six months of your life."

A man was on vacation when he ran into an old acquaintance. "Hello, Joe," he said. "I haven't seen you in years. What are you doing these days?"

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

A lawyer was out hiking with a friend when they encountered a mountain lion. The lawyer dropped his pack

and got ready to run. "You'll never outrun a hungry mountain lion!" exclaimed his friend. "I don't have to outrun him," replied the lawyer. "I just have to outrun you!"

Give him chance to pay the balance

A pick pocket was up in court for a series of petty crimes. The judge said " Mr. Connors you are hereby fined £100." The lawyer stood up and said "Thanks, my lord, however my client only has £75 on him at this time, but if you'd allow him a few minutes in the crowd..."

Two lawyers met at a cocktail party. "How's business?" asked the first. "Rotten," replied the other. "Yesterday, I chased an ambulance for twenty miles. When I finally caught up to it, there was already another lawyer hanging on to the bumper."

An airliner was having engine trouble, and the pilot instructed the cabin crew to have the passengers take their seats and get prepared for an emergency landing. A few minutes later, the pilot asked the flight attendants if everyone was buckled in and ready. "All set back here, Captain," came the reply, "except one lawyer who is still going around passing out business cards."

Some American academics, discussing the Six Day War with an Israeli general, were eager to know how it had ended so quickly. The general told them, "We had a crack regiment at the most sensitive front. It was made up entirely of lawyers and accountants. When the time came to charge – boy, did they ever know how to charge!"

A lawyer charged a man \$500 for legal services. The man paid him with crisp new \$100 bills. After the client left, the lawyer discovered that two bills had stuck together — he'd been overpaid by \$100. The ethical dilemma for the lawyer: Should he tell his partner?

Obituary

I knew Fr. Varghese Paul ever since I joined journalism in 1973. I was the assistant to Mr. Ramu Patel.. the editor of the first English daily of Gujarat The Western Times. Fr. Varghese often came to see me and we were good friends. he introduced me to the Catholic press. He was associated with the SAR News. Later on

I handled the news agency for 3 years. We participated in many meetings and committees. His zeal to work was amazing, he worked hard to build up the Catholic



Press in Gujarat and all over India. I came to meet Father Vallammattu. We tried to handle the only national magazine the Indian Current. I was the president of the committee and Fr. Varghese was a very handy helper to me. Fr. Varghese introduced me to the International Catholic Press UCPA of which I was the Vice President of india chapter for two terms. Fr. Verghese and I just have attended more than 59 national and international seminars and meetings. He often clashed with me but there was no bitterness in him Fr. Verghese Paul was a good priest. He built up catholic news and prepared many youngsters all over Gujarat and India. He had travelled far and wide. He had a great collection of facts figures and data... he was the editor of Gujarati Catholic monthly DOOT managed by the Jesuits. He was in the Gujarat Vidyapeet set up by Mahatma Gandhi. He was popular among all his community people. Fr. Varghese will be missed by one and all. He always kept a smile on his face. Thousands of youngsters will miss him all over.... His passing away has created a big loss in Gujarat... Good people are also required in heaven and so good lord called Fr. Varghese to his eternal abode. May his soul rest in peace...

—Ignatius Dabhi

Shirley's Mouth-watering

Green Chilli Pickle

- 12 green chillies (medium spiced)
- 1 tsp jeera
- 2 tsp mustard seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 1/2 tsp fenugreek seeds
- 1 tsp saunf
- 1/2 tsp ajwain
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- Salt to taste
- Juice of one lemon
- 1/4 cup mustard oil
- A pinch of asafoetida (hing)
- 2 tbsps vinegar



Method:

1. Remove the head of the chillies after washing them and cut them into pieces.
2. In a kadai, dry roast the jeera, mustard seeds, coriander seeds, fenugreek seeds, saunf and ajwain.
3. When cool, blend into slightly coarse powder and mix them thoroughly onto the chillies.
4. Add turmeric powder, salt and lemon juice.
5. Mix well so that everything is combined well.
6. Heat the oil. Once the oil is hot, add a pinch of hing to it.
7. When the oil cools down, pour it over the chillies.
8. Add vinegar to it as vinegar acts as a preservative and stores for a longer time.



Shirley D'Cruz

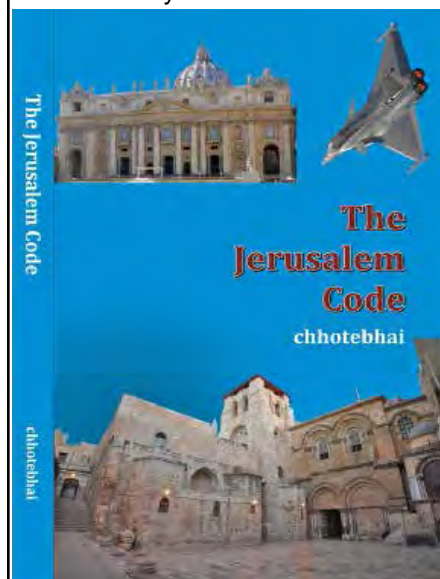
Fr Varghese Paul Chollamadam SJ (GUJ), 78, went to his eternal abode at 7.30 morning on 10th April 2021 at GMERS hospital, Gotri. He was shifted to this hospital on 9th April night. Lately he suffered from Covid besides other illnesses that he was suffering from.



Father Varghese was a visionary and a gogetter. Along with Vincent D'Souza and Victor Karunan, he worked hard to make SAR News a reliable news agency.

The Jerusalem Code

by Chhotebhai



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-DR. TREVOR COLASO

Congratulations to our beloved Oswald Cardinal Gracias of Mumbai, whose motto: "To Reconcile All Things In Christ!" (Colossians 1:20), is indeed awe-inspiring and all-absorbing. Its extended quote continues: "whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of His cross. And you who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, Christ has now reconciled in His body of flesh, by His death; to present you holy, blameless above reproach ... Thus I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me, to make the mystery that was hidden for ages and generations, but as now been revealed to his saints – this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory!" (Col 1:20-27). The Cardinal's protracted maxim indeed propels us to fruitfully reap the benefits of God's Divine Mercy!

Concerning the End Times!

From the Diary of St. Faustina Kowalska, Divine Mercy in My Soul, we have the urgency of the present 'end times'! "Before I come as the Just Judge, I am coming first as the King of Mercy (83)! You will prepare the world for My final coming (429). My daughter, speak to the world about My unfathomable mercy. It is the sign for the end times, after that will come the day of justice! While there is still time, let them have recourse to My mercy. Let them profit from the blood and water which gushed forth for them (848). Secretary of My mercy tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day, the day of My justice is near (965). Write: Before I come as a just Judge, I first open wide the door of My mercy. The one who refuses to pass through the door of My mercy, must pass through the door of My justice (1146). I am prolonging the time of My mercy for the sake of sinners. But woe to them if they do not recognize the time of My visitation. My daughter, your duty is not only to write and proclaim My mercy, but also to beg for this grace for them, so that they too might glorify My mercy (1160).

Prime Legacy of the Divine Mercy!

Also, for a thorough teaching on the 'end times', refer to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (articles 668-682).

Dives in Misericordia!

The above Encyclical, "Rich in Mercy" (30 Nov. 1980) by Pope John Paul II address the theme of Divine Mercy which humanity and the modern world need so much. He observes that mercy is loves second name; and that mercy is the greatest attribute of God! He recalls that mercy does not humiliate a human being, but on the contrary it gives him/her a new value. He especially explains God's unconditional love and mercy through a fruitful commentary of the "Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-35).

The prodigal son squanders and loses something more important than his material good – his dignity as a son! While he becomes aware of this loss, he decides to return to his father's house, and asks him to treat him as one of his hired workers. The parable indirectly touches upon every breach of the covenant of love, every loss of grace, and every aspect of sin.

In this parable Christ also shows us the mercy of Abba-Father, who is able to reach down to every prodigal son or daughter, and to every human and moral misery! Thus, Divine Mercy promotes and draws good from all forms of evil.

Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy (EAMD)!

This is a lay Catholic outreach ministry affiliated with the Congregation of Marianans of the Immaculate Conception.

Members form 'cenacles' in order to pursue and to maintain a Sacramental life through spiritual guidance and strength.

EADM also offers seminars and training programs for prayer communities that include study of Sacred Scripture, meditations on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and reviews on St. Faustina's Diary.

EADM nurtures genuine belief in the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist! The apostolate promotes Eucharistic Adoration, together with veneration of the Divine Mercy Image; and praying the 'Divine Mercy Chaplet' especially at 3pm. EADM helps provide for the 7 Spiritual and 7 Corporal Works of Mercy; including shipments of medical and educational materials to the poor and to prison inmates.

EADM is in the forefront of the Pro-Life causes and roots! It fights against the evils of abortion, domestic violence and euthanasia – To preserve and to support life; right from the moment of conception until natural death! Our Good Lord warned St. Faustina: "Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My mercy" (Diary, 300).

Biblical Consolation!

The Bible gives us immense comfort and solace. Allow me to quote just a few verses from two Books of the New Testament:

"God Who is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive in Christ – By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing. It is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast!" (Ephesians 2:4-5;8-9;).

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not by any works of righteousness, but according to His mercy – By the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit which He poured out richly through Jesus Christ; so that being justified by His grace, we might become heirs to the hope of eternal life!" (Titus 3:4-7).

Age, the Pandemic & the New Normal

-Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

Setting up homes, hostels, old age homes, day care centres for women, orphan

Hardships and sufferings of the aged, the ailing and suffering are ignored, as humans they have become devalued - Corona Pandemic has brought on serious all around distress to the aged and the second spell now is set to be disastrous. The aged in various places who were quite good in 2020, now in 2021 are a shocked and frightened lot unable to comprehend many many goings on. Corona Pandemic is causing incalculable misery to the old and young too and it is impossible to gauge and hope for a future.

One major and damaging factor is the apathy and even a cruel indifference of those in authority and responsibility; apathy of social leaders and even religious leaders. The other impact that is causing a holocaust to destabilise human life in India is the economy that is invading the common man's day to day subsistence. The financial establishments – Banks & Co-operatives and so on. Have deeply undermined the interest rates on savings which is a serious worry and even terror. Just last week it was a big riddle when the Hon Finance Minister suddenly announced a shocking cut in small savings interest rates and equally suddenly withdrew the orders – it is a preview of what is to come sooner than later.

****Old Age Care :** Commercial ventures in the guise of service institutions and many super financed institutions aiming to rake in money into certain pockets and flex super muscle power. In many old age care institutions, vested interests of all hues are now learning that there is good money

to make and commercializing with extreme exploitation. With the 'New Normal' in place food quality and service, general and sanitary services have gone down visibly - cheap salvaged vegetables and non-veg stuff is common. Very often motivated refusal to allow family to visit and interact is denied citing Corona.

Lack of transparency and accountability often leads to corrupt practices in any organization. Blind



goals and 'Get-rich-quick' thinking in the management of old age shelters is now catching on all over. Medical care is most often whimsical and without regulation and supervision; the untrained are the first line care givers. Frequent change of caregivers is disconcerting to the helpless sick and aged. It is evident many health care institutions and old age homes run by various entities give commercialism the first place and big money is the main aim.

The management of old age homes focuses on sickness and cultivating the sick/aged, a means to create more sick and crippled in body, soul and mind and the people who work for the cause will only fall into crime, sin and retribution. People fail to stand up for truth and justice. Sickness is the aim as against wellness and the aged sick have no voice. Old age plans and so on have little use when the aged person is not in control and dependent on

caregivers - the chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Wellness - the main need of the aged does not figure anywhere, treatment of the sick, with all attendant torture and high expense is the norm.

In the case of many institutions, 'outsourcing' in a clandestine and haphazard manner, lacking any framework or system, wasteful expense and fleecing families is heatless. The primary aim is to support and enhance as per fancy of management. Introducing non-existent rules while the aged and true grass root caregivers suffer unnecessarily, managements are pampered.

Consideration and understanding with constructive mutual dialogue is totally absent in such institutions. Their one portfolio at all levels is to ignore the sufferers and remain evasive and nonchalant, this is applicable at all levels. .

There is no platform for exchange and communication, no grievance redress mechanisms.

*****Vital immediate Need:** Most vital and needed is that "Affairs of the aged, should come under a proper fully fledged Ministry/Department in State/central governments ...and the official machinery must oversee and monitor all matters about aged people, their welfare and care." A uniform mechanism should be in place to regulate and administer the right and just needs of the aged.

Both the Center and State governments must immediately form 'Ministries and Departments' for the 'Senior Citizen Affairs' as most other causes have such in place. These departments under the govt must organise/monitor services for the aged. at present lacks any consideration and security.....this is most urgent and vital – the pandemic is another reason for urgency.

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

7207. CHANDIGARH : Anglo Indian Catholic Divorcee, (Born in April 1972), Ht. 6' 1", Wt. 80 kgs, Very Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., MFC, MA English, Teacher by profession. Contact email : vishalsud81@gmail.com

7206. NEW DELHI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor (Born in October 1995), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 43 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. Computer Engineer, working as a Project Manager with Paytm. Contact email : dcosta.ria@gmail.com

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 : delphinempinto@gmail.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 motorbike accident. Contact Email : josephmullakara1973@gmail.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

7188. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor (Hearing Impaired) (Born in September 1989), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 62 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. HSC., Dip. in Computer Hardware. Working as a Cashier. Contact email : clifford9948@gmail.com OR 9920331773

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

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

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

7175. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1989) Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 74 kgs, Wheatish, Edn. B.Sc

(H.C.M.) Hotel and Catering Management, 2nd Photographer / Merchandise Sales Dept., Contact email : osbertagneloalmeida@gmail.com

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

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

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

7164. MANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1984) Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair, Edn. ITI Course, working as a Technician. Contact email : rajesh.ds215@gmail.com

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

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

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7201. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1992), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 55 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.E. in Electronics & Com. working as a Business Analyst. Contact email : ggd_oman@yahoo.com

7192. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1988), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 63 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., Diploma in Interior Design (MDID), working as a Sales Professional in the Private Sector. Contact email : especiosa.dias@legrand.co.in

7108. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1990), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 58 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. (Aviation), Ae SI (Part), AME (Aircraft Maintenance Engineer), working as a Aircraft Maintenance Engineer. Contact email : lucyann.alvares@yahoo.com

7111. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1993), Ht. 5', Wt. 47 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS., working with an MNC. Contact email : owena.dsouza@gmail.com

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

7191. BANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1991), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 57 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.S (Electrical Engineering in US), M.S in Robotics Engineering, working as a Software for a reputed Company in **New York**. Contact email : alfnan@yahoo.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 : drv2019@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, Singapore) working as a Senior Manager of Corporate Communications in **SINGAPORE**. Contact email : mafern.2121@gmail.com

7167. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1987), Ht. 5' 4", Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS. M.Com., and MBA, working as a Business Analyst. Contact email : soulmateforlife2019@gmail.com

7186. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1991), Ht. 5', Wt. 40 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., working for an MNC. Contact email : dyna911@gmail.com

7161. MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1986), Ht. 5'6", Wt. 62 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. Science, Masters in Mass Media, working as a Asst. Accounts Director. Contact email : padmarrao@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

7148. MUMBAI : Smart, goodlooking, Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1993), Ht. 5'2", Wt. 40 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. H.S.C., having own business. Contact email : teresa.joseph.1993@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

7147. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1992), Ht. 5'4", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA Finance, working as a Fund Accountant. Contact email : stefsasha09@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

7138. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1984), Ht. 4' 11", Wt. 56 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., working as an Executive Assistant (Secretary). Contact email : labinajena@gmail.com

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

7181. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee, issueless (Born in April 1974), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., working as a H.R. Contact email : roopaferns@yahoo.co.in

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

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Time To Refresh In His Presence

The Catholic Spring, has once again been seeded by His Resurrection.

This is the third week after Easter. In today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles we are told to renew and refresh our spiritual life in the solace of His presence. "Repent therefore... that times of Refreshing may come from the Presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

Furthermore, in the First Letter of John we are strengthened and assured that in Jesus Christ we have "an advocate with the Father." The Lord is righteous. He is, says John, "the expiation for our sins, and not ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 Jn. 2:1-2)

Biblical scholars and researchers should go beyond being adroit or having knowledge of investigation of the Bible; he should listen along the way to the Word of God; and to receive the Word as the Prophets of the Old Testament did. "What God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled." (Acts 3:18). The most powerful teaching to be discovered in this weeks liturgy is "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world,



BY MELVYN BROWN

our faith." (1 Jn. 5:4)

Christians are extraordinarily fortunate – our comfort zone is in Jesus. When we forgive those who live in the nightmare world of sin, death, destruction and violence, we are able to spearhead their world of false belief. We have no fear, for "His refreshing presence" is always with us. On October 5, 1962, Pope John XXIII spoke to the members of the Pontifical

Academy of Science, and expressed the wish that the Church desires to promote all studies that help to a better understanding of man and the universe. (pp. 778/Acta Apostolicae Sedis). This was a welcome breakthrough.

Christ's holy presence was felt at the Pontifical Academy. The Will of God would now satisfy the thirst, for the Word of God in our time. We turn to the Church and its bishops, to priests, religious, deacons and lay leaders - Our faith demands. Teach us to enter a life of prayer, love and forgiveness. Help us to know how to radiate the risen Christ, to spread the Word and preserve the truth when confronted by the non-believer. Tutor us in His presence to be one with Christ in this salvific work. "The Author of life is risen" (Acts 3:15).

After his resurrection, – twenty-one days have passed. As the Apostles spoke about Simon and that the Lord had appeared to him, suddenly, "Jesus himself stood among them; and said to them, 'Peace to you!' (Lk. 24:36). All this is true. Jesus asked them; "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings arise in your hearts?" (Lk. 24:38). The Apostles thought they were seeing a spirit standing before them. Then Jesus told them to see his wounds and to touch him. He asked them if they had anything to eat. The

astonished gathering of his followers offered him a piece of broiled fish; Jesus ate in front of them, and they all believed. Now at least an explosion of trust had blazed into the chapters of the greatest story ever told. It would be the faith of all faiths, and it would engulf the world for all time.

With His presence in our midst, it is also time to refresh our belief and to understand the scriptures. Open your minds for "it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentances and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Lk.24: 46-47)

These words buoy our spirits to make the right moves to evangelize the Word. The sacrifices we make along the way burnishes the armor of faith in our soul. At this moment I am reminded of the psalmist who said, "Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord." (Ps. 4:5)

This is the time to refresh our arid lives, lost in the valley of material desires and sins of the flesh. The Risen Lord is ever present to forgive and embrace us when we seek his love and mercy. The First Letter of St. John says, "Whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him....." (Jn. 2:5)

From understanding scripture, we learn from the sedimentary layers which arise on issues like confession, abortion, sex – almost a great many issues you can think of. It is unanimous however, that such topics will arise and compel us to struggle for solutions in their hour. It is also relevant to read the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans; "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever, Amen. (Rom.11:36)

Today, and forever His presence will help us to forge a faith of eternal trust, in Abba, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. "refresh my heart in Christ". (Phm. 1:20)

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Model Bank Malad Branch Relocalated

Mumbai (RBI), April.08: Model Co-op. Bank Ltd. Inaugurated and blessed the new premises of their Malad Branch on Thursday, 8th April morning at Ground Floor, Pearly Shell Apartments Co-operative Housing Society Ltd., Tank Road, Orlem, Malad West, Mumbai. The symbolic inaugural ribbon was cut by Rev. Fr. Cedric Rosario (Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Orlem) and 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 Rev. Fr. Cedric Rosario. The gathering was then addressed by the Chairman of the Bank, who thanked the customers of Malad for their support.

Model Bank Always Consider the Interesting and useful service of the Customer activity with the consumer of the customer. The service is engaged in providing people friendly services to meet the multiple demands of customers. Branch relocation in expanded and convenient locations to serve with more effective strategies during the globalization and coronation. This will strengthen the banking future of Model Bank. The new premises are strategically located



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 Deposit 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 was present and were catering to the customers needs with their trademark professional, courteous and prompt service said Albert W.D'Souza.

The event was also attended by other Directors of the Bank which included Mr. Paul Nazareth, Mr. San-

jay Shinde, Mr. Ancy D'Souza and Mr. Gerald Cardoza. The senior officials of the Bank Mr. Zenon D'Cruz (Officiating GM), Mr. Osden Fonseca (AGM) and Mr. Naresh Thakur (AGM) alongwith Mr. Lawrence Noronha (Branch Manager-Malad Branch) and Branch staff were part of the ceremony alongwith a few customers. On account of Covid related protocol the event was held with a small gathering.

The programme was compered by Mr. Osden Fonseca, AGM and the vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Zenon D'Cruz, Officiating GM. *Ronida*

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Christian community in distress

We are all aware of the recent incident in Jhansi in which four nuns, including two postulants, were harassed by members of the Bajrang Dal while they were travelling by train to their homes at Rourkela in Odisha. They were also taken to the police station on the trumped up charges of the two postulants being taken for conversion. This incident has generated outrage among the christian community and has been condemned at various forums. Protests are being held at various places. On the 31 of March, a Silent protest was organized by the Bombay Catholic Sabha at the junction outside Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Orlem. People stood along the adjoining pavement with placards denouncing the harassment of the nuns. The parish priest, Fr. Michael Pinto recited a short prayer at the gathering.

The chief minister of Kerala has denounced the incident (incidentally, elections are scheduled in Kerala in April and the nuns happen to be from the state). The Home minister, Mr. Amit Shah at an election rally in Kochi in Kerala, has also denounced the incident and promised action against those involved. He also went in to assure the people of Kerala that the culprits behind this incident will be brought to justice at the earliest.

From these statements it is evident that this was a factual incident and not a figment of somebody's imagination. It was strange therefore to note the Railway minister, Piyush Goyal making a controversial statement at a press conference. According to news reports, he completely denies that such an incident ever occurred in the first place. He said, "There was no attack on any nun whatsoever...the chief minister of the state [Kerala] is completely lying and making false statements when he says that." Incidentally, the Piyush Goyal reportedly is a student of a christian institution viz., Don Bosco's, Matunga.

Well, the christian community is certainly saddened by such incidents and the attitude of the authorities. So, where do we go from here? How long will such incidents continue to occur? Is the christian community & the minorities safe in the country?



Melville X. D'Souza
- Orlem, Malad West

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