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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

"But Let's Be Positive"

by Don Aguiar.

Some political observers have squarely put the present failure of successfully and effectively handling the pandemic to our collective responsibility. We ourselves have invited the trouble, they feel. The Electorate Is Least Worried - We Are Far Advanced into Blind Following. We have been walking blind-folded for quite a while, yielding submissively to a self-legitimizing political order. What has shocked them is that the electorate in many places seem least bothered about the one-sided policies of the Ruling Regime.

Average voters are happy enough with the freebies they get, the middle class with the new openings promised, the top elite with economic domination round the corner, and the Sangh Parivar with the Hindutva agenda well advanced. Our government is least concerned about developing a consistent and responsible approach to the problems and possibilities of the national economy or healthy relationships with neighbouring countries. Lost in self-importance, they have alienated every neighbour around.

All Value Systems Vanish - All intellectuals who used to be concerned about the future of the nation and our society are silenced, marginalized or eliminated. Now there remain among the voters only interest groups that are ready to lend their support to the highest bidder. They are least worried about the destiny of the nation.

Such men constitute the Modi-manpower. They merely sought to plunder India as they kept looking for better pastures. That is the level of their nationalism.

Many will question how many Indians can support both Modi-manpower and non Modi-manpower at the same time, calling such people complicated personalities. Given that those are two absolutely opposite sides etched in history. But come to think of it, these are not really complicated people at all.

These are the people who love being on the side of the Oppressor, irrespective of who the oppressor is.

It, perhaps, gives their inferiority complex a sense of achievement that leeches on the flexing of muscles, by the mighty against the weak. It gives them a unique happiness in the distress of others, what I call as "Malicious satisfaction."

Is mass suffering, inflicted by policy design or emerging as a policy by-product, an integral part of the nation's leader regime's view of national power and national revival? Can suffering and strength be viewed as mirror images of each other? Surprising as it may seem, this paradoxical question has a long history in politics.

If you go back in History, you will see this mind-set fostering on the side-lines of humanity every time.

When the Mughals had invaded India, these people joined hands with them and fought against those residents who resisted. The Armies of the Mughals were not all Muslims, you know?

When the British came steamrolling across India, these people sought employment under the Queen. The officers might have been British, but the hands that shot the bullets at innocent people were not all British, you know?

It was in their interest to cosy up to the oppressor and the harassment that they meted out to the weak couldn't have been merely "following orders".

Take up the incidents closer to today.

During demonetization, it was never about black money for these people ... "Ab uska black money pakda jaayega", that was their sole point of contention, the doom of others.

They didn't even care much about the pandemic taking lives in the first wave. It was the poor people dying. While these people, even in lockdowns were posting pics on Instagram of how they were partying on their terraces.

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“Touch-Me-Not” Government?

An innocuous little cartoon on the social media shows Narendra Modi saying “People dress up like corpses and float in the rivers just to malign me”. This says it all. This government has become very touchy but unlike that ‘touch-me-not’ plant, it comes out all guns blazing for any adverse comment or criticism against the government [read Narendra Modi]. Ministers and all the national spokespersons of the BJP attack the opposition and the media except those who act like their lackeys in defending the indefensible night after night on their television channels. The Lancet publication also said very clearly that the government of India spent more time defending the criticisms [its image] rather than fighting the pandemic. The well respected American CDC Anthony Fauci too was critical of the fact that India opened up too much too early and also felt that election rallies and mega melas were ill timed.

While the government is not buying the story that India ignored the warning of a second wave or lowered its guard so also big companies like private banks. Some from the top management actually encouraged their senior staff to show old setu app screen shots to hoodwink the security putting a lot of people to grave risk. That much for corporate responsibility! The PM declared at Davos that India, like some other nations, has succeeded in taming the pandemic. He gave himself the pat but refuses to accept the blame now. The pandemic which was confined to the urban areas in the first round has now engulfed the rural areas with almost non-existent medical facilities. The emphasis was elsewhere – Love Jihad etc. Too much of attention was focused showing ‘them’ to show that community in bad light. Karnataka MP names only 17 Muslims [rest non-Muslims] for hospital admission scam in Karnataka. No emphasis on infrastructure. The criminal negligence will haunt these states now that the pandemic has reached its shores [rather river banks] where scores of dead bodies were seen floating in the river Ganga, contaminating its waters, where millions of devotees throng for a holy dip for purification.

More and more such bodies are being located which were buried in sand. It does not require rocket science to tell us that all such deaths are unaccounted

VIEWS on NEWS



by Marshall Sequeira

in the final tally. This must be the tip of the iceberg. Many such bodies must have been either buried or cremated illegally without reporting such deaths in rural areas where there are no ambulances or other arrangements to ferry the sick or the dead. We have seen bodies being taken on carts, cycles, rickshaws or even relatives have carried their loved ones. Cremation grounds everywhere, with limited capacity, have refused to accept the dead and videos of such bodies being lined up have been highly disturbing. This is the plight of the poor as hospitals are not being able to cope with patients from urban areas, leave alone the rural folk.

The Narendra Modi government says there is enough oxygen, vaccines, medicines, beds and ventilators and that the opposition governments are only trying to tarnish the carefully built image of the PM. Amit Shah, the man who thought he subdued the pandemic and could win handsomely in Bengal and Tamil Nadu is nowhere to be seen or heard. Maybe after he ridiculed linkage of the second surge to the melas and elections, he has disappeared from the scene. Has Modi lost confidence in him after a string of failures? People, dying for want of oxygen is simply not acceptable when oxygen converters/ventilators procured from PM Cares [really?] fund are lying idle for want of trained staff. The image of the BJP in general and Narendra Modi in particular is badly dented and this will haunt them till 2024. RSS also agrees the government lowered its guard. Is it also tarnishing the image of Modi? Talking about intolerance – A policeman catches a man and threatens prosecution for pasting a blank sheet on a wall. When the man protested, the cop told him - “I know your maan ki baat”.

Are we insensitive?

We take great pride when we talk about our great culture which dates back to some five thousand years and the values we cherish. This may have been true some centuries back but today it is hard to accept that it exists. I remember, some decades back a policeman was asked by a reporter if he kept the gold if he found at a building crash site and the policeman said it would be unethical to take undue advantage of a calamity.

Even he showed sensitivity being poorly paid and more susceptible to temptation. This cannot be said about the situation as it pans out today. It is heart burning to watch unscrupulous people including politicians taking full advantage of the pandemic situation obtaining in the country.

The oxygen cylinders are being sold at exorbitant rates – sometimes ten times the normal price. Ambulance drivers are fleecing the hapless relatives; medicine costing five thousand is sold at seventy thousand. Even you find such elements in the noble medical fraternity – doctors conniving with culprits to make a fast buck. Beds are being sold, ventilators go for a premium. There is no respite even if your loved one is dead. Ambulances are beyond reach of a poor man. He carries the dead even on his shoulders all the way to his home. Sometimes he carries his loved one on a cart all the way to his village. Cremation staff also exploits the helpless charging them much more than what is legitimate. How can the authorities see this happen even conceding that the infrastructure has been stretched? Just because the poor cannot raise their voices we cannot accept this inhuman and insensitive attitude of a large number of people who have no qualms about exploiting the downtrodden. It is downright sad.

Efforts from the governments may not be lacking but the sheer numbers coupled with bad management of the scarce resources have made their efforts ineffective. Good Samaritans from all walks of life have come forward. The unscrupulous elements outnumber the Samaritans though. In the process such good people are able to reach only a small miniscule of those suffering. Different people are offering help in various ways and it shows that there is some semblance of humanity still left and the well meaning people should come and support such efforts. What is most heartening is that the millennials are in the forefront of this initiative risking their young lives. Kudos to them!

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When the migrant workers walked back, they didn't care. In fact they were busy hailing the Oppressors of what a fabulous job they were doing.

"Malicious satisfaction", pure and simple. They have always cheered for the Oppressor till the point it starts affecting them personally....

Modi-manpower also does not have the racial privilege of Trump. While the virus in the US killed the minorities disproportionately, the virus in India is not making a distinction between Hindus and Muslims.

And that's what's happening now.

The pandemic has hit home. Their own are dying now. They are running for aid along with everyone else. Suddenly they are experiencing what it feels like to be helpless, like the oppressed are, who they were jeering at not that long ago.

But trust me, the moment they feel they are safe, they will be back to supporting the oppressor, whoever it will be at that time and laughing at other people's miseries. That's how their psyche is built.

If these people ever witnessed a fight

between Jack and the Giant, they would have cheered the Giant as he kicks Jack's butt. Till Jack takes him down...

And that's when they will start sending out those messages of "But let's be positive"

Taking pleasure in the plight of others leaves you completely incompetent to deal with the same plight when it befalls you. Incompetent and Alone. Doesn't Modi Government feel ashamed that a government democratically elected by the citizens of the country is being directed by Judiciary on day to day affairs of its governance almost every day? In fact now it is going one step ahead and appointing its own team to audit Modi Government's work. Has Modi vanished? Supreme Court has no alternative but to take Modi's job of setting up oxygen distribution protocol. What a disastrous government we have given ourselves.

India has never been so sick; it has never been so much in danger of new diseases....

But a bird's eye view is needed to look at India, all over, as one secular unit. Our problems have brought us to a situation where either we will have to suffer silently or we will have to transform the government, their old traditions, and their conditionings. Those

conditionings and those educational systems and the religion that the government has followed up to now, have contributed to this crisis. This new disease problem in India is the ultimate outcome of all our cultures, all our philosophies, and our religion. They all have contributed to it – in strange ways, because nobody ever thought of the whole nation including the Prime Minister and his cabinet; everybody including the Prime Minister and his cabinet was looking at a small piece (their own interest), not bothering about the whole nation.

So, today, the world is horrified by what they see of India and deeply dismayed. The braggadocio has been stripped aside. The exposed reality is ugly and impossible to hide.

Finally, there's also how we view ourselves. Our confidence in being special seems to have disappeared. This is not the exclusiveness we sought. Television and social media have brought home a different truth. We've been reduced to a nation that's more than frightened, we're in panic. The dream of achieving India's inevitable and irresistible destiny has metamorphosed into a nightmare where we know our own incompetence and irresponsibility is what haunts us. **And that's when we start sending out messages "But let's be positive"**

How does the Holy Spirit work?

Pentecost meaning, 'Fifty,' is the Christian festival celebrating the descent of the third person of the Triune God, namely the Holy Spirit on the Apostles fifty days after Easter. What did the Holy Spirit do? It empowered, emboldened, and transformed the disciples of Jesus to follow the great commission, "Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to the whole of creation." (Mk 16:15) Thereafter they began to freely and fearlessly speak of the Risen Christ and his saving grace. That was amazing! How does the Holy Spirit work in the lives of people? Does it have a special technique or method to touch peoples lives.?

The Holy Spirit works in many different ways. He may guide a person through **a voice**, or an **angelic visitation** to convey God's message, like when Mary heard the angel say, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus." (Luke 1, 30-31) He may appear in a **dream** as in the case of Joseph, when the angel appeared to him and said, "Rise take the child until I tell you" (Mat.2:13) Some people are inspired by **scripture**, others when they listen to preachers, teachers, prophets, or even enemies.



by:
**Dr Jeanette
Pinto**

Stella grew up in a dysfunctional alcoholic family and suffered abuse. As a teenager, she lived on the streets, but eventually found a job and place to live. She even attended church and put her faith in Jesus. However, depression continued to plague her. A teacher met Stella in church, invited her to a Bible program where she learnt, "God loves you no matter what." Romans 8:38. The Holy Spirit **entered** Stella's life, she desired to know more about Jesus, bought a Bible and thereafter lived her life in truth and peace.

God uses human channels to speak words of prophesy, tongues, interpretation and words of wisdom and knowledge (1Cor. 12: 8-10) God in present times also utilizes **the media** to disseminate His truth via satellite TV, radio, internet, websites, different platforms of social media, books, podcasts, movies, music and even dance. Some hear the voice of God in **nature and creation**, through the sound of a bubbling brook, the song of a bird, a powerful wind or an earthquake. Elijah was camping in a cave on Mount Sinai when God manifested Himself. Elijah saw a powerful wind, a mighty earthquake and a fierce fire, but God wasn't in any of them. Instead, God spoke to him in a "still small voice," also translated "a gentle whisper" (1Kings 19:9-12)

The Holy Spirit works through the **seven gifts** - wisdom, understanding counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord, which we Christians receive in Baptism. In understanding, we comprehend how we need to live as a follower of Christ. A person with understanding is not confused by all the conflicting messages in our culture, he learns to discern about the right way to live. This gift perfects a person's speculative reason in the comprehension of truth. The Holy Spirit also acts as **Comforter or Paraclete**, one who intercedes, works as **Advocate** to a person in times of



trial.

The Holy Spirit is constantly active it **enlightens** and **directs** us to live righteous and faithful Christian lives. We know that an act is sinful, as it disturbs the peace of our conscience. The Holy Spirit, saves, fills, seals, and **sanctifies** us. It **reveals** God's thoughts, teaches, and guides us into all truth. We read in Gen1:27; "God created human beings in His image and likeness..." But by sin, man distorted and destroyed that image. The Sacrament of Baptism brings us back to God, and Confirmation blesses us with the Holy Spirit, which sanctifies and enables us to be true witnesses of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is truly God's presence in our lives, "...you are God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16) We humans with scarred souls are like soft pliable clay. We call upon and need the Holy Spirit to melt, **mould, heal** and **shape** us, so that once again we become perfect like the image of Jesus. God's Spirit is like a cleansing fire that **purifies** one from personal sin. His Spirit is like refreshing water that sustains a person day after day.

Our human heart longs for God, and its is God's Holy Spirit which **inspires, authorizes** and **empowers** a person to do His work. This Spirit is like heaven-sent wind that directs our steps to be in tune with God. The Holy Spirit is truly a **Divine strategist**, knowing fully how and when to come into one's life. Thus, the Holy Spirit constantly and powerfully works in unimaginable different ways to change our hearts and life, an on-going process of making us holy through **sanctification**.

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Be prepared to tackle the third wave of the virus

As the second wave of Covid-19 has occupied a dangerous situation in our country, many people are getting ill day by day and many more are losing their lives. But we, as a nation, give more concentration to shopping than our health.

A lot of people are seen in markets and in malls doing their shopping.

Besides shopping, we still see a lot of people jogging on the roads in the early hours of the morning or going for their early morning walks. We must follow the SOPs which the government has declared, wear masks whenever we step of the house, maintain social distance and sanitize/wash our hands.

We must also be prepared to tackle the third wave of this deadly virus which will soon enter our country and create havoc.

—Jubel D'Cruz,
Dombivili, Mumbai

Networking Need

The popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Myspace have taken over the world by storm in many ways. These sites lets users make profiles automatically where they can communicate with friends, families and strangers through pictures, blogs, music, links and many other ways. As social networking sites become more important to society. Some people agree that these online sites are causing the society

a great trouble, especially for the youth. Many sites cause harassment, bully, violation of someone's privacy, etc. Social media sites can change a person life but these days it is affecting people negatively, especially the youth.

— Jubel D'Cruz,
Dombivili, Mumbai

Assessment and transfer of clergy

This is with reference to the letter 'Transfer of priests' by Prof. Robert Castellino (Secular Citizen , May 17). Transfers of diocesan priests come into force every year in the month of June. While Parish priests are usually given a 6-year tenure Assistants are given 3 years. This is the prevailing norm, but not a hard and fast rule. Transfers and promotions have always been decided by the Archbishop and his team of advisors and continue in the same fashion even today. It is the prerogative of the Archbishop to decide on such matters, and as every good shepherd who knows his sheep, he is the best person to choose his flock and transfer them as and when he thinks fit. Any interference in such matters by the laity is uncalled for as it will only lead to politicising the issue and biased judgements. The role of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) members should be limited to helping the parish priest to identify pastoral needs of the parish and to plan pastoral programmes accordingly----Certainly not to assess the performance of the parish priest and assistant and pass judgement. Let us also remember that the church is not a democratic institution that functions according to the wishes of the people.

—A. F. Nazareth,

What is the truth?

While politicians are known to sing a different tune each day, it is not known why our scientists and medical experts keep changing their stand time and again during this critical period of the pandemic. Several vaccines have been developed to combat the virus and it strains , but their efficacy is still to be known. While some vaccines are said to be 45% effective after the first jab , and 70% -80% effective after the second dose, others are reported to have different efficacy percentages. Earlier, it was safe and effective to take the second jab after 28 day. Later, it was changed to 6-8 weeks , and now to 12-16 weeks. It is still not known why some people die after the first jab, while others test positive even after the second jab. The reason is often said to be because of co-morbidities ---a term which is yet to be clearly defined. Until a few months back, Plasma therapy was said to be the miracle cure for Covid patients. Today, it is a different story and proved to be ineffective. Lately, the Goa govt has gone all out to promote 'Ivermectin' as propylaxis treatment for those 18 and above as well as to reduce the mortality rate of Covid patients. The WHO has on the other hand has warned against its indiscriminate use. Today, another deadly 'black fungus' infection is taking a heavy toll of thousands of Covid patients and even those who have recovered. Overuse of steroids and severe diabetes is said to be the cause , but no one knows for sure the real reason. Social distancing of 6 feet may now prove to be ineffective since studies have shown that the Covid virus aerosols and droplets can travel up to 10 metres. So, in this uncertain and dismal scenario, the question uppermost in the minds of a much-harassed people is 'What is the truth'?

—A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim, Goa.

(Contd.. on p. 7)

A Pentecostal Catholic

Does this sound like an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms? Is it possible to be both a Pentecostal and a Catholic, when there is so much animosity between the two? I have another question, as we prepare for celebrating the feast of Pentecost. Where was the Holy Spirit before Pentecost?

Let me answer the first question. A Pentecostal is usually described as a person who gives more importance to the Holy Spirit and its actions, and has a predilection for saying "Halleluiah" at the drop of a hat. A Catholic, on the other hand, is perceived as a person steeped in liturgical traditions and pious devotions, living a straight jacket spiritual existence. Catholics are also wary of Pentecostals when they poach on their members. Both sides believe that the "other" is in serious error.

Let me clarify what I understand by the words Pentecostal and Catholic. Pentecostal usually refers to those believers who emerged about 120 years ago giving special importance to the Holy Spirit and its gifts like praying in tongues, prophecy and healing. These are all rooted in scripture, and are not, per se, contrary to Catholic beliefs. In the Catholic community this spiritual movement is usually referred to as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, duly recognized by the Catholic hierarchy. It began in the USA in the late 1960's.

The word Catholic means "universal", belonging to the whole world, and by its very nature embracing all. In its organized form it has papal leadership, a hierarchy, set norms and practices, with strong clerical control. Some of these aspects, like "clericalism" are acquired traditions that are at variance with its own Dogmatic Constitu-

tion as laid down by Vatican II. When I say that I am Catholic, I mean that I subscribe to the teachings of Vatican II and not the many aberrations and excesses that the hierarchy and clergy conveniently revert to. For me, being a Pentecostal Catholic is a Christian whose life and values are rooted in sacred scripture on the one hand, and the teachings of Vatican II on the other. I have often said that the wished for renewal of the church as envisioned by Pope John Paul XXIII, who prayed for a new Pentecost, is still a long way from achieving its goals. Recent moves of Pope Francis on synodality, accountability and fraternity are according to the mind of Vatican II.



by chhotebhai *

Now let me address the second question. Where was the Holy Spirit before Pentecost? It is actually a stupid question, but it merits a cogent response, because there may be some who are inclined to believe that the Holy Spirit got activated only at Pentecost. A scriptural journey of Jesus' own life shows the all pervasive presence of the Holy Spirit. Let's start at the very beginning, my favourite event, the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel tells Mary "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most High will cover you with its shadow" (Lk 1:35). So the Holy Spirit is present and active from the moment Jesus is conceived/ incarnated. It also covers Mary with its shadow. Translations do not always convey the exact meaning. I would prefer to say that Mary was enveloped by the Holy Spirit.

The next major epiphany/ manifestation of the Holy Spirit is at the baptism of Jesus. "The Holy Spirit descended on him in a physical form, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven "You are my son; today I have fathered you" (Lk 3:21). Notice that all three per-

sons of the Holy Trinity are mentioned in the same event, and the message to Jesus is personal, not generalised – YOU are my Son. This is how the Holy Spirit works, forming a direct personal relationship between God and man.

In his final discourse Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to his disciples. Jesus defined the role of the Holy Spirit as the ability to discern between right and wrong, and to arrive at the truth. It is not just a Paraclete (helper) but one who leads from the front and shows the way forward in various situations. "When he comes he will show the world how wrong it was about sin, and about what is right, and about judgement" (Jn 16:8). And again, "When the Spirit of the truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth" (Jn16:13). There are three important take aways from Jesus' promise. The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of spiritual discernment, something strongly emphasised by the Jesuits in their Ignatian Exercises. It also teaches us morality, what is right or wrong in God's eyes. And finally it leads us in the path of truth.

I see this as the true role of the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus himself. This is a sin qua non for all Christians, especially those in leadership roles. This requires both humility and openness. Unfortunately, most religious leaders are so full of their own power and pelf that they block the working of the Holy Spirit; thereby often mistaking traditions for faith; or rules and regulations for the path of truth.

The Resurrection adds another dimension to the role of the Holy Spirit; that of power and authority. "Receive the Holy Spirit, If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained" (Jn 20:23). This authority cannot be seen in absolute terms or in isolation from other texts. It presupposes the correct disposition, as stated herein above.

How do we recognize the working of the Holy Spirit? St Paul had earlier

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(Contd.. from p. 6)

cautioned against external manifestations like prophecies, tongues and knowledge (cf 1 Cor 13:8). They are subjugated to the three cardinal virtues. "As it is, these remain; faith, hope and love, the three of them; and the greatest of them is love" (1 Cor 13:13). St Paul goes on to say that "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:22). I find that all the fruits are gentle and not aggressive, in contrast to the approach adopted by many who claim to be led by the Spirit.

I see some interesting events that are indicative of how the Holy Spirit spurs us to action. In his first discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had exhorted his disciples to walk that extra mile (cf Mat 5:42). He was stirring the pot, asking us to emerge from our comfort zones. This is manifested in the rich young man who had kept all the commandments. He was good, but not good enough for radical Christian discipleship. "If you wish to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" (Mat 19:21). A big task. Basically, Jesus is telling us not to rest on our oars, but to make a personal sacrifice, to walk the extra mile.

The second instance of not being good enough is the oft repeated episode of Martha and Mary. Here again Martha was a good person, doing good things, but at that point of time Jesus expected something else of her – to listen to what he had to say. Like Martha we too are often so busy, that we have no time to listen to Jesus in prayer (cf Lk 10:38-42).

The most poignant example of Jesus inviting us to take the extra step is his encounter with Nicodemus. He too was a good man, but needed to take another step forward. "You must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from, or where it is going. So

it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit" (Jn 3:8). Jesus was speaking before the advent of weather satellites that can quite accurately predict the eye of the storm and the course of a cyclone.

This does not dilute Jesus' message. Are we solid, liquid or gas (wind). Something in a solid state, like a piece of metal, remains in a state of fixity. It does not change, unless some external force is applied. A liquid either runs off or assumes the shape of the receptacle into which it is poured. Gas (wind) as in Jesus' time, did not have airtight containers. So the reference to the wind is something that is not restricted, chained or bogged down. It is constantly open/ receptive to what God wants of it.

This is never easy. A more poetic translation of the Bible, like the Kind James version, ends the Sermon on the Mount with the words "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Mat 5:48). In contrast, The New Jerusalem Bible that I use ends the discourse much more prosaically, "You must therefore set no bounds to your love, just as your heavenly Father sets none to his". I would like to believe both translations, that limitless love is the perfection to which we are called. This Pentecost may the Holy Spirit lead us in the path of perfect love, and show us what extra mile we now need to tread. This is because the "good" is invariably the greatest enemy of the perfection to which we are all called in Christian discipleship. Happy feast of Pentecost.

• The writer has written several books and articles on spirituality.

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(Contd.. from p. 5)

Losing popularity

The present situation in India clearly suggests that a majority of people will not (and should not) vote for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the next elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi did nothing when the people of India were dying outside banks while standing in long queues during the 2015 demonetisation drive. He also did nothing when labourers and migrant workers were dying on the roads after they were forced to flee their temporary homes during the 2020 lockdown.

Now, he is doing nothing when people are dying outside hospitals due to a lack of hospital beds and the shortage of oxygen cylinders and Covid-19 vaccines in the country. In the middle of a pandemic, the PM, however, is busy campaigning for the next elections.

—Jubel D'Cruz
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Corona Virus: Some Vital Lessons

Corona virus has put the world almost upside down, so much so that the humans are at a terrible loss to locate what is really happening to them. The untold miseries, brutal deaths and the lingering ramifications it has inflicted upon human beings, world over, is beyond the scope of being described in words. It has been the most multi-layered and alarming pandemic the human memories can ever recollect. Without a doubt, it leaves wide-ranging vital lessons for the human civilization, as well.

First and foremost, human beings are accustomed to make difference among persons, in the name of gender, language, age, race, caste, class, colour, creed, faith, ideology, culture, food habits, dress habits, social mores, nationality, and the like. There are considerations of high and low, white and black, great and small, right and wrong, familiar and strange and ours and theirs, to the dismay of all sense of logic.

But, corona virus made absolutely no difference as regards any of the above-mentioned characteristics of the human society, rightly so. It took the weak ones into its grip, irrespective of their various affiliations, whereas the strong ones were spared. Those who failed in their fight against it as well as those who won the game after untold struggles included all categories, too.

Well, too much of 'discrimination and division' has been brutally done, one to another, ever since the inception of the human civilization. For that reason, the humans require 'masking' their faces today, shamefully so. The agonizing saga of the world-wide suffering and death due to corona is an undeniable invitation for the humans to 'unmask' themselves and see their 'true face' in the 'mirror'.

Secondly, even after civilizations after civilizations have gone by, the humans

are yet to learn the art of managing its own 'waste'. In spite of the fact that scientific and technological development has devised lots of ways and means of disposing the natural and non-natural fitter away, human beings, by and large, has a long way to go before they can claim a mastery over the art, for oneself and for others.

Corona virus finds its way through 'unclean ways', patently so. Therefore, the corona restrictions and protocols demand even 'double-masking' the face, along with physical distancing, keeping the hands, clothes, house, premises, roads, markets and public places clean always. No doubt, abiding by these procedures is indeed a very bothersome task, in view of keeping corona off.



**Fr. Dr. M. D.
Thomas**

'Cleanliness is next to godliness', thus goes the golden dictum. The divine cannot be accessed, but through clean ways, not only of the body, but also of mind, heart and spirit. The code of behavior of the

corona times call for pursuing the 'sacred' through external and internal cleanliness as human beings, in the day-to-day contexts of life. Will human beings, especially in India, learn a lesson from corona virus?

Thirdly, as per the popular saying, 'God created the humans and human beings created God'. That is what religious traditions are all about. Religious systems have devised huge volumes of doctrines, rituals and stipulations, in view of entering and entertaining the abode of God. But, do they guarantee changing the mind of God in any way, so as to have their will to run the show of life in the world?

The current times of the pandemic is characterized very much by the lock down of most of the social collections, including that of the places of worship, manifestly so. Though some of the religious compulsions are substituted by virtual platforms, it is an occasion to

realize the futility of much of what has been done so scrupulously in the name of religion and to give a realistic and meaningful twist to it.

What really makes sense in the purview of religion, faith and God is to consider 'God the Creator of all' and to entertain a 'fraternal frame of mind towards all human beings', along with other beings. Such a realization would necessarily follow 'reaching out to one's fellow men and women', in all possible ways, in the 'spirit of loving service'. This is exactly what is expected of 'good sense', during the corona times.

Fourthly, in the name of development and modernization, the humans have explored the 'space' and have landed in the Moon and the Mars. Powerful countries are never tired of boasting off their achievements. Besides, governments, world over, are obsessed by sheer 'vain glory' and go for monuments, like statues, bullet trains, parliament and assembly houses, high profile corridors, palaces and fashionable amenities.

Corona virus is posing a major challenge before the 'self-idolatrous rulers' as regards their dullness in planning, prioritizing and implementing what is expected of the dire needs of life. Corona times are an 'all-sided mirror' for the 'ruling cartoons' to really 'realize' the need of prioritizing 'oxygen, ventilators, beds, hospitals, ambulances and other health-related facilities, along with cremation and burial grounds.

'Development' has to be understood in the right perspective. All-round development of the family, community, country and society is development in the right sense of the term, too. Development of a few is not development either. Food, clothing, shelter, education, health and wellbeing of one and all, of the brow-beaten in special, has to be within the priority of caretakers in the society, in their own area of action.

Fifthly, ever since nation states emerged, weapons became a major concern, world over. Of late in special, almost all the countries in the world invest high volumes of resources on the most powerful weapons, including

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(Contd.. from p. 8)

nuclear weapons, in view of finding themselves safe and secure. But, most unfortunately, even the least of the weapons has been absolutely of any use to any country in fighting enemy of corona virus.

To be sure, weapons can never keep the nations secure against the other. 'Mutual good will, trust, friendship and co-operation only can help nations exist safe and sound' and grow together in larger and higher proportions. The Creator has distributed his resources across the nations. Therefore, however powerful a country may become, it will need other countries, in some way or other, complementarily so.

Besides, the idea of 'nationality' as a 'one-against-the-other' entity is nothing more than nonsense. Nationhood is a very important element in the larger society. It furnishes a sense of belonging. It facilitates development, too. All the same, citizenship is not like 'islands' that are cut off from each other. All human beings are 'citizens of the global society' of the humans. Corona virus reinstates this truth.

Sixthly, the human civilization has made several strides in its journey of growth over the millennia. But, has the human society been really growing up? The reservoir of idea, thinking, research and knowledge has made a miraculous revolution in life of the humans. Education has made incredible uprising, too. But, have human beings and their society become better? This is a question that has no satisfactory answer.

As a matter of fact, human beings grew more individualistic and selfish. Families, institutions, communities, nations, regions and organizations, on the whole, became self-absorbed and exclusive, too. Having a 'common origin, common existence and common destiny', along with 'sharing the resources' with one another, has not become a culture of the humans. The 'social sense' of the humans has shrunk.

How could the humans grow to its full stature as 'social beings'? The humans are endowed with the 'divine image', which has to be the seat of 'human conscience'. The 'likeness of the sacred' has to be reflected in one's own self and in the other, simultaneously. In other words, 'faith in one's own self, in the other and in God' together has to do the necessary homework for 'socially better times' ahead.

Corona virus is a pulsating 'mirror' for the humans. Amidst all the trials and tribulations being caused by the corona virus, human beings have to look into that mirror intently and learn some of the basic lessons of life. It is a hard test. Human beings have to afford to pass with distinction, in view of a 'humane and social' society ahead, definitely so. To win corona over is not merely to survive it, but to make a 'cross over' to a 'new earth and heaven' for the humans to have their being, in a collective and qualitative sense.

The author is Director of Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies, New Delhi, and has been committed to cross-cultural perspectives, interfaith relations, social ethics, constitutional values, national integration and social harmony, for the past over 40 years. He contributes to the above cause through lectures, articles, video messages, conferences, social interactions, views at TV channels, and the like. He could be contacted at 'mdthomas53@gmail.com'.

Matrimonial Proposals

Proposals are invited for

Mangalorean RC Bachelor, 31 years belonging to a highly educated and very affluent family with interests in healthcare, agriculture and many other sectors, Tall, Fair, Handsome, Holding Doctorate, managing the family business in Karnataka State. (REF:MM104)

40 years Mangalorean bachelor doctor (Ph.D) Ht. 6' Wt. 75 kg Fair., Handsome. no bad habits. High affluent society well connected. Belongs to highly placed business family in Mumbai (REF:MM103)

28 years Mangalorean spinster C.A., Ht. 5'6" Wt. 49 kg Fair., Beautiful. well cultured. Affluent society. Belongs to established business family in Maharashtra (REF:MM105)

28 year Mumbai based Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Profession : a Banker (REF:MM109)

Vasai based affluent business family R.C. East Indian Spinster, 33, years Ht. 5' 2", very beautiful and pretty. MS General Surgeon, Doctor by profession. (REF:106)

Mumbai based now in Dubai Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, 33 years, Ht. 5' 7", Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS, profession: a Senior Merchandiser (REF:107)

Mumbai based Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, 29 years, Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., C.A., Holding a managerial post. (REF:108)

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Unemployment, Society's Greatest Scourge

"BBC o ho BBC!

BBC stands for many, many things!

BBC o ho BBC!

Bombay Bekaar-khao Company!"

That was a ditty some of us picked up when growing up as kids, without of course then knowing what it all meant! In time I was to realize the connection between the words of these lines to unemployment (and not to the British broadcasting giant!) which I presume was as acute then as it is today and were put together as a hint for the unemployed though able-bodied local bully who had a wife, kids, and a secure roof over his head, not to speak of the luxuries of life that came his way as dowry! If truth be told, the bumpkin never, ever worked for a living!

Unemployment - biggest evil of every age!

It is a well researched fact that unemployment is connected with negative health consequences, leading as it does to stress-related illnesses and a lowered self-esteem as a result of unmet psychological and social needs in such contexts as: time structure, social interaction, personal goals, status, identity and societal recognition on the one hand and uncertainty about the future, financial instability, and loss of vocational identity on the other. This explains why questions of coping become key issues.

Jane Addams of *Hull-House* fame and the first American woman Nobel Laureate [*Peace Prize 1931*] says: "Of all the aspects of social misery nothing is as heartbreaking as unemployment." Incidentally, the ugly head of unemployment has three dimensions that need to be taken serious note of: the *individual* dimension, the *family* dimension, and the *social* dimension.

Individual dimension –

This dimension concerns two types of *individuals*, the first being the one who sincerely wants to work but can't find suitable employment, and the other, the one who lacks the will to work. However, this dimension is often overshadowed by the family dimension as we shall see below.

Family dimension –

Strangely, the weirdness of the Indian psyche whereby certain men are virtually encouraged, even goaded on, to refrain from making due effort to earn their livelihood is something not many understand. Amazingly, certain communities in India consider a boy-child born after the birth of three girl-children as 'lucky', the truth of whether he is lucky for himself or for the family being there for all to see! As for a girl born after the birth of three male-children? *Unlucky* to say the least! And boy! Such a girl is made to experience that supposed 'un-luck' rather rudely.

Considered a bad omen, she is ill-treated to the core, often denied the benefits enjoyed by the male children, deprived of basic nourishment and education, even as she is considered a workhorse of sorts, a maid to boot.

Now, take the case of Simon who was born after the birth of three daughters. Spoilt to the hilt by his mother, sisters and aunts, to the point of letting him get away with just about anything – not excluding *murder!* - he took school for granted, passing through each standard merely because of the teachers' familiarity with the family through an aunt who was a teacher. As luck would have it, he managed to pass through his SSC Boards by the skin of his teeth. Piquantly, hardly had he begun to show signs of feeling like the UK's Prince of Wales, there came along three younger sisters who were made to treat him like a king of sorts by the parents. So while Simon got in

and out of jobs, just for the fun of it as he'd himself say, his elder sisters would pamper him silly, unabashedly calling him *baba* even in adulthood, and not letting him exert or strain himself, even as the younger ones literally hung on to every senseless word he blabbered and doing his bidding like there was to be no tomorrow! If at all an elder sister complained over anything concerning him, the parents would tersely tell all the three elder girls: "He is your only brother – don't grumble! If you get married and lose your husband you can easily get a replacement! But if you lose a brother, you can never get another!" As for the younger daughters: "He is your elder brother – you must do whatever he tells you."

In time *baba*-Simon married a working girl brought to him by an elder sister while he himself had no qualms about remaining jobless, and had babies which were also, in time, looked after by an elder sister, while yet another sister would buy him the latest cameras [which he has never used till date!], mobiles, smartphones, tablets and what not, each of which cost a fortune! For his part, he'd whine about others not knowing how to run a business or bring up children, even if such whining meant biting the hand that fed him! Finally, when an elder sister, on retirement started a small enterprise in his name, it was she who would spend her retirement going over to the office regularly to work her butt off in order to keep *baba's chool* a burning while he stayed home practically throughout the month with an excuse of some health problem or the other. For her part, she'd often pretend her 'boss' was so kind-hearted as to permit her to report to work a little late on certain days! One does hear of dolls' house played by siblings being limited to 'bride-&-groom' and 'mama-dada'; but playing boss-and-employee was



by Ladislaus
Louis D'Souza

(Contd.. on p. 11)

(Contd.. from p. 10)

something novel! And as though to justify her action, she once cited her parents extracting a promise from her in a dream to look after their 'baba' – not to mention is wife and family! Parental glorification of unemployment at its best!

Add to this the tradition of family property going only to the only son of the family and you know how deeply ingrained is the BBC culture in *baba's* psyche. Needless to say, unless the parents of the family grow out of the cocoon of their psyche, 'baba' will remain a permanent member of BBC, adding in no mean measure to the rate of unemployment prevalent in the country!

Another case that merits analysis is that of Lavira and Regno. Marriage for him came with a 1-bedroom flat as dowry. Within a year of the grand affair that the wedding was, Regno lost interest in working and casually gave up his job while Lavira continued working and even bore Regno two sons. As if in keeping with the sentiments of the Biblical saying, "Like mother, like daughter" (Ezek 16:44), both sons took after their father. While the elder son joined the BBC after having worked for less than a year after graduation, the younger son simply refused to study beyond Standard X, embracing with open arms the prospects of remaining jobless the rest of his life with the BBC! Post retirement, Lavira soon got a job but Regno dear prevented her from taking up the offer on the grounds that if she continued in employment, the sons would refuse to work. To cut a long story short, the family is now a jobless foursome, surviving on Lavira's pension.

Social dimension - The famous counsel given by Polonius to his son, Laertes, in Act-I, Scene-III of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, before embarking on a visit to Paris, was: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be; for loan oft loses both itself and friend." Apparently, Delize was all out to prove the veracity of the opposite of this

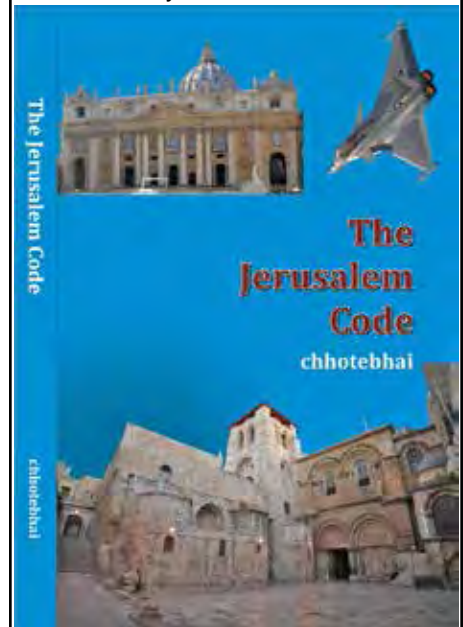
phrase as is evident from the fact that after the birth of three children, hubby Carlos decided to opt for voluntary retirement, confident that the sum that would come in following such a step was steep enough to last a life time of growth for the entire family. But the lavish kind of lifestyle that the family led ensured that the kitty was soon empty, necessitating the distress sale of their 2 bedroom apartment, with her shifting to her mother's with the kids and he into a wood-and-tin room a few miles away. It wasn't long before penury ensured that "borrowing" was the name of the new game Delize had taken to playing with gusto! And the reasons for the act cut across all sense of reasoning – from illness, no groceries, short of onions and potatoes, school fees to be paid, bills pending, to booze to be bought for Mister Bekaar-khao's birthday party, with reasons for not returning ranging from 'no money has come in yet, so how am I to return your money?' to 'Arrey - come on yaar! Where am I running away and where is your money running away?' 'But your borrowings have totalled 97,000 rupees already!' 'Only? What is 97,000 rupees, men! You give me another three thousand and round off the figure to one lac. And I'll give you the full amount when my Petula sends me money for looking after her children whom I'm feeding *fukat* here!' No prizes for guessing that Petula herself came in with a begging bowl for family alms.

The remedy...

Can one imagine the effect of such an attitude on society per se? Time, society in general woke up from its slumber and the Church, for her part, fully seized of the situation, voiced its concern from the Pulpit in an attempt to change mind sets and to thus ensure that no Catholic per se remains unemployed, adding to the misery of family and society alike but, rather, strives for probity in family and public life alike! Time indeed families, unlike their uneducated counterparts of yesteryears, woke up to honest reasoning being the only deciding factor in ridding both family and country life of the scourge of unemployment.

The Jerusalem Code

by Chhotebhai



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The Perfect Son.

A: I have the perfect son.

B: Does he smoke?

A: No, he doesn't.

B: Does he drink whiskey?

A: No, he doesn't.

B: Does he ever come home late?

A: No, he doesn't.

B: I guess you really do have the perfect son. How old is he?

A: He will be six months old next Wednesday.

Girl: You would be a good dancer except for two things.

Boy: What are the two things?

Girl: Your feet.

A family of mice were surprised by a big cat. Father Mouse jumped and and said, "Bow-wow!" The cat ran away. "What was that, Father?" asked Baby Mouse. "Well, son, that's why it's important to learn a second language."

A man goes to the doctor and says, "Doctor, wherever I touch, it hurts." The doctor asks, "What do you mean?"

The man says, "When I touch my shoulder, it really hurts. If I touch my knee - OUCH! When I touch my forehead, it really, really hurts."

The doctor says, "I know what's wrong with you - you've broken your finger!"

Patient: Doctor, I have a pain in my eye whenever I drink tea.

Doctor: Take the spoon out of the mug before you drink

Two boys were arguing when the teacher entered the room.

The teacher says, "Why are you arguing?"

One boy answers, "We found a ten dollar bill and decided to give it to whoever tells the biggest lie."

"You should be ashamed of yourselves," said the teacher, "When I was your age I didn't even know what a lie was."



The boys gave the ten dollars to the teacher.

A: Just look at that young person with the short hair and blue jeans. Is it a boy or a girl?

B: It's a girl. She's my daughter.

A: Oh, I'm sorry, sir. I didn't know that you were her father.

B: I'm not. I'm her mother.

Mother: "Did you enjoy your first day at school?"

Girl: "First day? Do you mean I have to go back tomorrow?"

Headmaster: I've had complaints about you, Johnny, from all your teachers. What have you been doing?

Johnny: Nothing, sir.

Headmaster: Exactly.

A: Hey, man! Please call me a taxi.

B: Yes, sir. You are a taxi.

A: Why are you crying?

B: The elephant is dead.

A: Was he your pet?

B: No, but I'm the one who must dig his grave.

A teenage girl had been talking on the phone for about half an hour, and then she hung up.

"Wow!," said her father, "That was short. You usually talk for two hours. What happened?"

"Wrong number," replied the girl.

PUPIL: "Would you punish me for something I didn't do?"

TEACHER: "Of course not."

PUPIL: "Good, because I haven't done my homework."

A teacher asked a student to write 55. Student asked: How?

Teacher: Write 5 and beside it another 5!

The student wrote 5 and stopped. teacher: What are you waiting for? student: I don't know which side to write the other 5!

Little Johnny: Teacher, can I go to the bathroom?

Teacher: Little Johnny, MAY I go to the bathroom?

Little Johnny: But I asked first!

Son: Dad, what is an idiot?

Dad: An idiot is a person who tries to explain his ideas in such a strange and long way that another person who is listening to him can't understand him. Do you understand me?

Son: No.

Man: I could go to the end of the world for you.

Woman: Yes, but would you stay there?

Man: I offer you myself.

Woman: I am sorry I never accept cheap gifts.

Man: I want to share everything with you.

Woman: Let's start from your bank account.

The real estate agent says, "I have a good, cheap apartment for you."

The man replies, "By the week or by the month?"

The agent answers, "By the garbage dump.."

Customer: Excuse me, but I saw your thumb in my soup when you were carrying it.

Waitress: Oh, that's okay. The soup isn't hot.

Customer in a restaurant: I would like to have a plate of rice and a piece of fried chicken and a cup of coffee

Waitress : Is it enough Sir?

Customer : What? Do you think I can't buy more?

Catholic Church and COVID!

Vatican News announced on 18 May 2021, that Pope Francis had made an initial donation of 20,000 euros towards the Shanti Ashram Women's Health and Social Centre in Coimbatore, TN. India.

Earlier on 06 May he sent a message to Cardinal Oswald Gracias expressing his solidarity and closeness to the people of India ravaged by the second wave of COVID-19! – "I think also of the many Doctors, Nurses, Hospital workers, ambulance drivers, and others for their works of charity!" (It was sadly announced on 17 May that 160 Catholic priests including 3 Bishops had succumbed to COVID-19 in the past 5 weeks globally - an average of 4 per day, with 24 Jesuits topping the list!)

According to Cardinal Gracias, the Catholic Church has made available some 60,000 of its Healthcare facilities. More than 50,000 Nuns, a thousand of them qualified-Doctors work at these Centers! The work is supervised through Caritas India, and the Catholic Health Association of India – a network of over 3,000 Centers focusing largely in Rural areas battling TB, Leprosy, AIDS, and people with Disabilities!

Earlier, Pope Francis launched a, "World Rosary Marathon" on 01 May 2021, along with Global Marian Shrines – 14 May, Our Lady of Good Health, India, with the theme, "Prayer for Scientists and Medical Research Institutes"!

Meanwhile, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, the National Council of Churches of India, and the Evangelical Fellowship of India, have observed the First Friday of the Month, as a Day of prayer, fasting and healing, for an end to the COVID -19 pandemic. ----- #

—Dr. Trevor Colaso, Vienna, VA. USA.

NOVENA PRAYER TO ST JUDE

O Holy St Jude, apostle and martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power, come to my assistance. Help me in my present urgent petition, in return I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked.



Three Our Father, three Hail Mary and three Glory be.
St Jude pray for us and all who invoke your aid. Amen.

(Publication must be promised.)

(This Novena has never been known to fail. This Novena must be said for 9 consecutive days.)

— Gracy M., Mulund

How to make curry leaves chutney



1. Wash and dry 1 cup curry leaves.
2. Heat oil in a frying pan.
3. Then add 1 teaspoon mustard seeds and 1 teaspoon urad dal to it.
4. Allow the mustard seeds to crackle and the urad dal to get a reddish brown.
5. Now add one teaspoon cumin seeds. Then add 1-inch piece chopped ginger, 2 green chillies and a pinch of asafoetida (hing).
6. Now add the curry leaves stirring all the time, till they become slightly crisp (Don't brown them as this would make the chutney bitter).
7. When it cools down, in a grinder add the curry leaves mixture with some salt and water.
8. Also add ½ cup grated coconut and 1 tablespoon roasted chana dal to it.
9. Grind to a smooth paste.
10. Pour it in a serving bowl and serve it with upma, pakora, idli, dosa, medu vada or any other snack.



by Jubel D'Cruz

Thanksgiving

Thanks to Divine Mercy, Sacred Heart of Jesus, O.L. Of Perpetual Succor and Infant Jesus for the kind favours granted

—Mrs Inacine M. Fernandes,
New Delhi



An Individual or A 'Migrant'?

“**E**verything can be taken from a man but ... the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.” Dr. Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*.

The eminent psychologist Dr. Viktor Frankl may have been one of many Jewish prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp. The inmates were stripped of their clothes, of their dignity. They were tortured and compelled to do hard labour but they could not be stripped of their individuality. The Nazis tried to de-humanise their hapless captives but could not break their spirit.

The term ‘migrants’, to me, is derogatory. It conjures up an image of bottles being manufactured on an assembly line. Every bottle must conform to a laid down standard or out it goes into the trash heap. Are human beings assembly line products? Are we clones of each other? Do all the people in the same economic or social strata live in an identical fashion?

The answer is an emphatic NO. God has created each of us in a different mould. It is mind boggling to realize that no two individuals in a world with billions of inhabitants have exactly the same faces, not even identical twins. To illustrate our individuality further, the left side of any face varies in minor ways from the right side. We differ in shape, colour and height. There are optimists, pessimists and those somewhere in the middle. Some are strong while others are weak. A loving God values each of us regardless as persons with a free will and a choice on how to react to similar outward circumstances. We throw some of our

fellow temporary passengers on earth into the dustbin of Rejection.



The term ‘migrants’ has a one-up, one-down; “I am superior, you are inferior” connotation. We should guard against thinking of those who are less privileged than us, because they are less educated or poorer, as belonging to ‘the migrants’, to an assembly line of human beings. Many of us have made our home in Mumbai though our ancestors hailed from another part of the country. So technically we too are ‘migrants’!



by *Monica Fernandes*

A couple would come to my doorstep selling fruits. They were very proud to inform me that though they were illiterate, by dint of hard work, they educated their three sons who are now teachers in the village. In contrast, my part time help Jyoti had a husband who wasted her hard earned earnings on liquor and would regularly beat up his family. Those unfortunates trudging hundreds of miles to their village were contributing members of society – plumbers, electricians, construction workers and not faceless human beings. It was a tragedy of gigantic proportions as wave after wave of human beings braved the hot sun because they had lost their jobs during the pandemic.

Jesus’ love is all encompassing including the rich and the poor, from different countries. He made no distinctions. Why then are we wary of those different from us? This is evident from our remarks such as, “Mark hails from X state. The saying goes that you should trust a snake but not someone who comes from X.” Needless X does not come from the State our ancestors come from. This displays a small minded, bigoted attitude.

Mother Teresa and Baba Amte took pity on lepers, the sick, the destitute and the dying – those lovingly crafted by God but rejected by their own. These people were in need of help, medicine, kind words and above all, love to restore their dignity.

History has shown groups of self serving men and women treating people differently. They may appear to succeed in the short run but eventually lose out. Stalin’s totalitarian regime in Russia in the 1940’s arrested many men and forced them to do hard labour in the forbidding Siberian terrain. One such person was Alexander Solzhenitsyn, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973. His book ‘One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovic’ illustrates that while all the prisoners seem identical during their daily trudge over snow covered terrain, they were individuals with a common purpose, viz. their own survival and that of the group. There was the expert mason, Ivan Denisovic also called Sukhov, the respected team leader Tiurin, hard-working Buinovskiy and lazy Fetiukov.

Homebound as we are, do we prefer to sit pretty watching the aptly named idiot box when suffering surrounds us? Do we spare a few kind words for others, contribute towards a worthy cause, volunteer in whatever way possible? Are we like the three monkeys who see, speak and hear no suffering and discrimination or do we have the will to do our bit by using our God given talents and resources?

The Holy Bible In True Perspective

The Word of God in the Words of Men

“For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers against the world rulers of this present dark-

The Roman Catholic priest I knew would read the Bible, not only in the solitude of his room, or in the quiet of the chapel, but anywhere and everywhere he found the time to. It was part of his routine life. His devotion to the Bible became a part of my family's collective legacy.

His faithfulness dignified us. The Bible is the beacon of spiritual light. It is the only open book in the world for all people to read and discover, to delve into documented evidence in its writings – and to feel free to talk about minor or major topics. The Bible wraps in its quilt of many colors, visions, hopes, peace and comfort.

Mobilizing the faithful behind the Bible has never been an issue. It is a popular devotion with Christians to read the Holy Book and meditate on its many lessons for life, prayer and courage. To spread the Word of God is a solemn commission and a right. In many corners of the world the Bible is banned, her followers persecuted and denounced – yet, nothing anyone does can challenge the sheer grit of Christians to uphold the values and mission to preach the Gospels and ‘Gift’ the Good News.

The right to the pursuit of trust and freedom of faith in the Bible is God's unique gift to humanity. The Bible has all the answers if we look for them. One of the highlights in Roman Catholic devotion to Bible values is to discover the nature of being human.

In Genesis 1:26 the Good Book tells us about the nature of human beings; “Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the



earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon earth.” (Genesis 1:27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.



BY MELVYN BROWN

As personal beings we can have fellowship with God. We have His permission to procreate and populate the earth, and to have care for nature. Read Genesis 1:28; 2:15. We have been told that humankind cannot understand the enigma of our existence. Although we are mortal, yet we want to live.

In the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews we find an answer to the enigma. “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Heb. 2:14,15) “And deliver all those who through fear and death were subject to lifelong bondage.”

In the Bible we were taught that Satan is the symbol of evil. We must depend on God's power to defeat the evil one,

ness against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:12).

The word Satan in the dictionary means, the Devil, and in Hebrews ‘adversary’. The Holy Bible informs us that when God created the world, it was good. (Genesis 1:25) Roman Catholics and Christians still believe that the world is very good.

The Bible is the Word of God and plays a dynamic role in Catholic devotions; to read a chapter or passage daily; to meditate on the life and passion of Our Lord; to gain an insight on hope; to win over odds; to strengthen the faith and to nourish the soul with confidence in the words of Holy Scripture.

What does the Bible think of itself? Read Timothy 3:15,16. Also, refer to Psalm 19:7. We use the Bible for baptism, for marriage, sermons, blessings and anniversaries, for times of sorrow, happiness, praise, gratitude, courage, peace and death.

The Holy Bible is the Book Divine, the Armor of God, the companion and comfort for all humankind.



improve, it will keep going. I would rather die here very shortly if things go on as it is." Fr. Stan went on to add, "I was taken to JJ hospital and there were a lot of people but I had no opportunity to explain what I should be given. There are some medicines which the jail authorities gave me, but my deterioration is more powerful than the tablets they are giving me,"

Earlier the High Court was provided with a Medical Report of Fr Stan Swamy prepared by the JJ hospital. This report was submitted pursuant to the Court's order of 19 May, wherein the Dean of JJ Hospital had been asked to constitute a committee and to examine Fr Stan's health condition on 20 May. However, Fr Stan's advocate, Senior Counsel Mihir Desai was not given a copy of the Report; therefore it had to be read out in the Court. The report mentioned that the petitioner's poor health largely had to do with age. The committee did not find any neurological defect or psychopathology. Some of the ailments mentioned in the report include the imbalance of limbs, lumbo sacral degeneration and some degree of hearing loss. It recommended urgent surgical assistance for the hearing loss and physical assistance owing to his general weakness. It also said that he required physical assistance in the form of a walking stick or a wheelchair. However, his overall condition, his pulse rate etc., were stable and Swamy was "responsive" and "cooperative". Fr. Stan's personal sharing to the High Court of his deteriorating health condition in fact thrashes this report.

The Court also informed Fr Stan that it was willing to issue orders to transfer him to JJ Hospital or any other hospital of his choice for the general treatment of his health, which was largely deteriorating due to his advanced age; the response of Fr Stan was very clear, *"The only thing I request is to consider for interim bail. I have been in deteriorating condition. I would rather be in Ranchi. I do not think any of that (hospitalisation) is going to help."* He also told the Court that his co-accused were worried about his health, and

(Contd.. on p. 17)

It was quintessential Stan! In a manner which has come to characterize him Jesuit Fr Stan Swamy told the Bombay High Court during a hearing on 21 May 2021, *"I want to go to Ranchi to be with my friends....Whatever happens to me I would like to be with my own"*

Fr Stan who turned eight-four a few weeks ago on 26 April, has been lodged in the Talaja jail since his arrest on 8 October 2020. He was the last one of sixteen to be arrested, in the Elgar Parishad/Bhima-Koregaon conspiracy case. That he had nothing to do with either is clear as daylight! His only 'crime' over the years, much to the chagrin of powerful, vested interests, was his total identification with the Adivasis and of his accompanying them, in their quest for a life based on justice, dignity and equity. So naturally, when Fr Stan says, *"Whatever happens to me I would like to be with my own"*- he is making a very powerful statement of his life and mission.

Fr. Stan had approached the High Court some time ago challenging a Special Court's decision of March this year. In the order, the Special Court had rejected his bail sought on medical grounds as well as on merits. On 21 May, Fr Stan was produced before a Division Bench of Justices S J Kathawalla and S P Tavade of the Bombay High Court, via video-conferencing from the Talaja prison, where he is lodged as an undertrial. Some

days ago in a telephonic conversation with a fellow-Jesuit he spoke about his deteriorating health condition. Ever since, plenty of efforts were being made from several quarters, to ensure that he receives the proper and adequate medical treatment and if needed, also hospitalisation.

Fr Stan reiterated this position telling the court that he had suffered much during his stay in prison, *"I was brought here eight months ago. When I came to Talaja, my full system, my body was still very functional. But during these eight months, I have gone through a steady regression of all bodily functions. Eight months ago I could have a bath by myself and also do*

some writing by myself. But these are disappearing one after another. Talaja jail brought me to a situation where I can neither write nor go for a walk by myself or even eat. I am not able to meet this demand. Eating has become a real difficulty; someone has to feed me with a spoon." He also spoke about the dire conditions in Talaja jail that prompted prisoners to help each other in the face of acute economic deprivation.

The Court then asked Fr Stan if he wished to be admitted to the Government-run J J Hospital for a *"general treatment in order to improve his overall health."* His response was a categorical 'no' saying, *"I have been there twice. I am not for being hospitalised in JJ Hospital. What medicines will that hospital give me? It will not*



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ

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he believed that his condition would gradually worsen if he was kept back at Taloja Jail or any other hospital.

Advocate Desai was also given an opportunity to speak with Fr Stan during the video-conference. He then urged the court to adjourn the hearing for a week to permit him to speak again with Swamy and to convince him to get admitted to a hospital. *"Since he is a priest, he feels 'forgive them, for they do not know what that do'... This is the approach he has taken,"* The High Court granted him the liberty to approach it again if Fr Stan changed his mind about hospital admission. The bench said, *"Someone must have told him, or he himself is an intelligent man. He knows his problems are only age related. That's why he is pressing only for interim bail says won't take hospital admission."*

The High Court in the meanwhile has directed the authorities of the Taloja prison to strictly comply with all the recommendations made by J J Hospital in providing the necessary health facilities and treatment to Fr. Swamy while in prison. The Court finally posted the matter for hearing on June 7, 2021.

The drama that unfolded in the virtual court hearing was vintage Fr Stan: someone who is very clear about his choices: that he is innocent, that he should be given the bail to go back to Ranchi and to be with his people; if not, he would rather continue to be in Taloja jail identifying himself with his fellow-prisoners and even die there! Stan takes a Stand! However, whilst respecting his opinion, there are many others, who are genuinely concerned about his deteriorating health and would like him to be hospitalized as soon as possible. In this Ignatian Year: for Jesuit Fr Stan and for several others, his reality today is indeed a cannonball moment!

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

'Ascension of Christ' Focus of Christianity

The new testament of the Bible elaborates, Jesus Christ lived his "second life" for 40 days - between resurrection and ascension. On the 40th day, in the presence of his disciples, he simply rose towards the sky until his body disappeared into the heavens. Then two white-robed strangers – assumed by tradition to be angels – suddenly appeared and assured the disciples that Jesus the Christ, would one day return in exactly the same way by which he had departed. The Catholic Church year after year, celebrates the feast of the 'Ascension' 40 days after Easter Sunday. The Catholic Church also celebrates an analogous feast with reference to Mary, the mother of Jesus. This feast is referred to as the 'Assumption' to signify the fact that whereas Jesus ascended into heaven by his own power, Mary was raised to heaven – or "assumed into heaven" – by the power of God.

The Ascension of Jesus and the Assumption of Mary are both dogmas of the Catholic Church – as well as of several other Christian denominations. Imagine – Christians give a great deal of attention to the festival of the birth of Christ as Christmas. But the birth of Christ was nothing unusual. There were billions of babies born before Christ and billions who have been born since. By contrast, the Ascension of Christ as the Resurrection, are indeed unusual. Certainly it's not common for people to rise from the dead and ascend into heaven either before Christ or after. And yet, while it is just about impossible for a Christian to live through the 25th of December without being aware that it is Christmas Day; it is certainly possible for a Christian to live through the 40th day after Easter without even being aware

that it is the Feast of the Ascension. In fact, out of the over one billion Roman Catholics in the world today, how many are aware that the Feast of the Ascension was celebrated by the church, this week. In all probability the day would have been just another day in their lives. Devout Catholics today may still believe in these doctrines, but the majority probably do not give these issues real attention. Which is faulty, because if these doctrines are indeed true, then they are of paramount importance to Christians of all categories.



Catholics have been brought up from an early age in the teachings of the Catholic faith. We may not be experts on Scripture, but we are rational human beings and Scriptural expertise is not so essential as until the 1960s, ordinary Catholics could not really study or read the bible.

The Apostles' Creed is traditionally ascribed to the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. According to one legendary tradition, it was jointly written by the twelve apostles, prior to their departure from Jerusalem, each apostle contributing an individual article, making twelve articles in all. The tradition does not accord individual authorship of each article to a specific apostle.

In many instances it is clear that the Catholic Church marks various feasts practically on a daily basis and these are celebrated by one group devoted to that particular personality or episode. The classification of the feasts by the church is hardly known by ordinary followers. The vital feasts such as Resurrection, Ascension and a few others really deserve awareness and importance as perceived by the faith. This needs to be suitably addressed and rationalised.

- **Compiled : Ivan Saldanha Shet.**

What is the role of the Catholic priests in lockdown days?
Many have done a lot of social service to the unfortunate migrants and other poor groups.
According to one report we have lost 170 priests in the country. But as spiritual gurus, where are they?

The General Absolution Granted By Pope?

During the second lahar of Corona, a trustee of a private hospital asked me in writing: "Father, there are many Catholics dying due to Corona these days in our hospital. I do not see any priests coming to pray or give the Sacrament of the sick. Why is it so? Will you come? माझी आपणा-ला विनंती आहे जे भाविक मरणाच्या वाटेवर आहेत त्यांना (सातेसाव) संस्कार आपण किंवा आपले सहकारी धर्मगुरू यांनी द्यावा, ही विनंती. धर्मगुरूंना चर्चमधून आणणे व परत पोचवणे व त्यांना पी.पी.ई किट पुरवणे, ही जबाबदारी मी घेतो. सहकार्याची अपेक्षा. I am ready to arrange a vehicle, PPE kit and all the safety measures we provide for doctors."

Well, I was inclined to oblige but I was told by authorities that there is no need of priests to endanger themselves by going in the Covid wards and in turn spread the virus in their own communities. The Pope has exempted the faithful from receiving the sacraments during these days of Corona! *Addressing the situation of those who are dying from the virus in isolation, without aid of the sacraments, the decree says, the Church is praying for such people, and "entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints, grants those faithful a Plenary Indulgence at the point of death."*

Unconvinced I began to discuss the question with my colleagues. I was told, "Faithful and loyal to the Magisterium of the Church, I would say you just have to stay put where you are appointed and help in whatever manner those who are around me... We do not have to run all over the world to save people. God is looking after that. We are to cooperate with God in the work

of salvation. Let us obey the Holy Father who has given "general absolution" to all faithful from all obligations of the Sacraments, knowing fully well where lies our salvation, even in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Let us not insult our Holy Father who has, after serious reflection, given the general absolution from not being able to receive sacraments during these months of pandemic."

How does this loyalty to the Church sound?

The General Absolution?

What is the role of Catholic priests in lockdown days? Many have done a lot of social service to the unfortunate migrants and other poor groups. Many have created places ready to accommodate covid-19 infected people. According to one report we have lost 170 priests in the country. But how many of them were infected by direct service to Corona patients?



In fact many may have died of other ailments aggravated by Corona, or may just be by fear! As spiritual gurus, where are they seen?

The abovementioned decree raises many questions in minds of social workers like the hospital trustee-mahaashay. First of all why has the Pope to give absolution? Is it a sin not receive Sacraments in the present crucial conditions when priests themselves are not available to administer them! By using the word, 'absolution' does he not inculcate a guilt feeling in the hearts of the faithful? In fact there is no question of absolution whether general or particular!

The Pope has dispensed the faithful from receiving Sacraments and priests from administering them in pandemic days! Many faithful have significant fear or anxiety of becoming ill by being at Mass. To such persons their parish priest may grant a dispensation as per canon 1245 of the Code of Canon Law. On 20 March during at mass Pope Francis explained so tenderly that the faithful can confess their sins directly to God, ask for pardon and experience God's loving forgiveness. Pope further said: "Return to your father who is waiting for you. The God of tenderness will heal us; he will heal us of the many, many wounds of life and the many ugly things we have done. Each of us has our own!" He advised Catholics that ... you can make your own direct confession to God if you find yourselves in a situation where you cannot go to confession.

That's all very good but this *Patre cordis* (Father's love) must be shown to the faithful concretely at these fearful and tragic moments! The pastoral need is 'to accompany them'. There is a need for priests to take the risk in going to give sacraments in Hospitals. Do we not expect doctors, nurses and all the health staff daily to go into wards with infected patients? They even help patients that are dying –and bury the dead? 'Oh that is their profession!' Then is not the priest as Good Shepherd bound to go and administer spiritual health by prayer, Sacraments and counselling especially when they are in desperate situation?

The people Seeing me overenthusiastic in exercising my priesthood in God-given Corona situation, a Religious advised me, "... Let us obey the Holy Father who has given "general abso-

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lution" to all faithful from all obligations of the Sacraments, knowing fully well where lies our salvation in the present circumstances. Let us not insult our Holy Father who has, after serious reflection, given the general absolution from not being able to receive sacraments during these months of pandemic. ..." So priests staying where they are put and be "available to the portion of the people of God who is entrusted to our pastoral care!

The bold people like the trustee-mahaashay raise further alarm: If we faithful do not need the Sacraments in such dire needs, why should we need them in post-Corona peaceful days? And suppose, if we people totally disregard religion and say 'bye bye' to the Church? The enlightened Catholics do ask today, "Who is the pope to dispense us from the Sacraments? Is he having authority over God? Does Pope decide when Jesus should come and bless and when he need not come? Is Jesus absolutely bound by rituals to come and bless? "O yes, Jesus said, (Mt. 16.19) 'Whatever you bind on earth, will bound in heaven and whatever you loosen on earth will loosened in heaven!' Is it not too much to assume from the fact that Jesus has given 'the keys of the kingdom to the Pope'? In fact Corona has dawned on the faithful that God is not bound by any Churches, Mandirs or Mashids!

Damien, The Hero Of Molokai

The Catholic priests are busy the whole time with ritualistic services, but they are not just Pujaris. They are prophets and really speaking, shepherds to feed the sheep in every sense (Cf. Mt. 21.15-17)! Those priests who function merely as ritual performers or pujaris, forget they are prophets and kings, will face a revolt in the Church. Corona has opened up different ways of reaching God. God does not exist in churches but rather in houses, in families and above all in hearts. There is a ritual-liberation today in all religions. "True worshipper will wor-

ship not on this or that mountain but in truth and in spirit" (Jn 4.23) If in post-Corona days people would continue experiencing this freedom, mukti from rituals, churches, priests, bishops and even the Pope, man would find God in his heart through meditation, dhyana. Gurus like Osho, Sadguru, and others are popularly appearing on u-tube proposing people various ways to practise Yogasans and meditation even as a protection from *Mahaamaari!*

St. Damien of 19th century challenged the clergy anew. At the age of 33 he volunteered to go alone and serve the lepers' colony on the Molokai island. He served them as doctor, nurse, teacher, preacher -even coffin builder, digger of graves and also undertaker of burials! He served them unsparingly and finally died of the same infection! He is called the hero of Molokai. To set aside Damien, another spiritual director gave me scientific reasons: "*Leprosy and Covid-19 are two different diseases. Covid-19 infects people in a different way from that of leprosy infection. God does not ask for our 'heroism'! The Church does not want us to give sacraments, because we most likely will become a cause of spreading the virus. The Church listens to the wisdom of science and medicine. With*

this unheard of virus, we are to save the lives of people. The best way we can do charity is not to become the cause of spreading the disease - covid-19 spreads and infects people in strange ways.

In my view Damien continues to challenge us: Many faithful die today more of the fear of death than Corona. They need to be gently reminded, "Thou shalt not worry, for worry is the most unproductive of all human activities. Thou shalt not be fearful, for most of the things we fear never come to pass. Thou shalt face each problem calmly as it comes with faith in Jesus the Lord." The shepherds need to proclaim to them "*Fear not! I am there!*" – of course taking reasonable care not to be themselves victims. Following the protocol, building immunity with proper diet, physical exercise, practice of specially *pranayama* for strengthening the lungs and strong faith in Jesus the Victor, they should have shown their 'metal'. Alas! For more than a year now many of our priests and religious are 'quarantined' in their rooms as a result of our educational and other institutions being closed in lockdown.

Was Pope's 'General absolution' an excuse overused!

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Goa Ill-Equipped To Handle The Spiralling Cases Of Covid-19

Just as multiple mutations of the virus are worrying health experts, numerous 'variants' of the lockdown being enforced in the state has been an equal cause of concern for the public.

Even before the earlier restrictions imposed have run their full course newer 'versions' have been introduced concurrently.

Although it is the prerogative of the Chief Minister to decide on such vital matters as the shutting down of the state over the COVID threat, a plethora of ministers becoming the 'mouth-piece' for the government on this matter has been discouraging.

Even though a lockdown was fairly evident considering the uncontrollable run of the virulent villain in the state, the uncertainties over its imposition was nonetheless vexing!

But yet again the confusion over a 'curfew' and a 'lockdown' has flummoxed Goans to the extent that they have started wondering whether the 15-day statewide curfew which has come into force from Sunday to arrest the inexorable march of coronavirus holds anything more rigid by way of restrictions!

However, with the onset of 15-day statewide curfew, Goa once again finds itself plunged into the depths of uncertainty.

If the confusion where a curfew is seen 'doubling up' as a lockdown is not enough, the manner in which law enforcers have gone about implementing the strictures truly deserves severe censure.

Clarity on any matter has not been the

forte of this government!

It has been the usual practice during this pandemic to have the CM promulgating a certain set of directives which, by the time it comes into the domain of the district administration, undergo 'subtle' changes.

The functioning of the markets during this period of curfew for instance!

Despite assurances by the CM that the essential supplies will not be interrupted, the orders of respective Collectors of both the districts in the state to shut down markets which are major suppliers of daily essentials will no doubt add to the hardships for the public, not to speak of the vendors.



by Pachu Menon

Ironically, while markets are closed, independent shops supplying essential commodities are allowed to carry out business.

While there is no doubt whatsoever that markets need to be shut down to avoid crowding, it is the arbitrary manner in which the curfew has been enforced in this instance that leaves a lot to be desired.

The common man has usually depended on the word of mouth to stay abreast of the latest developments during such times. But these 'reports' keep on getting distorted at equally the same rate as they spread and hence a general feeling of unrest among the people!

The social media too has only succeeded in creating confusion.

The panic buying that is in evidence whenever there have been indications of the state going in for a clampdown on restrictions even earlier more than

vindicates this contention!

However, the government cannot expect to enforce a new order overnight, with very little clarity to the people who matter.

Let us admit that it has been a story of wrong strategies undermining the seriousness of the pandemic. There have been errors of judgment all around.

In the haste to ease restrictions, presumably to secure the livelihood of its citizens, the government overlooked the most important aspect of the war against COVID – that of safeguarding the lives of its citizens!

Furthermore, as so very rightly said, people cannot be held responsible and made scapegoats for the errors of judgment of those ruling the state.

The customary dillydallying by the government over a number of decisions has further impeded any real chances the state had of combating the pandemic more efficiently.

While all along the unwillingness to close the state's borders stood out as a glaring anomaly in Goa's COVID-preparedness plans, it is extremely difficult to understand the reluctance shown by the government to introduce timely constraints to mitigate the worsening situation.

Nevertheless, a stringent implementation of restrictions, whether as a 'lockdown' or a 'curfew', is the need of the hour in Goa!

Meanwhile, at a time when the Oxygen mismanagement at the state's premier medical institute is making national headlines, we have senior leaders in the government playing politics over the matter.

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While differences between the Chief Minister and the Health Minister over COVID-management in Goa has driven a sharp wedge between the two; those clamouring for the latter's ouster from the cabinet and insisting that the CM hold the health portfolio till the end of the COVID crisis in Goa could not have come at a worse time.

A blame-game is the last thing Goa needs now and especially when the state is beset with an acute lack of medical supplies, ICU beds, and sufficient supply of oxygen.

The intervention of the High Court in the matter has only served to highlight the cryptically condemning negligence on part of the authorities.

For that matter, the vagueness of the state in implementing the court's order of making it mandatory for visitors to Goa to carry a COVID negative certificate with them is quite appalling.

The court has rightly warned the state government against prioritizing economy over the lives of its citizens.

Moreover, with contrasting statements coming from the CM and the Dean over the availability of oxygen, it is more than evident that the government is not in sync with the ground realities at Goa Medical College and hospital.

If horrifying incidents like the one at the GMC are to serve as a jolt for the administration to get out of a reverie, one can well imagine the state of readiness that the government is in to tackle eventualities during the pandemic!

With the steep spike in cases and shocking number of deaths of patients afflicted with COVID, we can only believe that the state has been subscribing to a flawed strategy in combating the disease all along.

With the government concentrating on overcoming logistical difficulties in procuring life-saving drugs, oxygen and other vital equipment required, it could have envisaged better ways to increase in-patient facilities at all the COVID-care facilities.

The treatment of the COVID-infected could have been left to the dedicated team of doctors and other medical staff manning the designated centers.

In these times of the pandemic, it is clearly mishandling of the situation and indecisiveness on the part of the government which has added to the woes!



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Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in you.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I believe in your love for me.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Your kingdom come.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I have asked you for many favors, but I earnestly implore this one. Take it, place it in your open Heart. When the Eternal Father looks upon it, he will see it covered with your Precious Blood. It will be no longer my prayer, but yours, Jesus. Sacred Heart of Jesus. I place all my trust in You, Let me not be disappointed. Amen.

—Janet D'Souza, Navi Mumbai

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7099. USA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1988), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 82 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., working as a Computer Engineer in USA. Contact email : willatauro@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

7110. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1984), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 85 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. IT, working as a Server Engineer. Contact email : fernandes.raymond@gmail.com

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

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

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

7144. POONA : Goan RC Bachelor, (Born in October 1985) Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 60 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Hotel Management Graduate, working as an Executive. Contact email : merrolmenezes@gmail.com

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

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

l2018anselm@yahoo.com

7214. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1986), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 52 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. CA CFA Ms Finance M.Com., working as a Senior Manager. Contact email : rfernandes020@gmail.com

7210. AURANGABAD : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1994), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 48 kgs, Fair Complexion, good looking, beautiful, Coming from business family, Edn. Chartered Accountant, C.A. by Profession. Contact email : putturaurangabad@gmail.com

7205. NEW DELHI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1996), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 38 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. BDS, Bachelor in Dental Surgery, woking as a Dental Doctor in **PUNE**. Contact email : mariadcosta0505@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

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

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 **SIN-**

GAPORE. Contact email : mafern.2121@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

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

7194. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in July 1989), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.B.A. (HR), HR by profession. Contact email : dsouza.elvina3@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

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

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

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

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

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

7179. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1994), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 45 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Bachelor of Pharmacy, working in an MNC as a Project Lead. Contact email : lin.r80@yahoo.com

7178. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic 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 Roman Catholic 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

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Sacred Heart Spirituality

by Dr (Sr) Mudita Menona
Sodder RSCJ

Spirituality is a way of life. Sacred Heart of Jesus Spirituality is the way of the heart-the path of unconditional love. To follow in the footsteps of the Master, one has to study the interior dispositions of Jesus' heart and learn to love whole heartedly and unconditionally. To make this a reality in one's life, one needs to have a tête-à-tête with Him daily, spending quality time and energy, in quiet prayer and contemplation. Observing, imitating and making one's own, the different nuances of His sensitivity and unique touch in one's own life during the day, one must be aware that we are all made of clay. He lovingly moulds us, firing us with His love to strengthen us.

Having observed the preferences of His Heart, one needs to choose like Him, the poor and the under privileged. This must reflect in one's life-the friends one has, the choices one makes when one visits people, the things one chooses to do and how one does them. In order to discover Jesus' Heart, one needs to contemplate His words, His attitudes, His relationships, His way of relating to all His creatures, thus understanding and grasping the art of putting flesh on to His words in scripture, living it in one's life and making it come alive in one's encounters with others.

Unconditional love is very demanding. Does one relate with equanimity and magnanimity with all, or does one have reservations and treat people differently? Does one dispense with one's time, energy, gifts and talents freely or are they at the service of the select few, partially rendered to the chosen ones, who will benefit one in return? Does one have the Bania/Do ut des Mentality- "I give, so that you may give"? Or does one give of one-

self generously to all God's creatures, irrespective of which creature?

Actions speak louder than words and are the acid test. Is one other-centered as Christ was? Does one experience pain when injustice is meted out to ones neighbour? Or is one apathetic and not wanting to burn ones fingers, or get involved? Does one take Mother Earth for granted, unconcerned about her depleting natural resources? If, one is a disciple, bride or spouse of Christ, then authentic love must permeate and soak ones whole being. This will demand hard decisions and a heavy price as a consequence.

Unconditional love is Trinitarian-given by the Father to the Son and through the Spirit. One needs to imbibe it the hard way- by trying, experimenting, succeeding at times and failing often. One needs to live and abide in His love i.e. accepting His generous love given freely in abundance and sharing it with all around. One can only give what one has. One's love must flow out from within. Superficiality has no place in Sacred Heart Spirituality. The world and its ways are superficial and passing. Money, power, status, ego are transient. What is one's inner treasure trove filled with?

To keep one's antennae in tune with the stirrings of the Spirit, one needs to be open and alive. The Spirit speaks loudly at times, but most often softly and gently. Jesus is already present within, at every moment of one's life. But it is the Spirit who unites and conforms one to His Heart. Only when one's heart beat matches His Heart beat, in unison will one be able to experience reality with His Heart and His Mind. Only then, will one be able to grow oneself on the model of His Love, Heart and Mind.

By contemplating reality with His Sacred Heart, one becomes a powerful force of conversion and transforma-

tion. One has to break one's body and lay down one's life for Jesus daily, so that others may have life and have it to the fullest. One has to stick one's neck out and pay the price as living saints like Fr Stan Swamy S.J., and those languishing in jail are presently paying. Many courageous martyrs have died for a cause. Is one willing to lay down one's life joyfully, go against the grain, worldly ways and stereotypes, and be beaten up, incarcerated or even killed; as Jesus was? Or does one use one's congregation as one's shield; not wanting to get into a controversy or tarnish its good name?

To grow one's interior life and glorify the Sacred Heart, prolonged times of prayer, meditation and contemplation are necessary. Reading/studying scripture, reflection/daily *Examen*, periodic renewals, days of recollection, annual retreat/*triduum* etc. can facilitate this spirituality. Spiritual direction, reflection with another RSCJ/friend, help from the community, time and space for prayer are aids that make the journey easier. Rosary, Marian devotions, community prayer, reconciliation are further add-ons.

However, the **epitome of Sacred Heart Spirituality is the Eucharist**. Receiving the Body /Blood of Christ, one is blessed with grace, capacity to lay down one's life, be broken, even killed if need be, so that new life, **new humanity and a new birthing can take place. ARE YOU READY FOR THIS PAINFUL BIRTH? HAPPY FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS ON JUNE 11th, 2021.**

Author Byline: Dr (Sr) Mudita Menona Sodder is a Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus-(RSCJ in French). She is an Eco-Spiritualist who lives on the Sophia College Campus, Mumbai.

Lockdown Musings

Rising unemployment, including among the salaried class and shrinking real incomes, has led to a lack of demand that is not a good sign for the economy and it is worrisome for a developing country like India.

Labour participation rate recovered soon after the lockdown was eased last year but has run out of momentum even before it could recover fully and unemployment has risen to 8% in April from 6.5% in March, according to CMIE data. Partial lockdowns in metro cities affect the economic status of the country, which looked bleak ever since the pandemic struck the sub-continent. Economy had recovered after the lockdowns were eased in 2020, but while supply side indicators saw a robust turnaround there was a lack of demand. Income and consumer sentiment have also been hit.

Income is lower than it was a year earlier. 90% of families have seen income shrinkage. Real economy indicators moderated through April-May 2021. The biggest toll is in terms of a demand shock – loss of mobility, discretionary spending and employment. The loss of momentum may not be as severe as at this time a year ago but these are still worrying signs. This is critical because it is only domestic consumption that will help the economy and provide a boost.

Lockdown musings continue to haunt the country. The COVID-19 has shown signs of easing, the spread of cases into rural areas and the relatively lower vaccination numbers there points to a burgeoning crisis. During the first wave (which peaked in September 2020), the COVID-19 cases started piling up in the urban areas initially and spread to rural areas (65% including semi-rural areas by September 2020). The second wave has also followed a similar pattern. The split was 52%- 48% in urban/semi-urban vs rural/semi-rural areas in March 2021 and by mid-May, the estimated case load split is 65% in rural/semi-rural areas vs 35% in urban/semi-urban areas.

These percentages may also be skewed due to a high rural-urban disparity in testing levels. In urban districts of Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai for instance, cumulatively, more than 500 tests have been conducted for every 1,000 inhabitants. This is a conservative estimate as the figures are based on the 2011 population. Whereas in the rural districts of Gadchiroli (Maharashtra), Tirupathur (Tamil Nadu) and Chamarajanagara (Karnataka), less than 50 tests have been conducted cumu-

latively for every 1000 inhabitants.

The cause for concern then is the fact that the rise in registered cases has not seen a concomitant increase in vaccination in rural areas. While more than 60% of cases were from the rural and semi-rural districts, only an estimated 12-15% of the inhabitants have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by May 14. In contrast, an estimated 30% of residents in urban areas and 19% in semi-urban areas have received at least one shot. These numbers tell a troubling story and they suggest that lower vaccination numbers in semi-rural and rural areas will mean that the impact of the pandemic will be more severe there, as is already being reported anecdotally from several parts of the country. That marks this story out as our top pick of the day.

C factor is creating a concern. Care for corona is needed most but other c factors are creating panic for the people in India. We are facing the toughest time. How we are going to cope up with this precarious position and corner and cater to the needs of the people in the remaining months of the year will be a difficult task. Corona created chaos, confusion and a critical situation in many families and caused concern. Cyclone caused havoc in Gujarat, Goa and other coastal regions Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

As the economy is facing lots of crunches, cyber attacks are taking place frequently and upsetting the position of the people without their knowledge. We were troubled by Chinese aggression and the main opposition Congress is a bottleneck during this crucial juncture. Churches are functioning without many activities and the Christian community is feeling the pinch as they could not celebrate Christmas or Easter during this period.

Corruption is the root cause of our major problems as we struggle to get hospital beds, oxygen, ventilators and other things during the pandemic. It is time to burn candles to keep our spirits high in trying circumstances. It is time to kill carbon in the air and create a congenial atmosphere by planting more trees and increasing the natural supply of oxygen in our environment. It is not the time to fight court cases and find amicable solutions to the pressing problems rather than taking legal courses. Patience and perseverance paid the price in the pandemic world and the lockdown musings paved way for a penetrated, persuasive and painful period.

by C.K. SUBRAMANIAM



Priyanka de Souza

Congratulations to Ms Priyanka de Souza, daughter of Dr. Chris and Dr. Rosemarie de Souza, on being awarded the prestigious Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA.

Her research work for which she was awarded the Ph.D. was deemed groundbreaking. She has now been appointed on the faculty of the University of Colorado, Denver, USA.

Priyanka has had a brilliant career. She studied Engineering at IIT, Bombay. Upon graduating from IIT she was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford, UK. She was among 5 persons in India to be awarded the Rhodes Scholarship. She spent 2 years in Oxford.

Priyanka won the National Gold medal in Chess and represented India and won the bronze medal in Singapore.

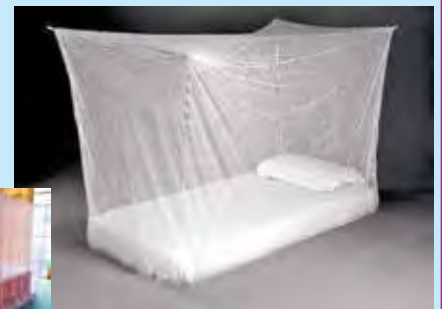
Priyanka is an avid traveller and has visited several countries. She loves travelling, reading, enjoys music and is a big fan of all the musicals on Broadway.

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