

Is the Dream of Our Founding Fathers being Currently Changed?

by Don Aguiar

Is this change becoming reality, as India celebrated 75 years of Independence this 15th August 2021? It is time to evaluate the progress of the Constitutional promises of a dignified life to the common man. The right to a dignified life without discrimination against any individual or community is a pledge we have given to ourselves at the beginning of our Republic, to be upheld at all times. **Is this happening at present times?**

We need to recognise that Independence comes with tremendous challenges and responsibilities. When we look at our democracy of the last 75 years, India is a story of unfulfilled potential, massive deviation from the Indian Constitution, as the violent nature of persecution against Christians & Muslims in India is presently not particularly horrific, it is also systemic and often carefully orchestrated. An atmosphere of deep trauma, fear and anxiety pervades the Christian and Muslim communities as they have a sense of being excluded from power structures, with their lifestyle, food habits, cultural symbols becoming objects of suspicion. Caste too remains a fundamental reality, with the political assertion of the marginalised not translating into their economic empowerment. Even after 75 years of Independence parties still play caste politics and divide the country. There is no talk of development.

Our founding fathers wanted political freedom as well as freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. They wanted justice and equality of status and opportunity. And they wanted us to be free of poverty. **As we look back at the dream and vision of our founding fathers of the nation after 75 years, we see a massive deviation from the Indian Constitution, as a whole host of factors have begun to conspire with each other. For one it must also be acknowledged that government support for their dream Hindu Rashtra has been steadily increas-**

ing.

Which bring us to something that is become challenging. Something important (founding fathers dream and Vision) has shifted. Nationalism comes in many shades. **There is a strident form of hyper nationalism that invents enemies and inflates imagined successes which can be deeply divisive**, but there is also the purer more inclusive nationalism that we feel when India does keep to its Constitution.

The current governments closed mind-set of nationalism, is, after all, a biased self-perception. Instead of critically evaluating what we lack and what skills must be acquired vis-à-vis a certain opportunity, having a closed mind-set inspires inaction and by default, disqualify the nation from the race. It kills our nation's ability to embrace risk, to trust its citizens and destroys possibilities of both good self-governance and professional achievement.

A nationalist's agenda at the heart of government is giving rise to hard-right Hindu extremists and their dream and vision to make India a Hindu Rashtra. The nationalist's policies of Prime Minister Modi at the national level has emboldened Chief Ministers in other BJP ruled states to promote similar hard-line majoritarian policies. This kind of politics is not only prevalent in political discourse, but also translates to regressive laws such as seeking to punish Christians for 'forced conversions' or punish Muslims for 'love jihad'. Even if a local reporter captures the real story, the final edit will be dictated by an institutional hierarchy which is either risk averse or loyal to powerful Hindutva organisations and parties.

The government Hindu Rashtra dream is being made reality by patronising the practice of Democracy to be the rule, as it is usually a slow-motion

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Peoples' Representatives

The nation is going through harrowing times due to the problems created by pandemic with millions of people suffering untold miseries, the AAP government [Aap ke sarkar?] suddenly realized that their own MLAs are facing financial issues and they decide that it is high time to alleviate their grievances, pandemic or no pandemic. The government decides to give them a small hike of 150% raising their salary from 12,000 to 30,000. With the other allowances, the monthly emoluments amount to Rs 90,000. Wonder if the BJP MLAs who only wait to pounce on the AAP government protested or have decided not to accept the enhanced pay as a silent protest. Incidentally, some of the State governments bear the income tax burden suffered by their MLAs. Why should the state exchequer bear these expenses is a matter of debate. Maybe this is for their selfless service to their constituencies.

The MPs too enjoy a good financial package – not to speak of the constituency allowance, travel allowance, daily allowance, unlimited Rail travel for two, 40 flights for two in business class, fully furnished bungalow and 50,000 units of electricity [roughly 4000 plus units per month] when an ordinary citizen consumes less than 400 units. From 1954 to 2020 the emoluments of the MPs have been revised as many as 26 times. No MP [irrespective of his or her political affiliation] grudges when the salaries are hiked. I think only the Communists voiced their opposition last time around. No wonder that the salary of an MLA in Kerala is only Rs 2,000.

The President who earns a salary of Rs 5,00,000 says he pays as much as 2.75 lacs as Income Tax which must be the rate for any citizen if he earns that much. When the President of the country finds the tax high [with all the perks that he enjoys]; it is for his government to take a note of it – next budget exercise is likely to begin soon. They can provide some relief and even common man will stand to benefit. One can imagine the burden on the middle income salaried group who are not provided with accommodation and other perks. While the government has been extending a lot of benefits to the pan-

VIEWS on NEWS



by Marshall Sequeira

demically affected segments, senior citizens [whose income is shrinking due to reduction in deposit rates] deserve some sop. Increasing the limit under the Senior Citizens Savings scheme from 15 to 25 lacs could be one option. Let the MPs and MLAs earn handsome income but they should do justice to the salary they earn by contributing during debates in the assemblies and Parliament. This unfortunately is not happening with hungama of the type witnessed in the Parliament at present.

To what extent elected representatives take their responsibilities seriously is something that needs to be evaluated. Some of them sit in the House but do not utter a word for the whole session if not the entire term. What are they paid salaries for? The attendance of nominated members is appalling and they do not feel they are doing anything wrong. Someone sent a clip on social media saying Movie star Rekha who was an MP [nominated] attended Parliament during her term for just 18 days and took salary of Rs 65 lakhs. Similarly, Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar also a nominated member did slightly better – attending 26 times and got Rs 59 lakhs. Both hardly spoke. Besides they enjoyed all the other benefits like free travel by air and rail, free power and possibly accommodation in Delhi. Should they not be paid based on their attendance? No MP will make any suggestion to this effect because all of them sail in the same boat and any such move will be met with stiff resistance. By the way, judiciary has come down heavily on the political parties for not following its orders on publication of criminal history of all aspiring contestants. Parties have been fined too for contempt.

Mockery in Parliament

Ever since the Pegasus controversy has erupted, the opposition has been holding the Parliament to ransom so to say. On the other hand, the government has stuck to its position 'No debate, IT minister has already made a statement on the floor of the house'. Both took extreme positions and the stalemate could spill into the winter session. That brings to memory possibly the longest protest by the BJP while sitting on the

other side thus disrupting the entire winter session when the UPA was ruling at the centre. We could possibly see present opposition break the BJP record in disruption.

How do you believe our politicians? Like a seasoned journalist and anchor says "Politicians' stand on issues depends on where they sit". How very true. When the BJP disrupted the entire winter session, their leaders asserted that disruption is an accepted form of protest and that it strengthens the process of democracy. They also said that it is the responsibility of the government to run the house and not that of the opposition. Ironically, this stand was taken by BJP leaders who are no more. At least they do not have to face the embarrassment. This means that the government has to make some compromises to enable the opposition to call off the protest and join in the proceedings. How come these assertions change when the BJP occupies the treasury benches? It simply means that those assertions were made to score brownie points and not based on convictions. When opposition parties now protest the PM calls them arrogant anti development. What is more disturbing is that the treasury benches passed some 25 bills when the opposition members were protesting in the well of the house.

A number of writ petitions have been filed in the apex court on Pegasus and much will depend on the verdict that comes out of it but the opposition ought to have waited for its outcome. They remained defiant while the government did not budge [as usual] from its stated position. No problem can be solved if both sides stick to their rigid positions. The government could have assured that before the session ends, one day will be reserved for Pegasus discussion when the PM or the HM will answer all questions. But no! This government is rigid. Finally both Houses had to be adjourned sine die. Sad!

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and messy process. Wild rumours and talk of conspiracies flourish. Street protests and outbreaks of uncontrolled violence happen. Fears of civil unrest spread. The armed forces grow agitated. Emergency rule is declared but things eventually come to the boil. As the government totters, the army moves from its barracks onto the streets to quell unrest and take control. Democracy is finally buried in a grave it slowly dug for itself.

Citizens' ability to strike back, to deliver millions of mutinies against the rich and powerful, is in principle never to be underestimated in a democracy. **But the brute fact is social indignity undermines citizens' capacity to take an active interest in public affairs, and to check and humble and wallop the powerful.** Citizens are forced to put up with state and corporate restrictions on basic public freedoms. They must get used to big money, surveillance, baton charges, preventive detentions, and police killings.

For when millions of citizens are daily victimised by social indignities, the powerful are granted a licence to rule arbitrarily. Millions of humiliated people become sitting

targets. Some at the bottom and many in the middle and upper classes turn their backs on public affairs. They bellyache in unison against politicians and politics. But the disaffected do nothing. Complacency and cynical indifference breed voluntary servitude. Or the disgruntled begin to yearn for political redeemers and steel-fisted government. The powerless and the privileged join hands to wish for a messiah who promises to defend the poor, protect the rich, drive out the demons of corruption and disorder, and purify the soul of "the people".

When this happens, demagoguery comes into season. Citizen disempowerment encourages boasting and bluster among powerful leaders who stop caring about the niceties of public integrity and power-sharing. They grow convinced they can turn lead into gold. But their hubris has costs. When democratically elected governments cease to be held accountable by a society weakened by poor health, low morale, and joblessness, demagogues are prone to blindness and ineptitude. They make careless, foolish, and incompetent decisions that reinforce social inequities. They license big market and government players — oligarchs — to decide things. Those who exercise power in government minis-

tries, corporations, and public/private projects aren't subject to democratic rules of public accountability. Like weeds in an untended garden, corruption flourishes. Almost everybody must pay bribes to access basic public services. The powerful stop caring about the niceties of public integrity. Institutional democracy failure happens.

Finally, in the absence of redistributive public welfare policies that guarantee sufficient food, shelter, security, education, and health care to the downtrodden, democracy morphs into a mere façade. Elections still happen and there's abundant talk of "the people". But democracy begins to resemble a fancy mask worn by wealthy political predators. Self-government is killed. Strong-armed rule by rich and powerful oligarchs in the name of "the people" follows. Cheer-led by lapdog media, phantom democracy becomes a reality. Society is subordinated to the state. People are expected to behave as loyal subjects, or else suffer the consequences. A thoroughly 21st century type of top-down rule called despotism triumphs. Might this be how democracy dies in India?

Death of 'Letters to Editor'



- Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

With the internet and IT all over the world, one can note that the printed word is losing its value and respect, many newspapers and periodicals are shutting down and giving space to electronic forms. In the last five years the readership and popularity of popular printed gazettes has been on the downside. In times gone by, "Letters to Editor" (LTE) was a popular media for reform and redressal. Many influential missives about the role of government in matters such as personal freedoms, economic development and technology took the form of letters. Through the 19th century, LTEs were increasingly centralized near the editorials of newspapers, by the turn of the 20th century LTEs had become permanent fixtures of the main opinion pages. But, the whole thing is dying out with the dawn of the 21st Century social media triumph.

Just a few Newspapers and Magazines now have a rare column for LTEs to cater to the older conservative ethos, even though little or no attention or value is attached to them, are hardly read and no authority perhaps takes heed to ego whims. Even if a rare good point is raised they land in the dustbin. Many LTE writers now just do it to kill time and get cheap publicity and false ego trips specially in small towns like Mangalore; one is doing it it seems, to set a record of 'the largest number of letters written by a reader' but no such official declaration has been made by any print media. Most of the letters are with no purpose and obsolete; editors out of compassion take them as also to fill space; it's not quantity that causes records and results, it's quality - this is applicable especially to page 3 let-

ters and not those that are on editorial pages. Narrow views from LTE contributors result from a habit to get personal gratification, these elements write about common matters which are already in the sights of authorities and matters that only affect personally, while ignoring wider issues - 'cut the foot to fit the shoe' policy? In past times LTEs were packed with wit and humor, now like in Parliament they are extraneously motivated, hence poverty of wit and humor is common and etiquette lacking.

One Mangalore LTE demands vehicles parked in unauthorised places should not be towed away or fines imposed etc....Then why have laws, courts and police. How can a citizen demand that laws and regulations are suspended? Look at the other side of the coin, how about the pedestrian who in the circumstances has no way to walk safely on the sides of the road. He seems to have no rights or law to safeguard. Authorities are lenient and need to tighten implementing road rules and regulations for e.g: license tests, using mobile while driving, bike riders are flouting road rules too dangerously, no basic civic sense at all - multiple passengers on two wheelers, transporting goods in haphazard and hazardous manner, population of vehicles on road too is high, lack of safety all around.

With road concreting and widening in many cities, the two and four wheeler riders act like 'Terrorists of the Road' and find it heroic to speed and do all sorts of stunts, seriously endangering the man on foot, specially the children, aged and weak; the statistics of road accidents will prove. Are only vehicle riders paying taxes and have rights others have no rights? Corona lockdowns have made matters con-

fused and the roads are free for vehicles. In many places one sees two wheelers in particular riding opposite sides of the road, taking short cuts. Imagine if the authorities are cowed down by the instructions of cranks and stop implementing the law/rule, what a horrendous situation it would make.

If and when an inquisitive person glances at the now rare LTEs, it is seen that most of the matters have already been planned for dealing with and information given by officials and the LTE is superfluous. Often notice the headers are 'Build Footpath' 'Repair Road' 'Clear garbage' 'Street Lights not working' 'Don't tow bikes away' 'Clean Gutter' and such silly 'instructions and orders'. This is mean, obnoxious and derogatory; now there are avenues to make a complaint directly to the responsible officials who have to look into such things.

LTEs used to be a good place to understand people and see the good and bad side and various interesting facets of the language and information, gradually it became a negative effort with riff-raff doing it for popularity, publicity and ego. All respect for officials and Govt is ignored and as is commonly seen ego and misplaced values have taken over from the polished and polite suggestions and explanation of the problems faced. Unwanted unethical rude questioning attitude is seen, it must be noted by authorities and action taken on the insulting missive. Unfounded and negative impressions are enhanced about Govt works, officials and systems which deserve to be lawfully curbed.

It is vital that in social media of the modern nature that personal aggrandizement tendencies are curbed and the vital public good is kept in mind and cheap avenues for showering one with undue importance and glory be carefully noted. LTEs should be in the right attitude, thinking and balance; people writing LTEs are considering it a literary work and able to command Govt and officials. The credibility of

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Corona virus: A man-made virus

This is with reference to the letter 'Coronavirus is a plague from God' by Jubel D'cruz (Secular Citizen, Aug 13) Even after 2 years, the origin of Corona virus still remains a mystery and a question mark whether it is of natural occurrence, man-made in the laboratory or an act of God. Of late however, there appears to be clinching scientific evidence that the virus was manufactured in the Wuhan lab of China. In earlier days, plagues were experienced as natural events, and rationalised as acts of God by bigots, going by the events in the Old Testament where pestilences and plagues were used by God to punish the unrepentant Israelites. Even today, super-

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media is at an all time low - sensitivity and sense is paramount. Balanced people write on various needed topics, for good purpose to bring observation, awareness and knowledge of rare matters, history, literature, human interest and so on not only to complain and point out faults but also to humbly suggest and appreciate.

Demanding all things unlawfully, while the weaker and handicapped persons are left to face danger, neglect and injustice must be definitely be condemned "Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu (May All Beings Everywhere Be Happy and Free)". Writers of 'Letters to Editor' (LTE), need to be sensitive, fair, just and broad inclusiveness is a must. Writing for a record of 1000 letters and/or personal popularity and ego is a virtual crime. The responsible editors must prevent and curb such shameful practices in all circumstances.

stitious beliefs prevail over scientific truths, with the result that even natural disasters caused by tsunamis, cyclones, floods, and earthquakes, are interpreted as punishment from God. Pandemics have come and gone several times over the past centuries. Yet, the church has not come out with a statement that the present pandemic is a plague and punishment from God. On the flip side we have a few doomsday prophets spreading the canard that the pandemic is the fulfilment of earlier prophecies and a sure 'sign of the end times' as predicted in the synoptic gospels and the Book of Revelation. Finally, all said and done, we need to come to the realisation that our human minds are too small and incapable of understanding the wisdom and sovereignty of God, and why a loving, caring, merciful and forgiving God allows pestilences and plagues, even as we read in the gospels how Jesus healed sinners without attributing guilt to the sinners.

— A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim, Goa

Hockey on the decline in our diocesan schools

The heart warming performance of our sports-persons at Tokyo 2020 has put the spotlight back on sports. The hockey teams, both men's and women's performed beyond expectations and were unfortunate to miss a podium finish. Interest in hockey will undoubtedly get a shot in the arm.

From the 70s to the turn of the century, Mumbai was a powerhouse of hockey, boasting of several hockey Olympians, products of our diocesan schools. Joaquim Carvalho, Mervyn Fernandes

(Ambernath), M M Somaya (captain), Marcellus Gomes, Darryl Dsouza, Adrian Dsouza, Mark Patterson, Viren Rasquinha (captain) Jude Menezes and Gavin Ferreira represented India in the Olympics with distinction. During the same period the following players from Mumbai featured in the World Cups: Cedric Pereira, Olympio Fernandes, Edgar Mascrenhas, Edward Aranha and Francis Dmello. Besides these stalwarts there were several players from our Mumbai diocesan schools who represented the country at the international level. Among them were: Avitus Dcruz, Gilbert Lobo, Gabriel Lewis, Diago Dsouza, John Fernandes,, Edgar Maschrenhas, Adolf Colaco, Cornelius Dsouza, Cheops Dcosta, Romeo Albuquerque and a few others.

But sadly thereafter, for the past 15 odd years we have failed to produce any hockey international from our archdiocesan schools.

I believe the game has progressed way ahead of our diocesan school system. The dedicated coaches of yore who rendered yeoman services to diocesan schools are incapable of measuring up to the technical requirements of modern day astro turf hockey. It is a different ball game today. And whereas the old coaches were paid a pittance or nothing at all, modern professionals have to be paid well. I am sure that a robust sports alumni association in diocesan school will willingly contribute towards the salary of professional coaches. After all, every catholic student in Mumbai has enjoyed years of school life playing football and hockey and is proud of his school team. But ultimately, it is left to individual principals to encourage hockey and bring back the glory days of old.

—Prof Robert Castellino
Malad

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In Preparation For Mass For The Masses!



The biggest Pandemic-Lockdown casualty, the grisly death toll apart, is the Church's Liturgy. For, from viewing Mass on TV or computer screens being just that, 'viewing'/'watching', to fulfilling the Sunday obligation by doing precisely that, our faith perspective in relation to the Liturgy has universally undergone a sea change.

Citing American research findings, William Grimm, Tokyo missionary, presbyter, and publisher of UCAN [Union of Catholic Asian News], in his post of 02 August 2021 writes: "Before the pandemic more than one-quarter of Catholics who went to Sunday Mass did so out of habit.....what lay behind the habit was a sense of obligation to attend..... Now that people have formed a new habit of not going to church on Sunday....., will reinstating an "obligation" be effective at helping people reactivate that old habit?.... Instead of emphasizing obligation, why don't bishops emphasize opportunity – 'After more than a year and a half of being unable to come together in worship, we now have the opportunity to do so again!' would be more attractive" than declaring the cancellation of the dispensation from the obligation of in-person attendance at Sunday Mass.

Grimm adds: "A bishop is responsible for the liturgy in the diocese.... In preparation for the reopening of churches, bishops have an opportunity to raise the quality of liturgical service. **Workshops for clergy on preaching and liturgy can be done remotely while waiting for the resumption of nor-**

mal activities.... If people know that the pandemic period was used to prepare an opportunity for their better return to liturgy, they will be more likely to return."

The Church in India which is due for a long haul in terms of securing full attendance once churches reopen is no exception. Would that our bishops and liturgists scrupulously oversaw the removal of all the distractive newfangled liturgical anomalies discussed below! Such a process alone would strike a balance between the internal (spiritual) and external elements, thereby regaining the "source and summit of Christian worship" tag for the Mass, making it an enriching God-experience for every believer.



by Ladislaus Louis D'Souza

***Singing** – Notably, choral singing (pre-recorded) accompanying online Masses [Powai & Wodehouse choirs being flag-bearers!] makes for a semblance of participation in online Masses. Contrarily, 'cantors' per se seem to consider the present situation a God-sent opportunity to exhibit their fetish for casual improvisations, lyrical nuances and musical notations royally tossed, the sense of dynamics underlying hymn-compositions given short shrift. Some cantors—better referred to as 'crooners', or maybe crow-ners!—sing as if with a vengeance, the decibel of their vocal output a virtual threat to sound systems and auditory nerves alike! Others brazenly indulge in dirge-like slow motion murder of hymns like 'Listen' [Entrance], and 'The Lord is my shepherd...' [Communion]. As for the sheer frivolity of 'Come and go with me to

my Father's House' [Recessional?], the piece deserves to be dumped so as to nip the *chalta hai* attitude it represents in the bud. Faulty intonation of 'it' as 'eat', sick as 'seek', 'braid-&-whine' [bread-&-wine], 'Seeeng to the Keeeng' [Sing to the King!], 'Heav'nly' coolly replaced with 'Hea-ven-ly', and 'Hosanna' crudely sung *desi* style, are other detestable aberrations. Pointing out liturgical truths such as 'the choir is not the queen of the liturgy but its handmaid' or that hymns ought to match the contents of the Readings, would earn you 'you're a nerd' looks! **With hardly any appealing original Church music being composed today, one cannot help but wonder whether the fate of polyphonic liturgical singing has finally been sealed by the pandemic-lockdown.**

***Cantor? or 'Co-Celebrant'?** – A strange development is the appropriation of part of the Celebrant's role by cantors glibly commencing the recitation of the *Confiteor*, the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Pater*, *Agnus* and a host of other things, the Celebrant busying himself with opening the page of the Missal for his next part, getting the ciboria out of the Tabernacle, readying the steel bowls [used as ciboria] for the distribution of Communion etc (That some of our younger celebrants require the assistance of their left hand to strike their breast with the right hand at the *Confiteor* is another amusing matter altogether!).

***Proclamation of the Word** – "The Word of the Lord" has suddenly got replaced with "The Word of God". What next, "God's Gospel"? Oftentimes, one sees the Deacon himself, instead

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of the Celebrant, kissing the Gospel. As for the Responsorial Psalm, what does one make of liturgical norms learnt in a diocesan Liturgy Course when priests, having hurried through the First Reading, say "Your response to the Psalm shall be...." overriding the fact that the Psalm per se is the Congregation's response to God's Word just proclaimed! Or "Please stand up for the Acclamation", then forgetting to say "please sit down for the Gospel!"

***Dress code** – The broad dazzling band around the neckline of the 'mini-chasuble' worn by Lectors in certain parishes (similar to EMHC vestment) draws undue attention to long, gorgeous hair-locks flowing down shoulder-fronts! But a similar vestment for the Sacristan? Hilarious! As for those 'viewing' the Mass at home, choice-driven fast-forwarding and reversing options render the 'dress code' redundant!

***Altar linen** – Rubrics specify that the longest of white sheets used, representing the burial shroud of Jesus, is so placed as to have its two ends fall almost to the floor at both ends of the Altar whose front remains uncovered. In contravention, gaudy sari-smocking covers the Altar-front and its sides, ugly veils unnecessarily covering the worth of carved Lecterns and Teakwood Altar Missal Stands.

***Floral arrangements** placed on garish broad-rimmed plastic plates surmounting tree-trunk props atop wrought-iron stands just about anywhere in the sanctuary clearly outdo themselves in terms of size and colour-scheme! Resultantly, those at the mic are seen peering through an unseemly maze, their own faces largely blocked from congregational view! Often, the use of potted greenery that has obviously seen greener days, and flowers that have long wilted, leaving the 'oasis' starkly exposed, constitute a needless eyesore.

***Spiritual Communion Prayer** – the Celebrant leading its recitation, contradicts the fact of his own consump-

tion of the sacred species!

***The hair factor** – Amazingly, while more women religious opt for short hair to save on hair-care time, more young priests are shedding the well-groomed look. Though sporting long hair isn't immoral, the unkempt look contravenes the formalness of liturgical garb, thus calling for a rethink rather than a "I couldn't care less" attitude!

***Coax, don't taunt** – With COVID-19 mutants and variants ruling the roost, full-attendance even at Sunday Mass may not happen easily. Innumerable individuals have, depending on the severity of the Covid attack and the time taken for recovery, been strictly

advised by their respective physicians to keep away from crowds including church-gatherings. Instead of taunts, like "Oh! So you got permission from your doctor to come to church!" how about gentle assurances that in Church one is in a safe environment for the Lord does protect His own (cf Ps 121:7)? Frankly, unless appropriate steps are urgently taken, Grimm's assertion could well come to pass: "Given the choice between un-involving in-person liturgy and moderately involving remote liturgy, people may opt for virtual participation, even if that precludes receiving the Eucharist."

Matrimonial Proposals

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Settled Forth



This title is enigmatic. It should either be “Settled For”, “Set Forth” or “Settled for Fourth”. It is actually an amalgam of all three. “Settle for” usually means accepting something that is below par. “Settled for fourth” obviously means that the proponent/ exponent has settled for fourth place. To “set forth” is just the opposite, to make a new beginning.

These thoughts came to me after observing some of India’s efforts at the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics 2020. For over 60 years we had settled for fourth place finishes, and actually considered them a great achievement; as that of Milkha Singh in Rome (1960) and P.T. Usha at Los Angeles (1984).

Despite our gloating over the medal winners my heart went out to two fourth placed finishers – the women’s hockey team and Aditi Ashok in golf. I say this because they were not counted among the probables. I watched that bronze medal women’s hockey match. Like many others, I believe that though Great Britain won, India did not lose. They went down fighting. Our girls were puny compared to the British. Many of them were from impoverished backgrounds. Some caste chauvinists in Meerut U.P., had the audacity to say that we lost because Vandana Katharia (who actually scored several goals, including a hattrick) was a dalit. Shame on them.

Aditi also faced insurmountable odds. She had to play 4 rounds (72 holes)

and at the end of the third round (54 holes) she was placed second. In the fourth round she lost by just one stroke. But listen to her story. She is diminutive, lacking the physical strength for long drives from the tee off. This was compounded by her recovering from corona that further debilitated her. Added to that, in Japan she had to commute for 1½ hours every day from her accommodation to the venue, necessitating rising at 3.00 a.m. and not getting full sleep. Her mother was her caddie (who lugs her golf bag around the course). This is probably because she could not afford her own support staff. It speaks very poorly of our organizers. I therefore consider Aditi too as a winner.



by chhotebhai *

What really amused me was the way our netas went to town seemingly taking credit for the medal winners; starting with our very photo conscious Prime Minister being seen time and again talking to the athletes over the phone. The biggest faux pas was by Manohar Lal Khattar, the Chief Minister of Haryana. He boasted on TV that gold medalist Neeraj Chopra had been training at Panchkuia and he would now offer him a job in the State Government as a Class I officer. Did Khattar not know that Neeraj was a Subedar in the Indian Army? He belongs to the 19th Rajasthan Rifles that has its regimental centre in Delhi. Besides, Neeraj had been training in South Africa, Turkey and Sweden under the watchful gaze of Klaus Bartonietz, a German expert in biomechanics. Wonder if Khattar even knows what that means?

Not to be outdone, Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of U.P., published full page ads of himself and Neeraj. But I wonder if his Govt took any action against those who passed casteist slurs against Vandana? Small wonder then that veteran journalist Rajdeep Sardesai was prompted to say that netas don’t win medals. Columnist Sagarika Ghose went a step further with her satirical piece in the Times of India “Olympics for Netas”. She bestowed the medal for synchronised swimming on the Gandhi siblings Rahul and Priyanka. No prizes for guessing why. The new Minister of Sports, Anurag Thakur, got the medal for shooting – yes, for shooting his mouth off with vitriolic communal hate speech. Amit Shah deservedly got the medal for wrestling his opponents and pinning them to the ground. Is arm twisting a part of wrestling? Veteran Sharad Pawar deservedly got the medal for gymnastics. He is a past master at parallel bars, floor exercises, roman rings and the pommel (not Trojan) horse!

Had our netas been so concerned about sports the Prime Minister would not have removed the Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju just a month before the Olympics. Post facto it is easy to bask in the glory of other people’s achievements.

Former long jumper Annu Bobby George reportedly said that the present government has done more for sports than previous ones (read Congress). Is Annu preparing for a long jump into the Rajya Sabha? If my memory serves me right the Sports Authority of India was started by Indira Gandhi as a prelude to the New Delhi Asian Games in 1982. Margaret Alva was the Sports Minister. They had identified various ethnic groups that were genetically oriented to a particular sport. The tribals of Chhotanagpur were encouraged to take up archery and hockey, while the Siddhis (a tribe of African origin on our west coast) were picked up for long distance running.

(Contd.. on p. 9)

Let me rack my memory further. Earlier it was the Indian Army that produced the best athletes. Neeraj is but the latest entry from those august portals. The Indian Railways come next. Many of our best hockey players were employed in either Air India or Indian Airlines. Several of them were Goans or Anglo-Indians. The first crop of male athletes like Milkha Singh and Ajit Pal Singh were from Punjab. Woman athletes like Annu and Usha were from Kerala.

With time, the demographics have changed. Most of our wrestlers and other sportspersons are from Haryana. Our women boxers and weightlifters are from the North East. Badminton stars are from Hyderabad. Odisha is the new hub for hockey, thanks to the sponsorship by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, himself a former hockey goal keeper. The house of Tatas was probably the first to seriously encourage sports.

Before the advent of sports quotas in government recruitment (Annu please note that it was not introduced by the BJP) several sportspersons had to depend on their own resources. Somebody like Maharaja Karni Singh of Bikaner could bear his own costs for trap shooting. Gold medallist Abhinav Bindra could afford his own shooting range; but most sportspersons are totally dependent on sponsors, be they government or private, not just for the training and travel, but even for specialized diet, equipment and support staff.

Returning to Tokyo, we are gloating over 7 medals; one gold, two silver and four bronze; just one more than the six we won at London 2012. In contrast the USA won 39 gold from a haul of 113, closely followed by China with 38 from 88. So there is a long haul ahead of us for Paris 2024.

We could take a cue from veteran sports commentator Boria Mazumdar

who was in Tokyo itself. He recommended that, like Britain in 2012, we should shift focus from team sports like hockey to individual events like athletics. We could focus on our strengths in wrestling, boxing and shooting where there are many more medals for the taking. In contrast, in a team event like hockey, 16 players go through 8 matches to win just one medal. Food for thought.

I would also like to remind our newly minted Sports Minister that sports is a great leveller. World tennis champions Novak Djokovic and Naomi Osaka bit the dust, as did our brightest stars Marykom, Vinesh Phogat, Sania Mirza, Manika Batra and Deepika Kumari (incidentally all women). This despite Deepika being the reigning world champion in women's individual recurve archery.

Sport is also a great unifier. Some of the best athletes from Europe are of African origin. Nobody asks an athlete if he or she is Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Sikh. Performance is all that matters.

Before concluding these reflections I am taking a leaf out of Yogendra Yadav's book. He is a political animal. Yet he chose to write a piece in The Print about his own childhood sporting experiences. Could I lag behind?

My father was the Captain of the Cawnpore Golf Club in 1957. When Gen Thimmaiah, then Chief of Army Staff visited, it was my father's privilege to partner him. In like manner it fell to his younger brother to introduce the cricket test teams to the Governor of U.P. who would drive down from Lucknow for the match in Green Park stadium.

Sport was in our blood. The first sport that came my way when I was just 6 or 7 was golf. I was then packed off to boarding school in the hills, so that was the end of golf for several years. But boarding school was all about robust outdoor games. There were no lush green playing fields. We played on bajri (fine gravel) that guaranteed

bruises and worn out boots or keds. With gaping holes in the soles due to the constant abrasion with the bajri we padded them up with cardboard, all that we could afford!

My favourite game was hockey, where I always played left wing. Back then both hockey and football were played in a 5-3-2-1 formation, very different from the modern game. I represented the school in junior football and an exhibition boxing bout. But I was physically too weak and small for gymnastics. I was mortally scared of rope climbing.

When I turned 18 I became a member of the Golf Club in my own right, but quit a year later when my father died. Later in life I would organize hockey and football teams, indulge in some trap shooting and organize a badminton tourney. But the funniest moment was in cricket. In a match in the church I clean bowled the parish priest. He deemed it an anti-clerical act! When I arranged a cricket team for my employees one of the players was a girl. The other team took her lightly not knowing that she was a leg spinner from the national team. That was Neetu David who is currently the chief selector of the Indian women's cricket team. We won, but we later discovered that my wife who was the scorer had totalled the runs incorrectly. Tough luck for the losers though!

No matter how old or young we are there will always be opportunities to pick up a hockey stick, a golf club, boxing gloves or a badminton racquet. Today I would advocate volley ball as it is the least expensive, with limited space requirement and ensures robust physical activity. In passing, the most beautiful female athlete at Tokyo 2024 was a volley ball player from Turkey.

So let us pursue the Olympic goal of faster, stronger, higher, to which a fourth dimension has been added – together. Why settle for less, as we set forth for Paris 2024.

It's not Your Fault

Silently when the night turns dark, she gazes though the sky and begins to search.

Her eyes roll up and down and people begin to wonder why, After a brief moment of silence, they realize It's her little Babe in the sky she looks for. The one who barely survived in her womb for months, But will remain in the corner of her heart forever.

She wipes her tears and smiles and sits with her family and looks all fine.

They knew it was hard for her and begin to murmur, Why God Why?

When days drifts into months, her heart begins to settle and so does her mind.

She begins to gather the broken pieces And take a step to stride ahead.

Once again there is laughter and fun There is joy but, in her heart, somewhere she struggled with the burden of guilt and pondered Why? Was she not good enough to carry her babe, When she saw other mothers carrying around their children proudly?

Months passed into years and once again her heart yearned for a little babe.

And as an answer to her prayer Her womb was blessed again. She was excited and happy, so was her spouse and family As words of caution began to flow from everywhere, She minded her thoughts and words and decided for this little one she would give her best.

Months began to pass, and her hopes swelled She knew this time it was all well She began to dream about the days ahead and could not wait to hold her little one in her arms Every day she whispered a prayer

Then like a blast of tornado Her stomach began to swirl And she cried aloud in pain And within few hours once again her little one was dead.

Her world came crashing down and so were her senses She began to wonder what she had done to deserve this. Was it all her fault?

Two of her little babies had bidden goodbye even before a gentle hello. She could not even hold them in her arms Or proudly spell out their names. She thought it was the end and she longed for no new beginning.

Family stood by her And her husband gently cared. But who could heal the bruises in her heart and the hope she

had lost?

Slowly people began to point fingers And some of their words were louder than the thunder. Day and night, she cried and wondered why?

She looked for comfort in different ways, but alas the pain in her heart was spread.

Near and dear ones said it was just a fetus But she knew they were more than part of her uterus.

She began to seek the Almighty and began to look around And that's when she realized no, she was not the only one She began to understand many around her had lost their little ones in the womb But chose to remain quiet and swallow the pain. That's when she realized staying quiet was no one's gain. Because it was never their fault.

She combed her hair and washed her face She knelt down and sought God's grace. And stepped outside with faith.

Miscarrying was not her choice But it was part of a devil's plan. Blaming herself would do no good And she decided to face.

She spoke loudly about losing her babe And told to the world she was still a mom No matter the months she carried her babies in her womb She was still privileged to carry and love them.

She decided to live again, with joy and hope. She knew her God was all powerful and one day her home and her heart would be full. Her tears she wiped forever To her despair she bid farewell With friends and family, she began to mingle And her smile began to sparkle.

She knew it was not the end And decided to enter a new door She knew being a mother had nothing to do with what is seen But was about what is felt

Today she lives with hope and faith Hope for a beautiful future ahead. She stands by those who have gone through her pain And shows them it's not the end.

Once in a while she stills looks up at the sky Plants invisible kisses on the cheeks of her little boys And smiles with tears in her eyes. Hoping to meet them one day And hold them tight.



by Sonal Lobo

The Navy on Friday cancelled the unfurling of the national flag at Sao Jacinto Island in south Goa after residents said they did not want the Central or state government to carry out any activities on the island due to their distrust of the authorities.

Give Chance To Aap In Goa!

-Fr. Michael G., Vasai

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during his recent visit to Goa, painted a rosy picture for the people of Goa with his pre-poll promises of a 24x7 power supply and free power up to 300 units, if his 'Aam Admi Party' (AAP) is voted to power in the 2022 Assembly elections. While all this seems encouraging and music to the ears of many in Goa, given the frequent power outages and erratic power bills to the consumers in recent times. The worst reaction is seen in Sao Jacinto Island. The Navy on Friday cancelled the unfurling of the national flag at Sao Jacinto Island in south Goa after residents said they did not want the Central or state government to carry out any activities on the island due to their distrust of the authorities.



Fr. Michael G. Vasai

A reader of The Secular Citizen Mr. A. F. Nazareth raises question on AAP's promises: *whether the AAP will be in a position to give Goa a 24x7 uninterrupted power supply even during the monsoons when most of the disruptions take place, and the work of underground cabling is still incomplete. Secondly, is this what is required to keep the people of Goa happy and content? Does good governance also not include a wide 24x7 water supply, a pollution and garbage-free environment, good and safe motorable roads, affordable rates for petrol, diesel, and cooking gas, a well-managed public transport system, affordable taxi service, etc. Can Mr Kejriwal take up these challenges as well?*

Mr. Nazareth admits that *this is something which the present and previous governments in Goa have failed miserably.* Hence my contention is: Why not give a chance to AAP this time? There

are ample reasons to believe that AAP will deliver the promises and much more. The proof is the reality in Delhi today. Terming it a gift for Delhiites ahead of the 75th Independence Day, the AAP government on 11th August launched 'faceless services' related to the transport department. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated the initiative by putting a lock on the premises of the IP Estate Zone RTO.

The new programme will initially cover 33 major transport-related services. Only driving tests and vehicle-fitness tests will be done in person. Faceless services will provide freedom from long queues, brokers and middlemen at the RTO office. The government said that people can now access all the work of the transport department while sitting at home!

Congress And BJP Rule in Goa.

Both Congress and BJP have allowed to ruin Goa due to their corrupt ways of governing. In 2010 the Shah Commission report into illegal mining – lobbied for by environmental groups such as the Goa Foundation – revealed corruptions, scams and unlicensed mining, which led to the Supreme Court suspending all mining activities in 2012. It was a decade of senseless extraction and looting which irreversibly brutalised the natural environment, destroyed the peace of village communities and damaged public health. Ever since it seems to be a war going on between the Supreme Court and the Goan government. By 2014 the Goan government had renewed a limited number of mining licences, hence, in 2018 the Supreme Court



again cancelled 88 mining leases.

In fact unchecked hotel building, inadequate sewage facilities have all taken their toll on the environment. Goa is thrust upon with nearly two million tourists a year! Imagine the non-biodegradable plastic! Although Goa didn't suffer the same devastating levels of flooding as experienced in Kerala in 2018, monsoon rains can be unpredictable and climate change is widely considered responsible for a trend of damaging weather events.

Goa Discovers AAP.

A few months ago Hanzel Fernandes (26) from Benaulim, Goa has won AAP its first-ever election in Goa. Though it is a local body election, AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal said on that occasion it is "just the beginning." After its complete washout in its debut election in 2017, AAP plans to contest the next state polls in 2022. Hanzel told reporters, "This is a change that was needed and it is good people have decided to make a change. We have not made any fake promises. Our promises will be fulfilled. Just give us time and we will do it,".

Hanzel's mother, an environmentalist, is more invested in his political career. Hanzel had a tough fight with big parties Congress-BJP. AAP is just a budding party in the state. She declares, "As a mother I am happy they voted for him without any money or bribe being offered," Geraldine Fernandes told NDTV. Hanzel's focus will be on providing a clean government to Goa through AAP. She continues, "We can protect all that is left, especially our environment, the water bodies, the

(Contd.. on p. 13)

Accountancy fact:

What is the difference between Liability & Asset?

A drunk friend is liability
But.

A drunk Girlfriend is an Asset.

An accountant is having a hard time sleeping and goes to see his doctor.
"Doctor, I just can't get to sleep at night."

"Have you tried counting sheep?"

"That's the problem - I make a mistake and then spend three hours trying to find it."

A business owner tells her friend that she is desperately searching for an accountant.

Her friend asks, "Didn't your company hire an accountant a short while ago?"

The business owner replies, "That's the accountant I've been searching for."

Why don't accountants read novels?
Because the only number in them are page numbers!

Employee goes to boss for leave:

"Since I have to go to my village to sell my land along with my wife , please sanction me one-week leave."

Employee: Sir You are like a lion in the office! What about at home??

Boss: I am a lion at home too, But Durga sits on the lion there !

Economics is not that difficult if we have the right examples.

Interviewer: What is Recession?

Candidate: When "Wine & Women" get replaced by "Water & Wife", that critical phase of life is called Recession!!

Boss: So tell me young man, on which occasions have you realised that you are important in the Company and company cannot function without you???

Employee : "Sir, whenever I asked for leave"!!



A Company Owner was asked a Question:

"How do you Motivate your Employees to be so much Punctual?"

He Smiles & Replies:

"It's simple; I have 30 Employees and 29 free Parking spaces 1 paid

Boss: We are very keen on cleanliness. Did you wipe your feet on the mat as you came in?

New employee: Yes, sir.

Boss: We are also keen on truthfulness. There is no mat.

Height of Corporate Torture.

A company employee went to TOILET.

As he sat on the seat on front wall was written:

"Had u put the same pressure at work, company's targets would have been achieved today"

Amazing reply by employee - **if you apply such pressure what comes out will always be sh*t!**

Customer: "You've got to fix my computer. I urgently need to print document, but the computer won't boot properly."

Tech Support: "What does it say?"

Customer: "Something about an error and non-system disk."

Tech Support: "Look at your machine. Is there a floppy inside?"

Customer: "No, but there's a sticker saying there's an Intel inside."

Personnel manager: "What made you leave your last job?"

Applicant: "Sickness."

Personnel manager: "And what was the problem?"

Applicant: "My boss was sick of me!"

Personnel Manager interviewing

prospective employee: "Your application states you were at your last place for 25 years. Then what made you leave the place?"

Hopeful applicant: "I was forced to they granted me parole!"

Three Finer Points:

Heller's Law: The first myth of management is that it exists.

- It's not that good help is hard to find, it's just that bad help is so hard to get rid of.

- They say you need a can-do attitude to get ahead in life. I disagree -- many people obviously got to be Vice-Presidents of major corporations just by snapping a few pictures of their respective CEO's and his secretary.

Personal Manager to New job applicant: "Why did your manager fire you?"

"Well a manager is the man who stands around and watches others work, right? " the young applicant replied.

"Yes, but why did he fire you?"

"He was jelous of me. A lot of workers thought I was the manager!"

There are two types of wives.

First Type: Quiet, Beautiful, Understanding, Not Argumentative, Loving, One who listens to husband

Second Type: Your own wife

Doc to lady: Any history of insanity in the family ?

Lady: Yes... My husband thinks he is the Boss of the house!!!

Ravana was furious with all the people ganging up to burn him.

He shouted at all of them "what harm did I do to any of you? I didn't kidnap your wife "

The angry crowd responded "that's what we are burning you for, you evil guy. "

Wife is angry as hubby stands too close to a beautiful girl in bus, a few seconds later the girl slaps him for pinching.

Hubby to wife: I swear I didn't .

Wife: I know, I did it..

(Contd.. from p. 11)

fields, which are so important to each and every Goan."

AAP is the youngest party growing very fast. It is already the main opposition party in Punjab. It has made an entry in Surat municipal corporation and many Gram Panchayats in UP. AAP announced that it will contest elections in Uttar Pradesh. Goa seems to be a more realistic target for the party. Hanzel Fernandes' words need to be taken seriously by us Christians. He said, "People voted for me because they saw a young person enter the political arena and offer an alternative politics beyond what the state has seen so far from the BJP and the Congress."

Of course Much Remains To Be Achieved.

Although AAP is doing exceptionally well in Delhi achieving even projects which were not there in the manifesto, AAP authorities humbly admit that much remains to be achieved. The promises like eradication of water tankers, 150 Mohalla Clinics, CCTV in every corner, ideal Public Transport, 47 fast track courts and full statehood for Delhi need completion. Kejriwal has not been able to keep Yogendra Yadav, Prashant Bhushan like people in the party.

But this is an open secret that AAP is continuously harassed by Central Government, Police, LG and Government officers. They could have worked far better if they had to get support from the central government.

So Why Not Give A Chance To AAP This Time In Goa?



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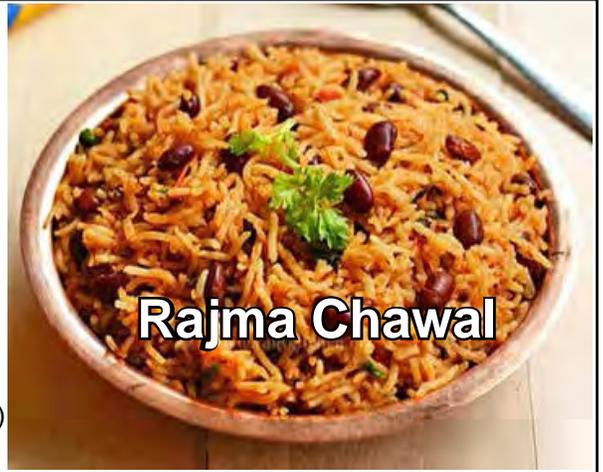
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Rajma Chawal

Ingredients:

2 cups rice
1 cup rajma (kidney beans)
1" piece of ginger, grated
2 onions, sliced
1" piece stick cinnamon, powdered
3 green chillies, chopped
1/2 tsp red chilli powder
1/2 tsp turmeric powder
1 tbsp coriander powder
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp amchur (dried mango powder) or use a little tamarind as a substitute
1 tsp chaat masala
2 tomatoes, chopped
Coriander leaves for garnishing
2 tbsp of oil
Salt to taste

Method:

Soak the rajma (kidney beans) for at least 8 hours or overnight. Pressure cook for 5-6 whistles until soft yet not mushy. Set aside.
Heat oil and add the cumin seeds. When they sizzle and begin to change colour, add the onions. When they turn pink, add the powdered cinnamon, ginger and green chillies. Fry for 2-3 minutes.
Then add the coriander powder, amchur or tamarind, red chilli powder and turmeric.
Mix well and cook for another 3-4 minutes.
Add the cooked rajma along with the water used to cook it in and the chopped tomatoes. Mix well and let simmer for 5 minutes.
When the gravy thickens a bit, add the chaat masala and salt. Mix well, bring to boil again and turn off heat.
Add cooked rice and mix gently.
Garnish with chopped coriander leaves and serve warm with some plain yogurt.



by Jubel D'Cruz

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The Turning Point



At times life throws us a challenge. We follow our our usual set daily routine to include time for work, studies, fun, play and prayer. Everything seems honky dory. And then out of the blue a life changing incident occurs –an accident, the sudden demise of someone close to us, an unexpected failure, a worldwide pandemic. Our usual road is blocked. We have reached a pivotal point in our lives. There are other roads to follow and it depends on us which road we choose.

St. Ignatius of Loyola (born 23.10.1491, died 31.7.1556) was a Spanish Catholic nobleman. He is remembered as the founder of the Jesuit order of priests and for his book on Spiritual Exercises for he felt that just as a person exercises his body, he is also in need of spiritual exercises as well. The Jesuits foray into the field of education was started by Ignatius himself. But Ignatius first choice of a profession was that of a soldier. The Battle of Pamplona in May 1521 was the pivotal point in his life when a cannonball shattered his right leg. He had to undergo a series of operations and as he lay recuperating in his father's castle, he kept on reading and reflecting on the religious books that were his sole reading matter. He could have spent his life wallowing in self pity but these books changed his entire perspective on life.



by **Monica Fernandes**

On June 7, 1893, a young Indian lawyer, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (later known as the Mahatma or 'great soul') was forcibly evicted from a Whites only carriage on a train in South Africa. Till then he was a regular brown sahib. But this eviction was a watershed moment in his life. He began to lead protests against segregation via a passive resistance movement called Satyagraha which means

'force which is born of truth and love and non-violence'. The Mahatma drew a lot of inspiration from the bible and would often quote, from Mathew 5: 39, 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you and pray for those who treat you badly. To the one who strikes you on the cheek, turn the other cheek; to the one who takes your coat, give also your shirt.' The father of our nation went on to galvanise an entire country to shed the oppressive shackles of colonialism through non-violent methods. Amazing! An entire nation had reached a turning point. He was the inspiration for other leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King. If the Mahatma had chosen to just grumble about injustice and not act after that fateful day in South Africa, the entire history of our nation may have been different.

We have all heard motivational speakers whose lives took an about turn after a major operation or a serious accident. One such iconic lady is Arjuna awardee Deepa Malik. She became a paraplegic at the tender age of 29. This lady with a fighting spirit is proud of her military background as both her father and husband are army men. On September 12, 2016 at the age of 45, Deepa made her country proud by becoming the first Indian woman athlete of win a medal at the Para Olympics.

Some of you, dear readers, may be facing roadblocks in your lives. At the end of the day, it is not what happens in your life that matters, but how you re-

act to it. Following the footsteps of his father and older brother, young Anurag was bent on joining the Indian Institute of Technology. He prepared hard for the entrance exams but disaster struck on the day before the exams when he was hospitalized with a serious infection. Not one to quit, Anurag decided to try his luck the next year but had a bad fall and landed up with a fractured hand and, as luck would have it, his left hand with which he wrote. Anurag was very despondent but his mother, who is a teacher, pointed out to him that there are many roads to success. Anurag went on to study at the London School of Economics. Today he is happy and successful in his career.

But a traumatic event has not always been the turning point. Gautama Buddha was Prince Siddhartha from the Shakya clan. His father protected him from being exposed to sickness and disease. It was during chariot ride outside the palace that the young prince first beheld suffering and death when he saw an old man, a diseased man and a decaying corpse. After years of meditation, he began preaching the eightfold middle path between extreme sensual indulgence and severe mortification.

Mother Teresa joined the Loretta order of nuns as a teacher. She witnessed two very traumatic events – the Bengal famine of 1943 and the bloodshed before the partition of India. She also saw poverty and suffering on the streets of Calcutta. This prompted her to start the Missionaries of Charity so that the poorest of poor could live and die in dignity.

(Contd.. on p. 15)

A twist in fate could happen to anyone. The death of the main bread winner of the family, a failure in exams, loss of a job, an accident or sickness, being jilted and last but not least, the strain of living during a pandemic – these are some of the challenges being faced. But do not despair for there is always a way forward.

How do we condition ourselves to find another road during a roadblock in our lives?

- We all have ups and downs in our lives but some of us seem to have more downs. Let us not waste precious time bemoaning our fate. Nor should we compare ourselves adversely with others, envying them for being luckier than us. Negativity and seeking sympathy results in us being blind to other alternatives.
- Develop our Spiritual Quotient. We could read the precepts and lives of great spiritual leaders and sages. The parables of Jesus Christ all have a message to strengthen us mentally. Spend some time in prayer. Through personal experience during difficult times, I believe this approach helps.
- Reach out to others. This approach makes us less likely to think that nobody has seen the troubles we have seen.
- We should not neglect our physical well-being and make time for yoga, walking and exercise.
- Surround ourselves with positive people who truly care for us. Who are our friends? Can you rely on them in good times and in bad?
- We should not hesitate to seek advice and help from those wiser than us. There is no loss of ego in seeking help.
- Be proactive. You may have lost your job due to the pandemic. Is it possible to attend on line courses to hone your skills? If your particular job profile is no longer of relevance in the current scenario, is it possible to change your line entirely, considering your strengths and talents?
- Above all, we must believe that we are made of sterner stuff and we SHALL overcome. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "faith in ourselves and faith in God- this is the secret of greatness", "All power is within you; you can do anything and everything."

Corona Care Proves Crucial

Clearly friends, life is bottled up. The genie has condensed to a thick layer of smoke and entered the bottle. The lid is screwed tightly and life is in a bind. Children no longer throng the lane. Temple bells ring no more. Vehicles are off the road. The survival instinct has reduced life, prompting us to wait to live another day. Missing the munch munch and the daily dose of newspapers in your coffee table.

How are you coping with the trauma? The relationship between nature and civilization remains as complicated as ever. While civilisation often draws from nature, Mother Nature is often hurt by the inroads of civilisation. That debate is better left for another day because of the urgency of the hour. Everyone is left to fend for oneself in compliance with social distance norms and with means available.



C.K. Subramaniam

I have reverted to watching some old Hindi movies on YouTube. Already done with Dharmendra's Baharen Phirbhi Aayengi, Baharon ki Manzil and Anupama which I had missed in my youth. Dharmendra epitomised the quintessential of manhood in the cellular world. We were debating passionately taking sides either with Dharmendra or Rajesh Khanna during College days. Likewise, it was Shivaji or MGR down south those days.

My sense of intellect drifts me from the make believe world towards literature. I dust off my collection to reach a Sobha De, Khuswant Singh, Arundhati Roy or Paulo Coelho. Books anyway have so many pages and it may be unwise to tax your mind with serious stuff. I change track to catch a visual on

mythology which I have missed. Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana open up new vistas beyond the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. In this way, I toggle between Film, Books and Mythology. You suggest something more. I will take it if my passion suits me.

So friends, this lockout has generated fresh options for us. I would have missed them but for the bottled genie. Life is undefinable and coping is the only option we have. Who doesn't want to travel to a hill station in summer? Who doesn't want International flights to be operational soon?

Learning and realization are most important. Look at the world and all the sufferings; being under house arrest is the least we can sacrifice. I have been confined to home since March 14. The lesson that I learnt during the 11 days confinement is that life is really simple but we insist on making it complicated. Nothing is to be feared, it is

only to be understood. The time has come to understand more, so that we may fear less. Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Resisting them will only create sorrow. Let reality be reality. Allow things to flow naturally forward in whatever way they like. The chief danger in life is that we may take too many precautions.

We are all waiting for the D-Day with baited breath when the nation will announce- Khul Ja sim sim. Genie will be out of the bottle and Corona will take its place. Once bottled, it will be thrown in the deep sea never to be found again.

Life's a fight;
a good fight of faith.
Stay safe. stay healthy!!!

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7242. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1992), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MCA / MCS, working as a Software Developer. Contact email :

mayapereira_2000@yahoo.com

7241. POONA : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., Post Graduation Banking and Finance, working for Bank. Contact email :

matri0688@yahoo.com

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

Contact email :

osbertagneloalmeida@gmail.com

7226. CANADA : Canadian Citizen Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1990), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 59 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., in Environmental Science and in Energy Management post-graduate degrees from the University of Toronto. Working for a reputed company as Energy Management Analyst in Totonto. Contact email :

francisper@gmail.com

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

shaun.neo00.outlook.com

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

Contact email : troyt007@gmail.com

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

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

6797 MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in December 1987), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working for Five Star Hotel in Mumbai. Contact email : johnserrao14@yahoo.com

6585. MUMBAI : Mumbai born and broughtup Roman Catholic Bachelor, Handsome, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 78 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. EXTC Engineering, working as a Networking Engineer. Having own accommodation. Contact email : 18.elaine@gmail.com

6856. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1973), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 67 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as a HR. Contact email : clifforddsilva@yahoo.co.in

6531. POONA : Tamilian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1975), Ht. 6', Fair Complexion, Handsome, Edn. M.Com., Having well established business. Contact email : tony137@rediffmail.com

6707 MUMBAI : Goan RC bachelor, (Born in June 1975), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., having own business. Seeks a Family oriented girl. Contact email : maxabreo@yahoo.com / maxabreo@vsnl.net

6250. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in January 1974), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 76 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., working as a Manager. **Contact email : cardoz.clint@gmail.com OR 9833563182**

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, WheatishComplexion, 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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7240. PUNE : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1987), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Very Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA, working as a Finance Executive. Contact email : angelina0134@gmail.com

7239. CANADA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in February 1992), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Completed Bachelor of Electrical Engineering in Toronto. working at a MNC in Toronto. Contact email :

walkdowntheaisle2@gmail.com

7064. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1988), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, working for Private Company as an Accounts Executive. Contact email : cecrc19@gmail.com

7234. MANGALORE : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1993), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBBS, MD (ongoing), Doctor by profession. Contact email :

samaddy2013@gmail.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

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

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

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

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

rosypetters74@gmail.com

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

7069. MUMBAI : Tamilian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1992), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., Nursing, Staff Nurse. Contact email :

mpchandran68@gmail.com Mobile : 9820041633

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

7128. MUMBAI : Affluent business family R.C. East Indian Spinster, (Born in 12-04-1988), Ht. 5' 2", very beautiful and pretty. Edn. MS General Surgeon, Doctor by profession. Contact email : drv2019@gmail.com

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

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

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 : jcd0906@gmail.com

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

7176. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic 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

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

smile9920@outlook.com

7064. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1988), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, working for Private Company as an Accounts Executive. Contact email : cecrc19@gmail.com

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Defend Democracy

The institutional murder of 84-year-old Jesuit priest Fr Stan Swamy, who died on 5 July 2021 in judicial custody, has shaken the very foundations of democracy in India. The importance and the urgency to defend democracy and all that is precious in the Constitution of India against repressive and anti-people laws, is perhaps felt today, as never before.

Fr. Stan's death has evoked a groundswell of protests, rallies, all across India and abroad. Editorials and op-eds featuring his life and illegal incarceration; talks and webinars; prayer vigils and Masses and every form of social media has kept a truth alive that the memory and legacy of Fr Stan will live on forever. Fr. Stan, spent a lifetime working with Adivasis in Jharkhand in defence of their rights; for him, all that mattered was that the Adivasis are given the basic dignity which every human deserves and that their access to their resources of *jal, jungle and jameen* are not exploited by unscrupulous, corrupt vested interests. For this, he ultimately had to pay the price!

On 8 October 2020, he was arrested in the Bhima Koregaon conspiracy case even though he had absolutely no connection with it. He died waiting for a chance to clear his name. Whilst in prison, Fr. Stan, despite his age and other physical infirmities (like Parkinson's), was for a long time not even given the straw sipper cup which he desperately needed. In denying bail to Fr Stan, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) judge, D. E. Kothalikar argued that "*the collective interest of the community*" outweighed Fr. Stan's right to personal liberty. Fr. Stan's death should hopefully now shake the collective conscience of the nation and the judiciary as it brings to an end a stark tale of injustice: one that has left the highest institutions of India's justice system diminished.



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ

After Fr. Stan's death, the NIA court denied bail to Anand Teltumbde, another member of the BK-16, as the advocates, artists, journalists and intellectuals who have been imprisoned under the Bhima Koregaon conspiracy case are called. The latest now is to shift some or all of the BK-16 out of the Talaja jail to an 'unspecified prison' in Maharashtra. According to reliable information recently the prison authorities submitted an application, requesting to transfer the male accused in the case to other prisons. There was no hearing of the people who are being transferred. The decision was taken solely by the NIA court without any consultation with the political prisoners or their families. The family members of Surendra Gadling, Sudhir Dhawale, and Anand Teltumbde have challenged this decision. They allege that the purpose behind the transfer is to divide the incarcerated by sending them to separate prisons and therefore a brazen attempt to keep them from speaking the truth!

There has been drastic erosion in the democratic space for protest in the country; the ordinary citizen has experienced this in a very brutal way since 2019. The calculated destruction of democratic values and of the rights of the citizens, take place at a frightening regularity. The way some of the followers of the ruling regime (including a BJP member who is a Supreme Court lawyer) ranted and raved against the Muslims of the country at Jantar Mantar on 9 August, in full media glare, is a case in point. They did so with impunity and though after much pressure some are now arrested, they know very well that nothing will eventually happen to them! On the other hand, a strategy that has been central to the erosion of democratic space has been the weaponizing of the criminal justice system by the State to harass and punish those who dare to protest against the

anti-people and anti-Constitutional policies and actions of the Government.

In this situation, while one looks to the Courts to protect the fundamental rights of all, the entire judicial system, has apparently failed the citizens. There have been 7050 arrests in 5128 UAPA cases between 2015-2019 but conviction rate was only 2.20% (according to data presented in the Lok Sabha in March 2021). While this experience has become visible because of a number of cases (eg. the Bhima Koregaon case, the Delhi riots cases), where intellectuals, students, trade unionists, lawyers, human rights defenders and activists have been incarcerated, the axe of state repression consistently and dangerously hangs over the heads of those who express their point of view or dissent from that of the state. The Adivasis, the Dalits, the ordinary labourers, the farmers, the migrant workers who raise their voices, know the State only as an entity that punishes those peaceful and democratic attempts to challenge the status quo. The Muslims and other minority groups are particularly vulnerable and have been systematically targeted to create a false narrative of anti-patriotism, internal terrorism and of being a threat to the nation.

The disheartening situation is that of the courts, who have mostly acted in a conservative manner and have been reluctant to speak truth to power and restore justice. Earlier, the mainstream media allowed for expression of protest and raised issues of such injustice, today it has become the voice of the state and an important medium to popularise the narrative of the State. The large numbers of human rights activists, friends and supporters of all the people in jail under these laws, have consistently and persistently built up a campaign for their release and against the use of draconian laws. Scores of people have been detained under various other repressive state laws. This

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includes journalists, human rights activists, trade union activists and workers, cultural activists, comedians, environmentalists, youth, students, farmers, electricity and industrial workers, and large numbers of minorities, to create a false narrative of internal terrorism and threat to the nation.

There are some rays of hope: recently some judgements and court orders have begun to question the issues of the sedition law, UAPA and the right to bail. The most recent orders from the NIA court in Guwahati and the Delhi High Court (in the cases of Akhil Gogoi; Asif Tanha, Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal) has offered a devastating critique of the UAPA and is also regarded as a turning point in judicial circles. The mainstream press (many who qualify as 'godified' media) has taken note of this turn, breaking with the narrative of the BJP government on these issues. These judgements have vindicated and even defended the right to dissent and opposition to government.

Beginning 23 July, a series of actions have been launched all over the country as part of a National Campaign to Defend Democracy. The first was a call 'Justice for Father Stan Swamy' – which brought together hundreds of people from all walks of life in public protests demanding that the Courts clear the name of Fr Stan. On 28 July, the Jesuit Conference of India (JCI) observed a 'National Justice Day'. In a widely -circulated letter the President of the JCI, Fr Stany Dsouza SJ said, "We, along with the civil society organisations and the people of goodwill, have now organised this day (National Justice Day) to pay homage to Fr Stan and to recommit ourselves to the mission of Truth and Justice. It is an inclusive public gathering consisting of Diocesan clergy, the religious, the laity, the staff and students of Jesuit academic institutions, friends and partners in mission and the representatives from the civil society." Supporting this initiative, Cardinal Oswald Gracias the President of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India said, "the death of Fr Stan Swamy has been a shock for all.

We knew his health was precarious; that he was jailed on charges that were not established; that he was given a rough treatment when incarcerated in the Taloja jail. Our hearts went out to him. But when he passed away, we were numbed. I knew Fr Stan personally having briefly lived in the same community with him many years back in Jamshedpur. He was gentle, kind, soft spoken but articulate with a single-minded dedication to the cause of tribals, spending hours with them every day. We remember him with affection. The greatest tribute we can pay to him is to keep alive his vision: to work for the poor and the oppressed with dedication. Pope Francis reminds us of this often." He endorsed the call for National Justice Day adding, "I encourage every bishop in his diocese to participate to the extent possible according to the local situation."

The response to 'National Justice Day' was overwhelming: Parishes, Schools and other Institutions brought together their colleagues and collaborators, their staff and students, religious Sisters and other Priests, their parishioners and others from civil society for a public manifestation to pay homage to Fr Stan and to pledge that we all need to be and work together for justice, so that the legacy that he has left us will carry on. In most places it was a silent assembly either at one place or in procession. The participants carried lit candles, banners, posters and placards which included pictures of and quotes from Fr Stan. COVID-19 SOPs meant that numbers were limited and all manifestations were held on the campuses or in halls. In some places, eminent persons spoke about Fr Stan and his life and the importance of working for justice particularly for the Adivasis, Dalits, minorities and other disadvantaged sections. There were prayer services with hymns and songs of unity. A statement was read out at the end which was covered by some of the local media the next day. On 3 August (the thirtieth day of Fr. Stan's death) a Memorial Mass was held for Fr Stan in Jamshedpur and later his incisive memoir 'I am not a Silent Spectator' was released in Ranchi.

On 9 August, the National Campaign

to Defend Democracy gained added momentum when 165 movements, platforms and organisations, representing thousands of citizens give a call for a country wide action to save our democracy: marking the international day for Indigenous people & Quit India movement day, as a day of Public Action. The action will continue till 28 August but a high point will be on 15 August India's Independence Day when thousands will pledge to campaign for repeal of the draconian laws and to protect our democracy. Several programmes: both physical and virtual are planned all over the country, over the next weeks.

The signatories to the National campaign in a public statement, 'Defend the Right to Dissent, Repeal the Sedition Law, UAPA and Repressive State Laws, Restore the Right to Bail, Justice for Stan Swamy' said, "State repression and attacks on right to dissent and the Constitution are growing. UAPA, NIA and other draconian laws are being used as instruments of repression. More than 165 organisations and civil society networks are undertaking a country wide action campaign (15-28 August) to protest against the institutional murder of Stan Swamy and the repression. As part of this campaign, programmes were organised across the country on 23 July to demand justice for Stan Swamy. The demands of this campaign are – 1) Justice for Stan Swamy, 2) Repeal of UAPA, sedition section and all other draconian laws, including state laws that allow preventive detention, 3) Restore Right to Bail, 4) Release all Political Prisoners, 5) Accountability for filing false cases and Compensation to victims, 6) Stop illegal detentions and weaponizing the criminal justice system. Country-wide protests and various action programmes will be organised in this campaign on 9 August and during 15-28 August. 9 August is international day for world's indigenous people. It is also the day on which the quit Indian movement started in 1942. Stan Swamy dedicated his life for Adivasi rights and struggles for jal, jangal and zameen. Come, let us organise programmes on 9 August to protest against Stan Swamy's murder, and for protection of Adi-

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(Contd.. from p. 19)

vasi rights and the democracy. Also, on 15 August, we will pledge to campaign for repeal of the draconian laws and to protect our democracy."

The Pledge which thousands are expected to make on 15 August 2021 is: ***On the occasion of the 74th Independence Day on 15th August, we pledge to defend the legacy of our Freedom Movement, the spirit of the Preamble and the values of our Constitution.***

We pledge to campaign for repealing all draconian laws and assert the right to bail of every citizen.

We believe that the right to question and the Right to Dissent are the foundation of our democratic, secular and socialist republic.

We commit to campaign against all ideologies, laws, and state actions that deprive us of the freedoms of speech and opinion, conscience, association, and to non-violent opposition.

In the meantime, the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) has initiated a year-long nation-wide campaign 'Jan Azaadi 75: On the path to Freedom' which focusses on remembering the values of the freedom struggle; re-asserting the contributions of people's movements over 75 years; and to resolutely strengthen our collective struggle for democracy, human rights, social and ecological justice. The campaign which began on 9 August will conclude on 15 August 2022.

At the start of the Quit India Move-

ment, late evening of 8 August 1942, Mahatma Gandhi gave a call to the nation to "Do or Die"; the next day his words translated into concrete action and India after much struggle, finally gained her freedom on 15 August 1947. The current call to 'Defend Democracy' is in a similar vein: it is a do or die for we the people of India today. In 1908, when Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was being tried for sedition in the Bombay High Court, he courageously stated, "Swaraj is my birth right, and I shall have it." Justice Davar, the presiding judge, then asked him if he had anything to say before the sentence was pronounced, he audaciously replied, "All I wish to say is that in spite of the verdict of the jury, I maintain my innocence. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of men and nations. It may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may prosper by suffering than by remaining free." These immortal and inspiring words of Tilak can be read even today; they are etched on a marble plaque outside Court Room 46 in the Bombay High Court. NG Jog, Tilak's biographer has described this historic moment very profoundly, "These words delivered on the spur of the moment have a spontaneous dignity and almost a Socratic sublimity. They breathe the spirit of dedication to freedom and of defiance against the might of the British Raj. And, they could have been uttered by only one man in India's contemporary history – Bal Gangadhar Tilak." Fr Stan resonated the words of Tilak in 2021!

As we the people of India 'celebrate' yet another Independence Day, it is fitting to remind ourselves of that pro-

phetic prayer of our Nobel laureate, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action

–
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

We have to wake up now before it is too late! We need to internalise and act on Tagore's call to "let my country awake"; together with Gandhi's "do or die" and Tilak's "Swaraj is my birth right" and above all, with that unflagging commitment, whatever the price, to defend democracy!

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

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MU231795 - Age 42, Edn. MBA, PG., MS
MU111888 - Age 35, Edn. Masters (IT)
MU412052 - Age 30, Edn. ME., M.Tech.
MU222121 - Age 32, Edn. M.Phil., Neu.Sc.
MU112144 - Age 34, Edn. BE., B.Tech.,
MU212208 - Age 41, Edn. BE., B.Tech.,
MU332212 - Age 31, Edn. BE., B.Tech., (IT)
MU212277 - Age 30. Edn. M.Sc., Masters
MU332283 - Age 33. Edn. BE., (IT)
MU122288 - Age 32. Edn. Masters. BE.,
MU142503 - Age 40 Edn. M.Sc.,
MU122509 - Age 36. Edn. MD., MS., (IT)
MU112929 - Age 35. Edn. M.Sc.,
MU112936 - Age 30. Edn. ME., M.Tech., MS

Brides

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FU112233 - Age 29, Edn. ME., M.Tech.
FU232338 - Age 28, Edn. B.Sc.,
FU211009 - Age 32, Edn. BE., B.Tech. (IT)
FU321130 - Age 36, Edn. MA., MBA.
FU221208 - Age 32, Edn. M.Sc., Medical
FU311427 - Age 35, Edn. MBA., PG., BE.
FU221435 - Age 31, Edn. MD., MS.
FU231576 - Age 29, Edn. Masters, MS.,
FU132065 - Age 29, Edn. M.Sc.,
FU332561 - Age 28, Edn. B.E., B.Tech.,
FU112658 - Age 27, Edn. M.Phil / Ph.D.,
FU122697 - Age 29, Edn. M.Sc., Computer
FU142755 - Age 28, Edn. MD., MS.,
FU122970 - Age 29, Edn. ME., M.Tech., MS
FU333045 - Age 26, Edn. Degree in Medical

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Grooms

MC310508 - Age 39, Edn. BE/B.Tech.
MC350723 - Age 34, Edn. B.Sc., Chef
MC021335 - Age 46, Edn. BE/B.Tech.
MC401574 - Age 30, Edn. BHMS/BAMS
MC491764 - Age 31, Edn. MBA PGDM
MC052036 - Age 32, Edn. BE/B Tech. IT
MC192449 - Age 48, Edn. CA, CPA, CGA
MC182574 - Age 34, Edn. BHMS/BAMS
MC282592 - Age 34, Edn. BE/B Tech. IT
MC152634 - Age 35, Edn. B Com. Banker
MC172944 - Age 33, Edn. MBA PGDM
MC112951 - Age 30, Edn. M Sc., EM

Brides

FC222510 - Age 30, Edn. MBA PGDM
FC341589 - Age 29, Edn. BE/B Tech.IT. MBA
FC171624 - Age 29, Edn. BE/B Tech
FC211590 - Age 30, Edn. MBA PGDM
FC172191 - Age 28, Edn. B.A. B.ED
FC112265 - Age 28, Edn. BA
FC152266 - Age 28, Edn. MA., HR
FC152344 - Age 27, Edn. B Com
FC162750 - Age 26, Edn. MBA PGDM
FC260690 - Age 32, Edn. M.Sc.,
FC310734 - Age 47, Edn. MBA PGDM
FC330899 - Age 32, Edn. M Sc
FC321665 - Age 31, Edn. BCA/BCS
FC192735 - Age 34, Edn. B Com
FC162752 - Age 37, Edn. MA
FC122963 - Age 35, Edn. BSc., Nursing

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The Covid19 pandemic has left somescar or the other on every human being in society the world over. This is the story of how ahumanitarian crisis worsened at the US – Mexico border in May 2020. Xiomara had fled gang violence in El Salvador six months earlier and worked under the table in Mexico to afford bus tickets for her three children and herself to make it to the border.

When she finally reached the border, she was nine months pregnant and feeling contractions, however the U.S.Customs and Border Protection offered to take her to a hospital. But she had heard about family separations and was fearful and worried about losing her children if she was hospitalised, soshe refused the offer. She was sent back to the streets of Ciudad Juarez at night. Imagine her horrible plight, alone with three children ages 10, 6 and 4 and one on the way. “It was sad, and I started to cry,” said 33-year-oldXiomara in Spanish, “I really thought they would let me through to the U.S.”

Jesus loves and cares for each one of us and He will never abandon us. He sent an angel in-Juarez who told Xiomara the name of a shelter he knew. She hurriedly took her children to that place only to find that it was full. Besides she was told that she and her children would have to quarantine in a hotel for 2 weeks before being allowed into any shelter. The distraught mother looked up to the heavens, and the Lord’s mercy prevailed. An official from the Hotel Flamingoknown for its reputation of helping migrants came to pick her up.

There, she met another angel, Leticia Chavarria, a Juarez physician and fierce advocate for migrant women. She offered to examine her at no cost. Imagine it was the first time Xiomara had seen a doctor throughout her pregnancy. She could not af-

A Pregnant Mother and the Pandemic

ford a doctor’s visit which would cost her more than 3, 000 Mexican pesos, about Rs.11,000/- She didn’t have that kind of money.

On June 6, just 14 days after Xiomara was turned away from the border, Chavarria helped her to a hospital, where she delivered a healthy baby girl. Do you now think her troubles and journey was over? Not at all. But Xiomara and her four childrenhave now been living under God’s protection at San Juan Apostol (SJA) shelter for eight months.

Human Rights First, an advocacy organization has documented more than 1,500 claims of violence against asylum seekers under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)Xiomara says that she fled gang members in El Salvador and is a survivor of sexual assault. Her unwanted pregnancy and giving birth triggered difficult traumas she was grappling with. “I felt very strangel’d look at (my daughter) and it was almost like I didn’t want her,” Xiomara says. Therapy at SJA helped her she agrees“and four months after the baby was born, I was able to be affectionate with her.”Indeed, God is the author of life and every life is precious to Him. The support of other women at SJA was very valuable.

La Zadas (short for embarazadas, meaning ‘pregnant’ in Spanish) was a project launched by an immigration

lawyer Taylor Levy. He is the **Pro-Life hero** in this story. Standing at the border he saw the visibly pregnant women, devastated and vulnerable with no help. This set him thinking about creating the project of La Zadas, along with a midwife and several community organizers in Juarez, to help keep pregnant asylum seekers from falling through the cracks.

It is truly a **Pro-life program**, providing free health care, legal advice, products for babies and pre and post natal care like vitamins, menstrual pads and breast pumps. Some women who live at the SJA shelter receive treatment and support.It has been a haven which has brought peace and healing to those involved. In all, Las Zadas has supported about 120 women, and helped bring an estimated 68 babies safely into the world.

The Biden Administration has begun processing some asylum seekers-but there are about 25,000 awaiting. Xiomara’s case is complicated. While MPP is winding down, expulsions continue at the border with no clear answer from the governmentwhether these migrants will have a second chance to apply for asylum.Xiomara wonders if this interview might help her chances. “First and foremost, all I want is safety for myself andmy children. I have faith in God that things will get better,” Xiomara says, “That’s all I can do.”Courtesy: TIME March 15/ March 22, 2021.



by:
Dr Jeanette Pinto

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