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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

Violent Jihadism has Created Fertile Ground for Right-Wing Extremism

by Don Aguiar.

It was a day like no other, now labelled in history by the number of month and the date of the day, 9/11. We have since lived with its consequences.

Remembering the 11th of September. This date leads your memory back to a most terrifying event, i.e., the terror attack against the US some 20 years ago. I recall that day vividly. I was then living in Hamburg, and that very afternoon German time, we were sitting and talking—me, Heidi and Cody. Suddenly, Cody got a phone call (he is American) and said: “What!!” Then he jumped over the table and turned on the television set where we saw the planes hitting the twin towers in New York. One can certainly say that the world has never been the same since, and with terror attacks “available” anytime and anywhere, vigilance is advised even to this day 20 years later.

20 years of 9/11 and the world is even more vulnerable today than it was on the day when the twin towers were assaulted. And yes there could be another 9/11.

On top of this, we have the failure in Afghanistan where the West now has left a country in a mess, and the corrupt government that was propped up by the western taxpayers has left as well, leaving the people of Afghanistan to face an uncertain future. Indeed, it is by no means a pretty sight, but agree with President Biden that there was never a good time to leave Afghanistan and that lessons learnt from this intervention may signal an overall change in policy towards this kind of “nation building”. Looking at what NATO, supported by the US (didn’t) achieve (d) in Libya should indicate that it is the right move. US must stop interfering elsewhere and think that they can try to change things from the ground up.

The world has not ceased to be amazed at just how quickly the Western so-called powers have left the country of Afghanistan. There has been an exodus that we haven’t seen in years, and I fail to

find a similar comparison in recent decades. The pictures of the amounts of aircraft, leftover tanks, and military hardware is a terrifying sight and in the wrong hands. Whether or not damaged by the power that left them behind, still they represent a waste of astronomical proportions. Perhaps it teaches us a valuable lesson once again NOT to impose our way of life on other countries.

There have been many losers and few winners if any in this conflict, but as mentioned before, the military hardware suppliers have had a field day. Now, I have no doubt that the Middle Kingdom will be sweeping in to make “great friends” with the new rulers to get access to what is both above and below the ground in Afghanistan.

There is a big line at the washbasin for some politicians now to wash their hands and to claim partial success, but then again, politicians can always “spin it”. For that purpose, they have professionals to teach them how to make a defeat sound like a victory.

For the violent jihadism and America’s revenge – Al Qaeda spent USD 500,000 on its terror attack on World Trade Centre & Pentagon. US lost USD 55B in physical damage, USD 123B in economic loss & USD 8T on the wars to take revenge. Al Qaeda’s terror act killed 3,000, the US revenge wars killed 900,000.

Though experts warn that extremism may likely flourish in Afghanistan with the Taliban at the helm, the level of threat this could pose is debatable. But the Taliban’s seizure of the Afghan government greatly increased the risk that militant groups will use Afghanistan to reconsolidate their bases and strength.

In the wake of the 9/11 and 26/11 attacks, the rise of violent jihadism reshaped American and Indian politics in ways that created fertile ground for

(Contd.. on p. 3)

The Encyclical "Fratelli Tutti" by Pope Francis

Joseph M. Dias, S.J.

Today, we are living at a time of great turmoil, when our world is being torn apart by a multitude of divisive forces, rivalries and much bitterness among peoples of different nations. There are tensions between the blacks and whites in America, ongoing violence due to the rampant drug-trade in Latin America, and religious conflicts in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand due to the rise of religious fundamentalism. Rampant exploitation of natural resources; illegal seizing of lands from the poor and disadvantaged; the expansionist ambitions of some of the big powers; the scourge of mindless terrorism in the name of religion; and ethnic conflicts in several countries are causing divisions, and bringing much pain and misery to societies all over the world. In such a situation, is it even possible to think of creating a world of love and brotherhood among all peoples everywhere? The great optimist that he is, Pope Francis certainly believes this is not only possible, but achievable, in his latest encyclical "Fratelli Tutti". He says he draws inspiration from Francis of Assisi, "who felt himself a brother to the sun, the sea and the wind, yet he knew that he was even closer to those of his own flesh. Wherever he went, he sowed seeds of peace and walked alongside the poor, the abandoned, the infirm and the outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters."

While acknowledging that there are dark clouds which cannot be ignored, Pope Francis says, "I would like in the following pages to take up and discuss many new paths of hope, for God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family." The recent pandemic, he points out, has made us aware of how our lives are sustained by ordinary people: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, storekeepers, supermarket workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests and religious. When there is

a common cause, all people of every hue and colour, rally together like brothers and sisters, forgetting spontaneously all the prejudices that divide them -- showing that universal brotherhood is not a myth but can become a reality. We must all nourish the hope that unity and harmony among peoples is possible and advance along the paths of hope.

Who are the 'Fratelli Tutti' (Brothers and Sisters all)? The Parable of the Good Samaritan unambiguously tells us that 'everyone in this world is my neighbour, brother and sister'. No one should be considered as an outcast or a stranger, or 'the other'. The Samaritan, in the parable, is the one who has the right attitude to the "stranger who fell among the robbers". He is not concerned about the man's social standing or background. He looks upon him as a 'brother in need' and spontaneously reaches out to him. The Good Samaritan is a true model of being a brother to all human beings, whoever they may be -- a 'frater tutti'. He reaches out to anyone who is suffering and in need of help. A lowly Samaritan - though he is a despised person in Jewish society -- goes to the help of a Judean, someone well-respected in Israel. After helping selflessly, he departs without expecting recognition or gratitude. He finds great satisfaction in his effort to assist another person. We need to care for every man and woman, young and old, with the same fraternal spirit of care and closeness that marked the Good Samaritan. Pope Francis goes on to assert that "The world must acknowledge the worth of every human person, always and everywhere.....Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country. People have this right even if they are unproductive, or were born with or developed limitations.....Unless this basic principle is upheld, there will be no future either for fraternity or for the survival of humanity." At the moment, in our world, it is the most abandoned

peoples : the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, camping in Bangladesh; and the unfortunate people of Afghanistan, abandoned to their fate by the latest events in their country; migrants fleeing violence in North Africa to get to Europe, across the risky waters of the Mediterranean; and helpless millions persecuted for their faith in many countries—who must be accepted as human beings like all of us, and who ought to be aided by the rest of the world as our 'dear brothers and sisters in need'.

Whenever people assist the needy through the corporal works of mercy mentioned in the Gospel of the Last Judgement, strong bonds of brotherhood are formed. Wherever relief work is carried out in times of natural or man-made disasters, and people feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick and those in prison, a certain closeness develops between the relief-workers and the victims who are suffering. Therefore, there are always abundant opportunities to cultivate ties of brotherhood by sensitizing the richer nations to the suffering of the poorer and underdeveloped nations and motivating the millions who are well off to reach out in acts of service to the poor and the needy, the marginalized, the forsaken and the forgotten; aboriginal peoples, tribals, social outcasts, migrants, victims of famines, war and violence, the sick and suffering, the elderly, women in distress and innocent abandoned children.

The most powerful means to cultivate a civilization of true brotherhood is "dialogue". "If we want to encounter and help one another, we have to dialogue," says Pope Francis. "Dialogue between generations, dialogue among our people, for we are that people; readiness to give and receive, while remaining open to the truth. A country flourishes when constructive

(Contd.. on p. 4)

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Website: www.sezariworld.com

Editor: LAWRENCE COELHO

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(Contd.. from p. 1)

right-wing extremism.

The attacks were a gift to peddlers of xenophobia, white and Hindutva supremacism, Christian and Hindutva nationalism: as Muslim bent on murdering Americans/Indians, al Qaeda terrorists and their ilk seemed to have stepped out of a far-right fever dream.

The unprecedented acts of terror on 9/11, when death literally fell from the sky, were ostensibly motivated by an impulse to revenge and restoration. **The perpetrators who carried it out sought to teach a lesson to the West, and re-position their version of Islam as a powerful political force.** But like a blast whose reverberations fly in all directions, the deepest impulses behind the attack were less strategic and more apocalyptic. They set in motion two crises that are still with us.

In 1997 Osama Bin Laden suggested an alliance of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and China against the United States and India. This is coming true.

For years following the September 11 and November 26 terrorist attacks, the conversation about US and Indi-

an national security was dominated by the war on terror. **But 20 years later, current and former officials say, the war's come home. Now, the biggest threat facing the US and India doesn't come from foreign actors, but those within the country's own borders.**

When it comes to extremism, the focus within US and Indian law enforcement and intelligence agencies has shifted to white & Hindutva supremacist and far-right groups.

However the threat environment post-9/11 & 26/11 continues to be dynamic, with both foreign and domestic terrorism threats, each of which have metastasized in concerning ways. However domestic extremism was metastasizing across the country quicker than thought of.

What makes the domestic terrorism threat so insidious is the foundational motivation to undermine our democracy, either by hate-driven ideologies or misinformation online. The general chaos in our society related to the pandemic, the state of our politics, and other factors unfortunately creates fertile ground for these false narratives to take hold.

In the months since top law enforcement officials began sounding the alarm about the threat of home grown extremism, the US and Indian government continues to grapple with how best to combat it, even when it comes from within its ranks.

The threat of home grown extremism also differs along ideological lines. The challenge for the intelligence and law enforcement communities is to mitigate both foreign and domestic terrorism threats simultaneously to prevent something like either September 11 or November 26 from ever happening again.

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(Contd.. from p. 2)

dialogue occurs between its many rich and cultural components: popular culture, university culture, youth culture, artistic culture, technological culture, economic culture, family culture and media culture." How very true it is that in any country, dialogue between various sections of society, in a spirit of openness, brings people together, helps them to know and understand each other better and strengthens their mutual relationships.

In today's globalized world, the media can be a powerful means of helping to make people feel closer to one another. In disseminating news from across the world, the media must act responsibly and be just and fair in its reporting. The most neglected, helpless and marginalized must feel that they are given their due in news reporting. The ubiquitous media needs to make a conscious effort to unite rather than divide people. A suitable mindset needs to be created that will make people wish to come together as one family. The Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO suggests a new mindset when it says, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be

constructed." It is in the minds of men and women that a spirit of universal brotherhood must be created, particularly by the media. The dignity of every human being must be respected, at all times and under all circumstances, because human beings possess an intrinsic worth superior to that of material objects. It is a dignity given by the Creator who, according to the Bible, has made us in His own "image and likeness". As Thomas Jefferson says in the preamble to the Constitution of the United States, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Pope Francis concludes his encyclical by presenting the example of Blessed Charles de Foucauld, who expressed his desire to feel himself a brother to every human being, and asked a friend to "pray to God that I truly be the brother of all." He wanted to be, in the end, 'the universal brother'. May God inspire that dream in each one of us. St. Paul too, in the letter to the Galatians presents the same ideal to all Christians: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on

Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." These words of Paul tell us, in no uncertain terms, that it is the duty of every follower of Christ to strive to build a world in which all God's children, whatever their origin or background, anywhere in the world, are brothers and sisters belonging to the family of the Creator.

In our own times, worldwide efforts to save our fragile natural environment, are making humanity aware that the spirit of kinship must also be extended to all God's creatures, including those belonging to the inanimate world, the plant and animal kingdoms -- as so charmingly expressed by Francis of Assisi, in his 'Canticle of the Creatures', in which he speaks of "Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brother Wind, Sister Water, Brother Fire, and Sister Mother Earth, through whom the Creator produces various fruits, with coloured flowers and herbs....." This is the kind of Broad Universal Vision all of us must all strive to develop in order to truly become Brothers and Sisters to all God's creatures.

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Save Goa's traditional pao

The news report 'pao to cost Rs 5/ from Oct 2', was most disturbing and a blow to the common man. What used to be the poor man's daily bread will now be out of reach for the middle class as well, especially those with large families. Not only has the size and weight decreased over the years, but also its quality. And what was earlier Rs1-2/ per pao will now be Rs 5/. What a sad state of affairs that people in Goa can no longer enjoy their favourite pao. Gone are the days. It is now 'Bhure din' instead of 'Acche din' for the people of Goa. It is unfortunate that the Goa govt has ignored the persistent and reasonable demands of bakers in the state for subsidies on various items linked to the bread industry, despite the escalating costs of all raw materials. If the Goa govt can provide free water to every household and free digital taxi meters to taxi operators, why can't it provide subsidies to the hapless bakers and bakeries, some of which were forced to close down? It is time for the govt to do a re-think on the matter, to save the livelihood of bakers in the state, as well as the traditional Goan pao from becoming extinct in the near future.

—A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim, Goa

World Grandparents' Day

On September 12, the world celebrated grandparents' day. Grandparents are like angels in disguise. They always watch out for us and pray for us even when we don't know it. They provide us a safe space on which we can always count on.

They not only help their children and grandchildren in their learning and growth but also foster good habits and moral values amongst them. They are the vitamins for the child's development. They are the ones who have made our parents the way they are. It is because of their upbringing that our parents love us immensely and care for us the same way our grandparents did when they were children.

— Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai

Caste politics - a curse upon our country

A couple of states are gearing up for the Assembly elections in the near future. The banner of revolt has been raised in several states and the chief minister has been replaced. The latest casualty is the chief minister of Punjab. Whether this move will pay off for the Congress which is in disarray across the country, only time will tell. But in the meanwhile however, a big deal is being made out of a dalit being made the head of a government. It is said that the caste factor played a crucial role in selecting the chief minister of Punjab.

In recent times, a lot of importance is being given to the caste aspect in our country. It's not just Punjab but in vari-

ous parts of the country. And are we wondering why? Should we say, rather, political parties are playing on the sentiments of the people? Our politicians are playing caste politics! This caste aspect is being used as a Trump Card for winning elections. It's around 75 years that we have gained independence. How much longer are we going to play the caste card? We need to get out of this mould. We need to stop using caste for our own vested interests? We need to review the whole policy of reservations itself.

Over the years, reservations based on caste, community, etc., etc., has taken its toll. Everywhere there is demand for reservations. Social justice, yes that's important. But, how much longer can we continue this practice? Merit seems to have taken a back seat. Does that explain, the best brains migrating to western countries and making it big there? And then, we rejoice and pride ourselves when they shine, because he or she is a person of Indian origin. It's time we put an end to this caste politics in our country otherwise we will never progress. This is a curse upon our country. As much as we aspire to be on par with the western world, we will never succeed, never ever!

—Melville X. D'Souza,
Mumbai.

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Mangalore marks Bishop Basil's 25th death anniversary at Cathedral



Rev Dr Peter Paul Saldanha, bishop of Mangalore diocese, along with the Dr Aloysius Paul D'Souza, bishop emeritus and Dr Gerald Isaac Lobo, bishop of Udupi, priests and religious men and women and representatives of lay faithful offered a memorial Holy Eucharist and paid homage to Bishop Basil Salvadore D'Souza (1926-1956) on 25th death anniversary and paid at his tomb at Our Lady of Holy Rosary Cathedral on Thursday September 9.

This day marked 25 Years of Bishop Basil passing away - he breathed his last on September 5, 1996 and was laid to rest on September 09, 1996. His great legacy to the undivided diocese of Mangalore transformed common lives, reorienting the shape of the diocese through his remarkable achievements during his tenure as bishop for 31 years.



by Ivan Saldanha-Shet

Bishop Aloysius Paul D'Souza brought out the missionary aspects of Bishop Basil saying, "Bishop Basil's missionary zeal and pastoral approach was very unique. He lived according to his motto "to proclaim the riches of Christ" to all the people and made the diocese rich and strong in faith, morals, social and economic life. He will remain a guiding force and model inspiring to perform our mission faith-

fully with great love and dedication."

'Govlya Gaaz' (Shepherd's Echo), a documentary film produced by Canara Communication Centre was released by Bishop Aloysius Paul D'Souza after the memorial service, depicting Bishop Basil's life and mission. 'Porzolik Naketr' (Shining Star), a book written by Bishop Basil's close associates, compiled by Prof Stephen Quadros, Permude was unwrapped and released. Donations were distributed in the diocese and a needy family for the housing project from the funds collected.

Dr Gerald Isaac Lobo, bishop of Udupi expressed his deep practical sentiments of Bishop Basil, saying, "Bishop Basil proved to be a dynamic leader at a young age. He courageously took the responsibility of the diocese, nurtured and nourished it, introducing the major changes brought in by the Vatican Council II. His approach was progressive, positive and inspiring."

Mangalore Bishop Peter Paul welcomed the gathering. Msgr Maxim Noronha rendered the vote of thanks.

Recap on Bishop Basil Salvadore D'Souza

Bishop Basil Salvadore D'Souza, was the visible shepherd of the Catholic diocese of Mangalore, May 11, 1965 till his death on September 5, 1996, for 31 blessed years. Under his able far sighted leadership, the diocese which included the civil districts of Udupi, Dakshina Kannada and Kasargod saw constructive and progressive changes in a big way. During his tenure, many new parishes were erected and new educational and religious institutions were added. He was instrumental in starting the Canara Organisation for Development and Peace (CODP), Institute of social development (ISD). He started hospitals at Badyar and Kinnigoli. He organised the visit of Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa to Mangaluru. He was the first bishop to start liturgy in vernacular, getting the New Testament, Missal and the books of Mass readings translated into Konkani. Because of these initiatives, Konkani language became prominent and recognized in day to day matters. Mangalore became the first diocese to have pastoral representative bodies as per the directives of Vatican Council II under the guidance of Bishop Basil taking the diocese to new heights.

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Chat Etiquette

“Freedom without rules doesn’t work. And communities do not work unless they are regulated by etiquette.”

– **Judith Martin**

A common element of social communications that has become the key feature of the way we communicate is WhatsApp [WA]. Undeniably, however, this facet has also proved to be the bane of several relationships vis-à-vis WA. Determining what is good for WA users and what isn’t has never been easy—*Is repeating a forward okay? What’s wrong with circulating old news snippets?*

Is it too much to expect the recipient to delete something found unacceptable? And so it is that well meaning individuals and groups have been struggling with the issue of exacting maximum benefit from WA use with the minimum discontent and disquiet possible!

Suggested below are some norms of etiquette collated from personal research and interaction that would help make for smooth relational WA use for members and *admins* alike.

A. Keep in mind that -

01. We are all in the group to *have fun*, *learn from*, and *entertain* each other! So, live your life amiably, learning how to socialize and improve your social skills, and making new friends.
02. You are unique—without you the group would be less interesting.
03. Every member of the group is important, none bigger than the rest. So mutual respect is paramount!
04. No one gets paid. Rather, volunteering efforts that help fortify

the group’s closeness is a thing of love and shared concern. So never expect someone else to build the group, but do your best by making your own valuable contribution.

05. Nothing is original, all are ‘forwards’! Yet, it’s best to circulate forwards only after verifying their correctness.



by **Ladislaus Louis D’Souza**

06. Overlooking repeats may be considered normal by some. Nevertheless, an indication of a sense of maturity on the part of each member lies in at least glancing at forwards so as to ensure that we ourselves

don’t ever repeat them.

07. Essentially, reacting wisely to repeats with related information as to their veracity or falsity would be most apt, saving as it does in the long run, every member’s valuable time and energy.

08. It’d be ideal to treat everyone and everything with just the right blend of seriousness and lightheartedness it deserves, ensuring that your comment on a given post enriches it rather than fosters an argument.

B. The specifics -

09. **Be discerning** – If you imagine that a group text will remain private, i.e. between members, think again! Anything shared digitally risks going public at any time. If you wouldn’t want the information shared publicly, ensure you don’t share it on a group chat.

10. **Input = interest** - Having accepted your inclusion in a group, staying silent can be taken as an affront. For the sake of the relationships you value, chime in periodically with, “Hey! Haven’t had the time to keep up! But

here’re my two-bits...!” Likewise, instead of single-word responses like “yup” or a curt “k”, something like “sounds good to me”, or “Hmm... can’t wait to be there!” would sound better. Much emotion getting lost in digital banter, carefully chosen words and sentences can help clarify communication, besides deepening relationships.

11. **Mute rather than quit** - If a group chat interrupts your work or becomes bothersome, rather than leave the group, which could appear impolite, mute the conversation. If you’ve been mistakenly added or, perhaps, don’t think you belong, message the originator/admin of the group privately, seeking an exit.

12. **Stay relevant** - All members being responsible to the purpose of the group: (a) if the group was established as confidential, maintain that status; (b) if the chat emerged around a school event or business-related issue, make sure the content you share stays relevant to the group; (c) if you have a separate question, topic, or concern you’d like to discuss outside of the group chat, message individuals directly; (d) uploading random memes, inside jokes, or starting arbitrary conversations with individual members is disrespectful.

13. **Avoid ‘text bombing’** – Expecting recipients to delete your text if found unacceptable is crass. Rather, think before you text in. Considering that no one fancies repeated phone text alerts, organize your thoughts, condensing them in a single message rather than send multiple consecutive texts—widely known as ‘text bombing’.

14. **Smartphone mischief!** - Group chats can feel comfortable pretty fast. Yet, our smartphones being extra-smart, misunderstandings do arise easily, confounding confusion, obnoxious comments flying thick and fast. To minimize conflict, (a) be

(Contd.. on p. 8)

(Contd.. from p. 7)

neither too hasty nor too casual with your comments; (b) carefully read, review, correct and clarify your posts before hitting send. If you don't stop and take time to communicate properly, an ambiguous utterance can be misconstrued as offensive. Imagine messaging someone that you are going to 'Borivili' and being asked the next day as to how you made it back so fast from 'Bolivia'! (c) If you suspect friction, address it promptly with the group, or through direct individual messages with the members concerned; (d) check on quiet members to rule out feelings of exclusion or paranoia in a group chat.

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Mumbai based now in Dubai Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, 33 years, Ht. 5' 7", Fair Complexion, Edn.

15. Keep up with the context - If you've missed the point of a comment or query, don't randomly post "what?" or "huh?" seeking a recap. Instead, make due effort to scroll up to get the details and context in question.

16. Be smart, stay safe - If you don't personally know all the members in a group you've been added to, refrain from parting with personal or confidential information such as your full name and contact particulars, names of family members, your social security or credit card numbers, least of all hints concerning your passwords. Likewise, refrain

BMS, profession: a Senior Merchantiser (REF:107)

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from sharing similar data concerning fellow members without the express consent of those concerned. Dishonesty can rear its ugly head at any time, exploiting a digital relationship.

17. Decorum - Sometimes the social, cultural, or political climate can spill over into group chats, conversations instantly going from fun to emotionally-charged. While you can't control the crowd, you can certainly control yourself. Take a step back and carefully weigh comments. Even in the midst of disagreeing, show respect, compassion, and kindness.

18. Balance is everything - If seemingly efficient multiple digital relationships tax you emotionally, maybe it's time for a group chat detox. Using technology wisely and teaching the young to do likewise is crucial to living a healthy, balanced digital life. Texting can never equal the value of a face-to-face chat or personal time with friends.

19. Greetings - Sharing greetings for a given season or occasion on members' personal chatlines can make for further bonding. However, not an impersonal "Hi! Happy Diwali/Christmas/Birthday..." but "Hello Zita! A happy Christmas/Diwali/Birthday..." is what will work wonders!

The time for such norms for WhatsApp use Etiquette as above is nigh. And rather than wait for the government to impose restrictions on our WA use, its best to apply common sense to all WA use.

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The bogey of 'Love Jihad'

The bogey of 'Love Jihad' continues to be kept centre-stage! An insidious strategy to defocus on real issues plaguing society in India. Recently, a Bishop from Kerala directly accused Muslims for making 'Catholic' girls in the State, victims of 'love and narcotic jihad'; on 10 September the CM of Gujarat said that his Government is "dealing strictly with those who trap Hindu girls and elope with them." Both the Bishop and the BJP CM are wrong on several counts- and in fact, their words are patently unconstitutional. Their words are reflective of a patriarchal mindset – which regards an adult Catholic/Hindu woman as a 'moron' who is unable to think and decide for herself: be it in marrying the person of one's choice or for that matter embracing the religion of one's choice. Secondly, both Bishop and CM have absolutely nothing substantive to prove their point: the Bishop is certainly unable to say how many Kerala Catholic girls have married Hindus or people from other faiths; or for that matter just left the Catholic Church. It is exactly the same for the CM. The Bishop needs to have the honesty to address the scandals: financial and sexual within the Church; the CM needs to address the dismal state of affairs on every possible front, in Gujarat! Both Bishop and CM should also take a visible and vocal stand in championing the rights (particularly, dignity and equality) of women in the Church and Country!

The questions the Bishop and the CM need to ask are: if two mature consenting adults would like to marry, what right has the State to stop them from doing so? If a Dalit girl wants to embrace Buddhism, since it is the religion of her husband and will perhaps lead to enhancing the quality of her life, does she have the right to do

so? Or for that matter, if a Christian girl wants to freely embrace Islam after marrying a Muslim, does she also have the right to do so? Why should the State (with its brutal mechanism and vigilantes) or the Church, interfere in matters which are personal and private and clearly violative of Article 21: the right to privacy. On 24 August 2017, the Supreme Court of India in a historic judgement declared the right to privacy as a fundamental right, protected under the Indian Constitution. In declaring that this right stems from the fundamental right to life and liberty, the Court's decision has far-reaching consequences for every citizen



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ

On 8 September 2021, the Gujarat High Court sent a notice to the Government as to why it should not quash the first 'love jihad' case under the newly amended law. The woman concerned has petitioned the court to do so; she says that the charges made against her husband were fabricated by the police. Earlier, on 19 August, in a landmark interim order, the High Court stayed the operation of several sections of the Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act, 2021, including the provision that termed interfaith marriages as means for forceful conversion. The law, which was amended to bring in the clause on interfaith marriages as a means to carry out forced conversion, among other things, was passed by the Gujarat Assembly on 1 April; after the Gujarat Governor gave his assent on 22 May, the State Government notified it and enforced the amended law in the entire State from 15 June. There were two petitions that had challenged some of provisions of the amended Act, primarily on the grounds that the law is completely arbitrary and violates the right to privacy.

A division bench headed by Chief Justice Vikram Nath (who has now been elevated to the Supreme Court) stayed sections 3, 4, 4A to 4C, 5, 6 and 6A of the amended Act pending further hearing, saying they "shall not operate merely because a marriage is solemnised by a person of one religion with a person of another religion without force or by allurement or by fraudulent means and such marriages cannot be termed as marriages for the purposes of unlawful conversion". A week later the High Court (on 26 August) turned down the State Government's plea seeking rectification of its recent order in which it stayed the operation of Section 5 of the new anti-conversion law. That Section of the Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act, 2021 mandates that religious priests must take prior permission from the district magistrate for converting any person from one religion to another. Moreover, the one who got converted also needs to "send an intimation" to the district magistrate in a prescribed form. "We do not find reason to make any changes in the order passed by us on August 19", the same division bench stated after hearing the arguments put forth by State Advocate General. The recent interim orders passed by the Gujarat High Court are indeed path-breaking and will surely be used as a precedence in the challenge of the other draconian and unconstitutional 'anti-conversion' laws (or by its more innocuous sounding sobriquet 'freedom of religion' or the more derogative 'love jihad') which exist in some of the States today and is high on the agenda of the ruling regime as a national legislation.

The amendments of the 'Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act' were passed by the Gujarat State Assembly, amidst strong protests from the Opposition

(Contd.. on p. 10)

members. If it not for the fact that the original act of 2003 and its present amendments are blatantly violative of the Constitution, some of the provisions are so ridiculous that they could lead to tears of laughter! For example, 'The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill' state that, *"there are episodes of religious conversion promising better lifestyle, divine blessings and impersonation. There is an emerging trend in which women are lured to marriage for the purpose of religious conversion"*

The 'Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act 2003', which was passed by the Gujarat Assembly on 26 March 2003; at that time, the entire Opposition walked out. It took full five years till 2008, for the Gujarat Government to frame the necessary rules. The law is easily one of the most draconian ones in the history of any democracy in the world and was piloted by the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi who is currently the Prime Minister of India! During his election campaign in 2002, he singled out Muslims and Christians and promised to bring in an anti-conversion law.

The provisions of the 2003 law include the following:

- * it prohibits forcible conversion by allurement or fraudulent means. 'Allurement' is defined as "any gift or grant of any material benefit, either monetary or otherwise". 'Force' is defined as "show of force or a threat of injury of any kind, including threat of divine displeasure or social excommunication". 'Fraudulent means' is defined as "misrepresentation of any other fraudulent contrivance".
- * it provides for punishment of those who seek to forcibly convert for a period up to three years imprisonment and a fine up to Rs.50,000. but if the person being forcibly converted is a "minor, a woman, or a person belonging to scheduled caste or scheduled tribe", the punishment is for a term of up to four years imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1 lakh
- * anyone seeking to convert someone from one religion to another, either

by performing a ceremony as a religious priest, or takes part directly or indirectly in the ceremony, shall have to take prior permission from the district magistrate (a civil authority) through a prescribed format

- * the person who is sought to be converted shall have to intimate the district magistrate about the ceremony within a prescribed period, to be laid down in the rules. In case of default, the converted shall face upto one year imprisonment or a fine of Rs.1,000 or both

The Act was clearly aimed at the minorities of the State particularly the Muslims and Christians

In February 2006, in keeping with letter and spirit of his anti-Constitutional law, at a Shabri Kumbh (a mass gathering of Hindus) programme in the Dangs (supported by the Gujarat Government), Modi warned the Christians *"It is my constitutional duty to prevent conversions. Our Constitution disapproves of them, and yet some people turn a blind eye."* Morari Bapu accused the Christians of bringing in plane-loads of missionaries from the Vatican *"who come here to carry out conversion activities but when we organise a 'ghar wapsi' why should it be termed as bad?"* Both Modi and Morari Bapu also clearly endorsed the 'ghar wapsi' programmes which were part of that programme. In 2009, the constitutional validity of this law was challenged in the Gujarat High Court by the Gujarat United Christian Forum for Human Rights and others. A notice was sent to the Government to respond, they did not have do so. The petitioners later withdrew their petition with an intention of making it stronger.

The basic premise is not whether one has the right 'to convert another'; but whether a citizen has the right to freely choose a religion of one's choice. Article 25 of the Constitution of India *guarantees the freedom of conscience, the freedom to profess, practice and propagate religion to all citizens* and Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (of which India is a signatory) asserts that

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance".

Whilst piloting the recent amendments, the Home Minister of Gujarat Pradipsinh Jadeja, did not try to hide the communal intent of the Gujarat Government saying, *"Our Government will never forgive the Jihadi elements who abuse our daughters. Love Jihad is not our political agenda but it is our pain and our government is determined to take strict action by converting this pain into the system"*. In a manner which has come to characterise the mindset of the ruling regime, Jadeja added that love jihad was a ploy of Muslim countries to control India and attack the social fabric of the country. The April 1 amendments are not jokes nor tomfoolery. Referred to now as the 'Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2021' it provides more stringent punishment against forced religious conversions through marriage. The new law has provision for three to ten years in jail and a fine of up to five lakh rupees if the accused is found guilty. The Bill amends a 2003 Act and seeks to curb the emerging trend in which women are lured to marriage for the purpose of religious conversion. Gujarat is the fourth State to have a law on so-called 'forced' conversion after Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh.

The key amendments in the 'Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2021' include:

- The original act of 2003 specified only two categories of allurement or offer of temptation (under Section 2 of the Act): -Any gift or gratification, either in cash or kind, and a grant of any material benefit, monetary or otherwise
- However, the amendment bill proposes a third category

“better lifestyle, divine blessings or otherwise”.

- *Insertion of new Section 3A on Lodging of Complaint:*

Any aggrieved person, his parents, brother, sister or any other person related by blood,

marriage or adoption may lodge a first information report with the police station

having jurisdiction against the person

- *Insertion of new section 4A for Punishment for contravention of provisions Section 3 in case of marriage by unlawful conversion*

Notwithstanding anything contained in Section 4, whoever contravenes the provisions of Section 3, insofar as conversion by marriage or by getting a person married shall be punished with imprisonment which shall not be less than 3 years but which may extend to 5 years and shall also be liable to fine which shall not less than Rs. Two lakhs

- *Insertion of new section 4B on Marriage by unlawful conversion*

Any marriage which is done for the purpose of unlawful conversion by the person of

one religion with the person of another religion, either by converting himself/herself

before or after marriage shall be declared void by the Family Court or were the

Family Court is not established by the Court having jurisdiction to try such cases.

- *Section 4 (C), if any institution or organisation is found contravening the law,*

then every person who was in charge or was responsible for violation of law could be punished for imprisonment for three years (may extend up to 10 years) in jail and a fine of up to ₹5 lakh can be imposed.

- *Insertion of section 6A on Burden of Proof*

The burden of proof as to whether a religious conversion was not affected through misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement, or by any fraudulent means or by mar-

riage shall lie on the person who has caused the conversion and, where such conversion has been facilitated by any person by act, omission, aid, abetment or counselling, on such other person.

- *Offences to Be Cognizable and Non Bailable in Section 7*

The offences under the Act have been made Cognizable and Non Bailable and they will be investigated only by an officer who isn't below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police

There are several points both in the original Act of 2003 and in the recent amendments, which are not only contentious but blatantly unconstitutional. For example, the point of *‘better lifestyle, divine blessings or otherwise’*: this certainly has far-reaching implications and can have a whole range of interpretations. Let’s talk about *‘better lifestyle’*: who decides what is a so-called *‘better lifestyle’*? Take the instance of a person whose original religion dictated plenty of fast and penance – now s/he embraces a religion which say, allows eating plenty and perhaps a different type of food and also with less rigorous penance; all of this makes the *‘converter’* a happier person – could this be interpreted as a *‘better lifestyle’*?

Then there is the aspect of *‘divine blessing’*; for centuries, people from all walks of life have been invoking God’s blessings on each other! So, does it now mean that in Gujarat we can no longer say *“God bless you!”* or invoke God’s blessings (or divine intervention) on another for whatever the reason? Strange indeed! Then comes the whole dimension of preaching: the sermons and homilies that Christian priests, religious and catechists give all the time. One speaks about *‘heaven’*, *‘eternal life’*, *‘finding peace in God’* and so on – does all this contravene the newly amended law? The opposite is *‘divine displeasure’* which may come under this ambit: can one say that one may go to *‘hell’* if one does not obey the commandments of God or maybe even embrace a particular religion? The icing on the cake is the word *‘otherwise’* – what does it mean

legally, is it tenable or does one leave it to the whims and fancies of the so-called interpreter and judge of the law? Any informed and concerned citizen, knows that there are ample provisions in the CrPC to deal with anything to do with force and fraud, bribery and corruption, threat and kidnap – why are these not being used to deal with say the bogey of *‘love jihad’*? On the other hand, why are these not being used against our high and mighty politicians and other vested interests? They have made promises galore, cheated the poor and the marginalised of what is rightfully theirs and looted the nation. Many of them should have been imprisoned for life, long ago! The amended Gujarat Freedom of Religion law has provisions like the *‘offences to be cognizable and non-bailable’* which seem to taken right out from another draconian and anti-people legislation the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). We the people of India, are certainly experiencing difficult days under a fascist regime! These laws are against democratic tenets, the nation’s secular fabric and the fundamental rights of citizens. It reveals the agenda of a fascist regime that is clearly afraid that a thinking and discerning citizenry will expose their hegemony on the marginalised and the minorities, the Dalits and Adivasis of the country; above all, it is a pitiable attempt to defocus from the urgent and pressing issues which are destroying the nation today!

The Gujarat Court’s interim orders are a ray of hope to many who cherish the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. The so-called *‘love jihad’* is clearly a bogey! The Bishop needs to wake to the Gospel of Jesus; and together with the CM of Gujarat and their ilk should realise that we have a Constitution which is sacred and meant to guarantee and protect the rights of all citizens!

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

Riddle

If a baby born In the morning is called Monica, in the evening is Evelyn and on the floor is Florence. What do you call a baby born in a car?

Answer: Carlos, if it is a boy and Carolina, if it is a girl.

— Jubel D'Cruz

Police officer talks to a driver: Your tail light is broken, your tires must be exchanged and your bumper hangs halfway down. That will be 300 dollars.

-
Driver: Alright, go ahead. They want twice as much as that at the garage.

Why did the physics teacher break up with the biology teacher?

There was no chemistry.

Husband: "Oh the weather is lovely today. Shall we go out for a quick jog?"

-
Wife: "Hahaha, I love the way you pronounce 'Shall we go out and have a cake!'"

A doctor asks his patient angrily, "Why did you send my bill back, unopened, Mr. Gunrick?"

Mr Gunrick explains, "But doctor, it was you who told me I must avoid any upsets and stress!"

A skeleton walks into a restaurant. After a while the waiter comes and says: "I'm so sorry, sir. You must have been waiting pretty long."

A guest calls the waiter and complains, "How come there are no chairs at our table?!"

-
The waiter shrugs, "I'm sorry but you only booked one table..."



Police officer: "Your car is too heavily overloaded. I simply cannot let you continue like that. I'm going to have to take away your driver's license."

Driver: "You're kidding me, right? The license can only weigh one ounce tops!"

Insurance clerk: "Where were you born, sir?"

Man: "In the United States."

Insurance clerk: "OK, and which part?"

Man: "My entire body."

A boy breaks an old vase at a rich uncle's house. The uncle gets extremely angry and yells: "Do you even know how old the vase was? It was from the 17th century!" The boy sagged in relief: "Oh, good that it wasn't new."

The police stops a computer hardware engineer: "Your light isn't working. You have to get off your bike."

IT guy: "I tried that but the light still isn't working."

Man to his wife: "Do you know what our 6 year old son wants to be once he's big?"

Wife: "No."

Man: "A garbage man. And you know why?"

Wife: "No, why?"

Man: "Because he thinks they only work on Tuesdays."

Mother: Eat your bread.

Child: I don't like bread. Why do I have to eat the bread.

Mother: So you become big and strong.

Child: Why do I have to become big and strong?

Mother: So you can provide the daily bread to your family.

Child: But I don't like bread!

A guy calls the fire department and yells excitedly: "You have to come, now, there's a fire!"

"OK sir, but please tell us how do we get to you."

The man asks, puzzled: "What, you don't have them big red trucks anymore?"

Paul to Jane: Would you like to be my girlfriend?

Jane: That's a bit direct. Can't you come up with something more beautiful?

Paul: I tried, but they didn't want.

The local minister sees that every morning, some apples on his tree are missing. He makes a sign:

God sees everything.

The next morning, somebody writes under it: Yes, but he's not a snitch.

An old guy in his Volvo is driving home from work when his wife rings him on his cell phone.

"Honey," she says in a worried voice, "please be careful. There was a bit on the news just now, some lunatic is driving the wrong way down the highway."

"Oh it's worse than that," he replies, "there are hundreds of them!"

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Jelly Custard



Ingredients:

1/2 litre fresh milk
 3 tbsp banana or any other flavour custard powder
 5 tbsp sugar
 1/2 cup water
 200 gm strawberry jelly crystals
 Red syrup for decoration

Method:

Boil the milk, add sugar and stir for a few minutes. Dissolve custard powder in a little water and gradually add in milk. Stirring continuously, remove from the flame when the milk thickens. Pour into a bowl. Heat water and add the jelly crystals; pour into a mould and allow to set. Cut the jelly into cubes and add to the custard. Decorate with syrup, then refrigerate till it turns cold. Serve into small bowls when the jelly custard turns cold.

— Jubel D'Cruz

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The Power Of One

Some of you may have seen my latest YouTube Hindi video $1+1=11$ (eleven). It is the title of a 2003 Bollywood movie starring Govinda and Sanjay Dutt. You may also have heard the Hindi saying “*Akele channa bhar nahin phor sakta*” (A single grain of gram cannot break the vessel in which it is being roasted). I do not subscribe to this latter view because I believe in the Power of One.

In the course of human history we had only one Jesus Christ or the Buddha. In the last century we had only one Albert Einstein and Mahatma Gandhi, that India Today magazine described as the greatest path breakers of that century. We also had just one Hitler, Stalin or Mao Tse Tung. Each, in his own way, altered the course of history. So let us not underestimate the Power of One.

In my aforementioned video I did some mathematical equations with the numeral 1, used twice. Let's have a look: $1-1=0$; $1/.1=1$; $1 \times 1=1$; $1+1=2$; $1 \text{ loves } 1=3+$; $1 \text{ and } 1 \text{ together } =11$ (eleven). The first four are simple mathematical equations, while the last two are sociological ones. Let us now apply them to human situations.

$1-1=0$ is when there is hatred between individuals. The sum total of that relationship is zero. $1/.1=1$ is division. We may not necessarily hate others, but we divide them; be it on religious, caste, gender or class lines. Again we don't progress as the sum total is just 1. In the third equation I have used an x symbol for want of a better one. Here I mean when two persons cross (x) swords, as in sport. In disciplines like badminton, tennis or volleyball there is a net (x) that separates them. Here again there is only one winner, and a loser, so the sum total again is $1 \times 1=1$.

The fourth equation is pretty obvious $1+1=2$. This is symbolic of friendship, as in two friends coming together. Their bond of friendship obviously is stronger than their individuality. Yet, an exclusive friendship, that is closed to others, as most are, cannot expand beyond the sum total of both. It is good, but not good enough to really impact society.

The fifth equation is a sociological one, symbolizing a marital bond. This is not limited to the couple as it is open to bringing more life into the world. So $1 \text{ loves } 1=3+$; or the old family planning jingle, “We two, our two”.



by chhotebhai *

The sixth equation is the big one where 1 and 1 together =11 (eleven). Here the sum total exceeds its parts. This happens when we bring people together in unity and fraternity. It is never easy, but where there is a will there is a way.

What happened to hate mongers like Hitler? They are confined to the dustbins of history. Their achievements were a big 0. What about divisive forces so prevalent in the current social and political discourse of India? They too will meet their Waterloo. See what happened to the great divider, Donald Trump.

I was horrified when on this Independence Day our Prime Minister declared that henceforth every 14th August (incidentally Pakistan's Independence Day) would be commemorated as Partition Horror Day. This is nothing but the opening of old wounds, for immediate electoral gain; though at the cost of destroying the delicately woven social fabric (tana-bana) of the nation. This is shameful. What if Pakistan now declares our Bangladesh Vijay Diwas as its version of Partition

Horror Day? There is no end to such divisiveness. Indeed like $1/.1=1$ it will not take its proponents very far.

Now to the third equation, $1 \times 1=1$. By its very nature competitive sport or electoral politics produces only one winner; so there is no forward movement. Yet there are exceptions. In South Africa, Nelson Mandela introduced a Reconciliatory Commission. There were two beautiful instances from the recent Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Its motto of “Faster, Higher, Stronger” has been expanded to include “Together”. It changes the complexion of competitive sport.

The first instance is of Neeraj Chopra, our gold medallist javelin thrower. Some unscrupulous, divisive elements spread the canard that his Pakistani competitor Arshad Nadeem had tried to sabotage his equipment. Neeraj was livid and denounced this mischief, saying that they were competitors, not gladiators, gunning for each other's throats.

An even more telling example was from High Jump. Two good friends, Gianmarco Tamberi of Italy, and Mutaz Essa of Qatar were tied for first place. Finally Essa requested the judges to declare them as joint winners. The judges were touched and awarded gold medals to both of them. This was sportsmanship not competition. There was no loser, only two winners, what management gurus describe as a Win-Win situation.

The above is a fine example of the fourth equation $1+1=2$. True friendship entails seeing the other person's interest, not just one's own. However, such friendships tend to be exclusive, not allowing others to enter that space. So again it has a limited impact.

The fifth equation, if at all it can be

(Contd.. on p. 15)

(Contd.. from p. 14)

called mathematical, is that of multiplication. It is a relationship that is expansive, in the form of children. We are moving forward; though here again most families would be inward looking and not thinking of the greater good. For example, producing a large family could further one's personal interest but be detrimental to society.

This brings us to the sixth and final equation; that of uniting all people for the common good. Its impact far exceeds the sum total of its parts. It is a force multiplier. This Fraternity was the battle cry of the French Revolution. It is echoed in the preamble of India's Constitution. It is also the opening word of Pope Francis' October 2020 encyclical "Fratelli Tutti".

This March Pope Francis went on a pilgrimage to Iraq. I quote from his speech on 6/3/2021 at Ur, the birthplace of Abraham, equally revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims.

"There will be no peace without sharing and acceptance, without a justice that ensures equity and advancement for all ... There will be no peace as long as our alliances are against others ... as they only increase divisions. Peace does not demand winners or losers, but rather brothers and sisters ... Anyone who believes in God has no enemies to fight. He has only one enemy to face ... hatred. Those who follow the ways of God cannot be against someone, but for everyone ... It is up to us to turn instruments of hatred into instruments of peace". I daresay that I am on the same page as our dear Pope Francis.

I end with the concluding prayer of Jesus, shortly before his crucifixion. "May they all be one" (Jn 17:21). Of this unity the psalmist had earlier proclaimed "How good, how delightful it is to live as brothers all together" (Ps 133:1). The apostles Peter and Paul also eulogise this fraternal love and unity.

"Finally, you should all agree among

yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing" (1 Pet 3:8). "Take every care to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together" (Eph 4:3). Words of wisdom.

Of the six equations that I have expressed which one do we choose? Do we want to be remembered as agents of unity or hate and division? The choice is before each one of us to exercise the Power of One.

The writer is the Convenor of the Indian Catholic Forum. He may be contacted at noronha.kp@gmail.com or 9415130822.

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MATRIMONIALS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7166 MUMBAI : Mangalorean Christian Parents seek alliance for their daughter, (Born in May 1992), Ht. 5'4", having completed her BCAF, presently working with MNC in Mumb ai. Contact email : ste004ffy@yahoo.in

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

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 postgraduate degrees from the University of Toronto. Working for a reputed company as Energy Management Analyst in Toronto. 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

7249. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Divorcee, (Born in November 1956), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 75 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. S.Y.B.A., Retired and well settled. Contact Mob.: 9221792354

7165. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1979) Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 63 kgs, Fair, Edn. B.Com., Post Graduation in Supply chain & Ship Management, working as an E-commerce online support. Contact email :

examiner4@yahoo.com

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

rajesh.dsz15@gmail.com

5996. MUMBAI : RC Bachelor (Born in November 1974) / 5'8", B.E., working in Senior position reputed IT

firm. Seeks alliance from R.C. spinster educated good family background Pl. reply with photograph and details to keithcardozo@hotmail.com OR **9820338755**

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

dsouzamalcolmneil@gmail.com. Phone/SMS 09480157258.

6424. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1991), Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., well employed, working as Sr. Customer Care Executive. Contact email :

gerardd754@gmail.com,

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

ian.roshan.dsouza@gmail.com

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

7237. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July

1990), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M. Eng., MBA., PGDM., working as an Asst. Engg. Manager. Contact email :

dannypinto@gmail.com

7236. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1986), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 67 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Edn MBA. PGDM., MBA from NMIMS, working as a Manager in Bank. Contact email :

sallysylviana@yahoo.in

7233. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1983), Ht. 6' 1", Wt. 83 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. HSC, IHM, IT., working as a Instrument Tech., working offshore (Rigs). Contact email :

bragandcruz@rediffmail.com

7232. GOA : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in July 1980), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 65 kgs, Tan Complexion, Edn. Diploma in Automobile Technology, Self employed. Contact email :

darwindsouza28@gmail.com

7231. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Divorcee, (Born in August 1970), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Diploma Holder, working as a Manager with a Cruise liner based in **USA**. Work entails 6 months work and 2/3 months vacation. Contact email :

raisaraisa1212@yahoo.in

7227. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1990), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 73 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Senior HR. Contact email :

baptistadarryl@yahoo.in

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

amlahenry11@gmail.com

7155. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1980) Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 67 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 12th std., having own business asm well settled. Contact email :

mendoncajason@gmail.com

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7254. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1981), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 69 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. F.Y. B.Com., Completed Aviation Course & holds knowledge of French Language and computer course. Contact email : evane_martis@yahoo.co.in

7253 MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1992), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.A., Profession : Professor. Contact email : basileitao@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

7252 MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1992), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 52 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.A., working, Contact email : candyh883@gmail.com

7251 MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic innocent Divorcee (Born in March 1992), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, Profession : HR., Contact email : fds140490@gmail.com

7250 BHOPAL : Anglo Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1988), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 48 kgs, Slim, Very Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., MBA., working as a HR Manager. Contact email : xaviers2k11@gmail.com

7248 MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in March 1992), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 59 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA Graduate - Human Resources. Currently working in Mumbai as an Executive for a International I.T. Company. (Full UK recruitment.) Contact email : librans19@yahoo.com or Whatsapp No. 9833116683

7245. BANGALORE : Gujarati Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1985), Only Child, Ht. 5', Wt. 43 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. 10 + 3, Architect in German Company. Contact email : pmcandy1957@gmail.com

7210. AURANGABAD : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in January 1994), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, good looking, beautiful, Coming from business family, Edn. Chartered Accountant, C.A. by Profession. Contact email : putturaurangabad@gmail.com

7244. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1992), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 54 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., Chartered Accountant, working in one of the Top Five reputed companies in Mumbai. Contact email : fionadesouza18@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

7243. NEW ZEALAND : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1996), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Sc., Nursing, Profession : Staff Nurse. Ready to settle in New Zealand. Contact email : sales@nomaplastechind.in

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

7230. MUMBAI : Silm, Smart, Beautiful Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1995), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working in Pharmaceutical Company. Contact email : alex1947@rediffmail.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

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 : frfernandes020@gmail.com

7160. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1988), Ht. 5' 7", Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS, working as a Senior Merchandiser

in a Global Retail Company in Dubai. Contact email : prislobo10@gmail.com

7128. MUMBAI : Affluent business family R.C. East Indian Spinster, (Born in 12-04-1988), Ht. 5' 2", very beautiful and pretty. Edn. MS General Surgeon, Doctor by profession. Contact email : drvd2019@gmail.com

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

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

7219. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Born Again Spinster, (Born in October 1993), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 61 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Post Graduate Diploma in Human Resources, working as a HR in MNC. Seeks only Born Again Bachelor. Contact email : gladfer_9@yahoo.com

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

7065. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1989), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 69 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. M.Sc., & Dip. in Clinical Research, working as Business Process Lead in TCS. Contact email : mendonca_luke@yahoo.co.in

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First Priest with Jesus' Wounds

(St Pio of Pietrelcina)

By Fr. F. M. Britto

He had often said, "After my death, I will do more. My real mission will begin after my death." Because he continues to do what he had done earlier, Padre Pio has become one of the most popular saints today.

He was born as Francesco Forgione on May 25, 1887, to Grazio Maria Forgione and Maria Giuseppa Di Nunzio in Pietrelcina, South Italy, as the second of five children. Though his parents were illiterate peasants, they were very religious. As a boy, he was sickly and worked in their field and cared the family sheep to earn some money for his home.

The young Francesco entered the Capuchin Friars at Morcone. Since he lacked sound formal education, he had to be tutored privately. At his Religious profession, the 15 years old took the name Pio, in honour of Pope Pius I. Besides having devotion to the mystical body of Christ, he was devoted to Mary, the Rosary and weekly confessions.

Ordained a priest in 1910, due to ill-health, Padre Pio was sent to a small agricultural community, Our Lady of Grace Capuchin Friary at San Giovanni Rotondo. He remained there for 58 years until his death. When World War I broke, he was also drafted to serve the military service on Nov 15, 1915. But due to poor health, he was declared unfit for it.

After the Mass, while he was hearing the confessions on Sept 20, 1918, he informed his spiritual director Father Benedetto, he saw a mysterious person, whose hands, feet and the side were dripping blood. When the vision disappeared, Padre Pio's hands, feet and the side were also dripping blood. "The pain was so intense that I began

to feel as if I were dying on the cross," he said. He also at times had the pains of the thorns and the scourging of Jesus. On certain days and circumstances the pain was severe.

While some criticised these wounds to be fake, some who studied them, claimed they were unexplainable. So the Vatican imposed severe sanctions on him in the 1920s to reduce his publicity and forbade him public Mass, blessing people, answering letters, hearing confessions, showing his stigma and even communicating with his spiritual director Father Benedetto. The Holy See even made statements from 1924 -'31 denying that the events in his life were due to any divine cause.

A large number of doctors visited Padre Pio to study his wounds. First his provincial father superior appointed Doctor Luigi Romanelli, chief physician of the civil hospital of Barletta, to study his wounds. The doctor declared on May 15-16, 1919, "I am sure that these wounds are not superficial."

The Holy See deputed Bishop Raffaele Rossi of Volterra to study and submit a report. After eight days of investigation, he submitted a report on October 4, 1921, saying that the 34 years old Father Pio's stigmata are "real fact." He affirmed, "The stigmata are not a work of the devil, nor a gross deceit, a fraud, the trick of a devious and malicious person."

Pope Pius XI ordered the reversal of his public appearance ban in 1933. Pope Pius XII, who succeeded him in 1939, encouraged devotees to visit Padre Pio. Pope Paul VI also dismissed all accusations against him.

Padre Pio also became popular due to other spiritual gifts like healing, bilocation, ecstasy, prophecy, miracles, ability to read heart, of tongues, the

gift of conversions, pleasant smelling wounds and extraordinary abstinence from food and sleep.

Many travelled to meet him, to request his prayers and to confess to him. Feeling embarrassed and humiliated, he asked the Lord to remove the external signs, but not withdraw the pain. He covered the wounds with red mittens or black coverings.

Spending many hours in the confessional, he gave five rules for spiritual growth: weekly confessions, daily communion, spiritual reading, meditation and exam of conscience. "Pray, hope and don't worry," he advised them. Though he was hard on the hard hearted sinners, Padre Pio was kind and charitable to all who came to meet him. There were many spiritual healings as people returned to the Faith. Attending his long Mass was a true experience of the Eucharist, with his ecstasy and sufferings. His preaching was earth-shaking. Though he spent many hours in the confessional, he was very joyful in the community.

The 81 years old Padre Pio died on Sept 23, 1968, due to long illness. After his death, the wounds, which he suffered fifty years and which never got infected, disappeared with no visible scar. He is alleged to be the first stigmatized Catholic priest.

Forty years after his death, when his body was exhumed on March 3, 2008, for displaying his remains, his body was found "in fair condition."

Pope John Paul II declared him on Dec 18, 1997 Venerable, Blessed in 1999 and a saint on June 16, 2002, not due to his stigmata, but because he was a man of prayer and suffering. ●

A Handful of Rice

Dr Jeanette Pinto

One of the many interesting and uplifting posts that I received during the pandemic is how people in different countries reached out to the victims of this crisis. This is the story of the 'handful of rice,' which unfolds that 'giving is better than receiving.' It is a regular unique and life-giving practice of a people little known, living in the Mizoram State of India, located in the northeastern part of the country. This mountainous region became the 23rd state of the Indian Union in 1987.

The Mizo people are an ethnic group of peoples native to this region, who speak various Mizo-Kuki-Chin languages. They are an indigenous people. Mizoram has great natural beauty and an endless variety of landscapes, rich in fauna and flora. About 20% of Mizoram's population lives below the poverty line. 87% of the people follow Christianity, while the rest follow either Buddhism, Hinduism or Islam.

The Mizos are a gregarious, simple, carefree and peace-loving people. There is no class distinction and no discrimination on grounds of sex. Since the days of the chieftains, they have always been a society knitted together by a peculiar code of social ethics with moral values based on 'Tlawmngaihna'. It means always being ready to assist others or **selfless service for others**, a rare principle in tune with Christianity. This ensures that one does not become a burden for others. It also helps everyone to be hospitable, kind, unselfish and helpful to others.

Agriculture is the main occupation, and they practice **Jhum** or shifting cultivation. An arduous task of jhum operation is jungle clearing like the remnants of burning. The **Chapchar Kut** is a festival of Mizoram during the month of March; it is the spring festival celebrated with gaiety. Rice is the staple food of Mizoram. However, the Mizos love to add non-vegetarian ingredients in every dish, namely fish, chicken, pork and beef are popular meats.

It is amazing to learn how in multifarious ways people and organisations the world over is helping to make the 'Kingdom of God' come on earth. Mizoram is indeed a witness to this although it is the most backward and poorest of the poor states of India. Studies indicate that presently it is one of the fastest growing economies. Despite their poverty it is heartening to learn of their values of giving, caring and outreach to community.

It is a traditional practice that each Mizo family puts aside a handful of rice at every meal. Every home rich or poor, young or old follows this custom. They collect the rice and later offer this to their church. The church in turn sells the rice and generates income, which helps support the poor in their community. What surprises on is that this ministry started in Mizoram way back over a hundred years ago in

1910. The concept became so popular over the years that giving was not limited to some individuals.

Youngsters grow up with this customary giving practice called **Buhfai Tham** – a Christian service that anyone can do. Over time people started to also give not only rice but firewood, vegetables, and also cash, making the Church self sufficient. The Bible encourages selfless giving from our heart as the spirit prompts us, "not grudgingly or of necessity for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor.9:7) Giving from the heart is a Pro-life act, investing in another's life. You are giving what is basic, essential and fundamental to life. Every family learns to make this sacrifice, they almost consider it a duty.



by:
**Dr Jeanette
Pinto**

In 1914 the money received from 'a handful of rice' was about Rs 80/ but by the year 2010, the amount was in lakhs of Rupees. They have no foreign funding all the money is raised within among themselves. Today they are able to support not only their church, but also about 1800 mission workers, and are able to also send missionaries overseas.

What can they get in return? They seek nothing, but develop the attitude of joyful giving and generosity all through life. "The handful of rice' inspires us that we are called to share what we have with God for His ministry. People say, "as long as we have something to eat everyday, we have something to give to God everyday." Indeed, it is such an appreciable, inspirational, and lofty gesture on the part of a people content with the little they are blessed with.

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