

THE SECULAR CITIZEN

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A NATIONAL FAMILY WEEKLY

The Hug, Unplugged

by **chhotebhai**

Has Pope Francis sold his soul to the devil? Oops sorry, I meant Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Christians in India awoke on Sunday (31st October) morning to see screaming headlines accompanied by a large photograph of Pope Francis and Narendra Modi hugging each other. It evoked mixed reactions. Going by those in the Catholic media it would seem that Pope Francis had lost it, by conceding so much public space to the ever camera ready Modi.

I read and study what Pope Francis says. I also get daily bulletins from Rome. Pope Francis has his head and heart in the right place. He is not a fool or a coward to be carried away by photo ops with Modi. He would have done his homework thoroughly before the meeting, as evidenced by his gift of a medallion for Modi's mother. A prominent Catholic leader, in a recent article, has gone to the extent of questioning Pope Francis' commitment and concern for the Christian community in India!

Why are we getting panicky? I feel that some of these erudite commentators are like frogs in the well telling whales how to swim in the mighty ocean. To unplug the significance of the hug we need to study the *dramatis personae*.

Anybody who has been closely following this pontificate, as I certainly have been, would vouch for Pope Francis being a genuine person. He is straightforward, not a soft diplomat. If left leaning Christians in India are aghast at this meeting we have the right wing in the USA who were even more aghast at his meeting with Joe Biden, calling him a good Catholic, and for not calling him out for his party's pro-choice (read pro-abortion) stance. Pope Francis, like Jesus himself, has his fair share of critics because he is not a status quoist.



Look at some of his recent high profile engagements. A couple of years ago he met the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyab of the Al Azhar mosque, Cairo, Egypt; during his Abu Dhabi visit. This mosque is considered the greatest seat of learning for the Sunni Muslims. This March, during his visit to Iraq, he met the 90 year old Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Al-Hussayni Al-Sistani, the head of the Shia

Muslims, in Najaf. Not standing on ceremonies, Francis took off his shoes to enter the Ayatollah's house as per their custom. He is only following in the footsteps of his mentor, St Francis of Assisi, who at the height of the Crusades, walked all the way to Egypt to meet Sultan Malik-el-Kamil, the leader of the Saracens (Muslims).

Lest Christians from Sister Churches (I detest the British era term "denominations") feel left out, recall that he warmly embraced (emphasis embraced) Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew and welcomed the head of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury to his recent inter-religious meet. I will rest my defence of Pope Francis with two quotes from his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. "Myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise ... Love, justice and solidarity are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day (FT 11). And again, "The best way to dominate and gain control over people is to spread despair and discouragement, even under the guise of defending certain values" (FT 15). Francis' words are equally applicable to the despairing frogs in the well as to the photo optic whales in the ocean.

Now to the other persona – Modi. It is common knowledge that he is inordinately camera conscious, even pushing away those who block the view. The classic example is of his donning saffron robes to meditate in a temple cave in Kedarnath on the eve of the Lok

(Contd.. on p. 3)

NCB image dented?

All central law enforcing agencies have enormous powers vested in them. At times they stretch those powers a bit too far and find themselves in the eye of a storm especially if they are targeting highly placed personalities like the politicians and celebrities having a huge fan following. Sameer Dnyandev Wankhede the high profile NCB Zonal Director has been targeting celebrities for the past couple of years post Sushant Singh murder under mysterious circumstances. A number of actors and actresses were targeted but nothing really happened. Not even a charge sheet which means nothing really was found which could stand the scrutiny of the courts. The latest target is Aryan Khan - the son of a mega star and naturally the case has evoked tremendous interest. Too much has been made out of the raid on the cruise ship. The witnesses are supposed to be independent but in this case the two witnesses, their role is suspect. Once somebody is detained the role of a witness is just to sign the panchnama of the raid and the contents seized etc. One of them Gosavi is wanted by the Maharashtra government in a criminal case. He is also believed to have connections with the ruling party at the centre.

In this case Gosavi is seen literally dragging the high profile detainee – Aryan Khan by his collar into the NCB's office. This is something the NCB officials are supposed to do. Also he is seen taking a selfie with the accused. To make things worse, he dials a number and makes the accused speak to someone which surprised many. An detainee is not allowed to speak to anyone except maybe in the presence of the NCB official. It is this part of the whole episode that exploded into a controversy which has erupted into a full-blown war between the NCB = Sameer Wankhede and the cabinet minister – Nawab Malik in the MVA government. Of course the minister's son-in-law was arrested a few months earlier for similar offence and naturally the minister had an axe to grind with Wankhede. The Minister has dug into his past and brought out some issues which have rattled the NCB. One of the witnesses of the NCB has turned hostile and accused the other witness of extortion of a huge amount. He has also named Wankhede as a part of the deal. This allegation has dented the image of the agency and in a swift action NCB

IEWS on NEWS

sent a team of officials to question all those concerned. Malik may have a personal grudge against Wankhede but the issues he has raised need to be probed. They cannot be simply brushed aside saying Wankhede has served in the government for a long time. Longevity of service is no insulation from scrutiny. If Wankhede is aggrieved he can take Malik to court for his utterances outside the assembly.

Drug menace has to be wiped out from the face of the earth – not only from Mumbai or India. Provisions of the statute are stringent. Result? Thousands are languishing in jails for months and even years because legal remedy is prohibitive. It took the celebrity detainee to hire best legal brains to get him bail. How many average people can afford such costs? Everybody's parents are not mega stars. The apex court must look into this. They must make getting bail a much easier exercise. Going by the conviction ratio, numerous accused suffer in jails for no reason – simply because courts take years to bring closure to the cases. Should not the agencies, which send them to jail, also be accountable? But the undue delay is getting justice lets off the erring official. By the time the case is decided, he would have retired. Why are vacancies in courts not filled for years? Since the retirement dates are predetermined, the process to appoint replacement can actually start much in advance. Can the retired judges from the subordinate and higher courts be engaged on contractual basis to bring down the pendency of cases, which like run rate in cricket, go on increasing year after year?

World Cup fiasco

Indian Cricket authorities are obsessed with revenue. They want the players to play non-stop and generate funds for the Board. IPL may be a nursery for budding cricketers but the tournament is exhausting and time consuming. Now they want ten teams and it will stretch further. So what? So long as the Board mints millions and dominates the cricket world it is happy. Indians played in India then went to England on a long tour followed by a stint in Dubai to complete the second half of the IPL schedule. Mind you, all this in an atmosphere



by Marshall Sequeira

of a 'bubble' must have been suffocating for the players. Add to this the scorching desert heat which must have sapped their energy. By the time the World Cup encounter started, they would have lost all interest in the tournament.

They played the practice games without any stress and performed well but the real test awaited the competitive games. There was too much of hype over the Indo-Pak encounter and going by the past success, a sense of complacency crept in. The body language of the players including the opening batters made them easy prey for the resurgent Pak players. Nobody really stood up and folded for a paltry score. The arch rivals made the Indian bowlers look like club bowlers. The performance against the Kiwis was no better. Indians showed good sportsmanship on the field. Beating smaller teams handsomely is no certificate for excellence. The team is finally out of the reckoning.

Pakistan supporters had all the reasons to celebrate. A convincing win against India after a dozen losses must have galvanized the Pak team and they showed it through their subsequent encounters. Of course, they showed restraint on the field and played the game in the spirit in which it is to be played. However the politicians in Pak linked the success to religion. In doing so, they admitted that Allah did not support them in their earlier twelve encounters. Ridiculous! It shows their mindset. Waqar Yonus took the cake. Being a sportsman of international repute he also stooped too low only to be scorned at by sportsmen. The trolls by Indians against Mohammed Sami were deplorable. His commitment to the national team can never be questioned and it is said that a few disgruntled people think otherwise to gain cheap publicity. It is good that the Indian captain stood by him. Back home, the team will have a new T-20 skipper as well as a new coach and it is hoped that they will give a better account of themselves against the Kiwis who have always had an upper hand.

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Sabha elections in 2019. Since electioneering had stopped he found an excellent way to say everything without opening his mouth. We cannot fault him for his astuteness.

Writing in the Indian Express on the day that the photo-op appeared, Liz Mathew wrote that the BJP was eyeing its voter base in Goa and Manipur (both due to go to the polls shortly) as also Kerala and the North East. Which politician is not looking for such opportunities? Critics of the Congress could say the same for Priyanka Gandhi shedding crocodile tears for the slain farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri.

The editor of the Satyadeepam, a Catholic journal from Kerala, was critical of the meeting. Rev Suresh Mathew, editor of Indian Currents, asked the Pope to shed diplomacy and express concern for religious freedom and human rights. These worthies have been quick to judge the Pope. The only ones who have expressed unabashed support are the Catholic bishops of Kerala who have hit the headlines for all the wrong



by chhotebhai *

reasons in the recent past. Unfortunately, while the Government of India has assiduously issued statements of what transpired at the hug, obviously emphasising climate change and Covid; there is no official communiqué from either the Vatican or the Nunciature in India. This is where they can be faulted; resulting in all kinds of conjectures in the Christian community in India.

All we heard was about the inscription on the bronze plaque prepared by artist Daniela Fusco that the Pope presented to Modi. It read "The wilderness will become a fruitful field" (Is 32:15). It is indicative of the transition "from selfishness to sharing, from war to peace, the change that takes place when men and women open their hearts to the authentic values of growth and social harmony". We do not know how forcefully the Pope put this message across to Modi.

For me the more worrying issue is Modi's invitation to the Pope to visit India, an invitation that was graciously accepted. This is where I am uncomfortable. By virtue of the official invitation this automatically becomes a State visit, replete with a ceremonial Guard of Honour and State protocol.

I have always found this abhorrent. Even well meaning Hindus question why such preferential treatment should be accorded to one who is essentially a religious, not political leader? The Vatican City State is just a consequence of history from the last century and should not be given over-arching consideration.

This aberration was further heightened when Pope John Paul II paid his second visit to India in 1999, for the release of his encyclical "Ecclesia in Asia". His grossly insensitive remark that the third millennium was for the conversion of Asia, well and truly set the cat among the pigeons. How could he have been so naïve? I don't blame the Hindus for faulting a State guest for making such a statement at Government expense.

I equally fault the CBCI for earlier going to the Prime Minister literally begging him to invite the Pope to India. Why couldn't the CBCI invite the Pope as a religious leader, minus all the State protocol? That would have greatly reduced the antagonism to a papal visit.

Another noteworthy point. Nobody has taken cognizance of Ajit Singh

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Politics and Religion – Partners in Crime Everywhere

by Don Aguiar.

Stalin once ripped all the feathers off a live chicken as a lesson to his followers. He then set the chicken on the floor a short distance away. The chicken was bloodied and suffering immensely, yet, when Stalin began to toss some bits of wheat towards the chicken it followed him around. He said to his followers “This is how easy it is to govern stupid people, they will follow you no matter how much pain you cause them, as long as you throw them a little worthless treat once in a while”.

Do we see any similarities in present-day India, Afghanistan and many other countries which are now proving to be yet another perfect example of what the news has been warning humanity about, since forever?. **That the basic cause of all our problems is very simple: It is the priest and politicians. They are the ultimate partners in crime. It may promote itself as a marriage in heaven, but the results are made in hell.**

Instead of listening to that warning, the masses, give support to their political and religious ideologies. In return, the priests and the politicians use the power we give them to brainwash us into continuing to support those same ideologies – in a catastrophic vicious circle. Of course, with each catastrophe we are assured, “Never Again!” And again, and again, and again, and again....

We are a country of dead people. No-where else would people have tolerated the daily and unjustified rise in petrol, diesel and LPG prices? If the government collected 75,000 cr in taxes 2014, it is today collecting 3.50 lakh cr. isn't it daylight robbery?

Meanwhile, the masses continue to in-

doctrinate their children, with the help of education, the media, and the other “pillars” of society, with those same beliefs and values. In this way, those in power are able to make sure that nothing fundamental ever changes and we can be relied on to turn up and support them, as required.

To complete the process, the masses will of course nod their heads approvingly as the whole charade is given the stamp of heavenly approval by some priestly figure. Once enough of them are locked into identifying with one geographical location or another, with one ideology or another, then the competition between these places and between the different beliefs inevitably follows – leading to whatever level of violence is required to prove they are right. The same destructive mess they see all around them continues in an endless sorry-go-round.

The majority of the Indian people have become so inured to brutal public displays of hate violence that when they consume video images of lynching, gang rape and killing of Dalit women, and the flaunting of bigotry by our leaders, they just turn our faces away. What was it then about the recent images from Darrang in Assam — of a man with a lathi shot in his chest trying to defend his home against hundreds of armed security men, and of a young civilian jumping on and kicking the man's body even as his last breaths cease — has that stirred public outrage?

To experience what exactly has been going on, you can watch - the people of India slipping into despair and poverty as India's growth has dropped from 10.2% in 2007-8 to 8% in 2020-21, this is so unfortunate, this economic crash is being caused in large measure by the rise of divisiveness and hate and the breakdown of trust. OR the people

of Afghanistan being butchered right on the TV screen in front of you. By courtesy of the priest and politicians.

In the documentary by Adam Curtis, “Bitter Lakes,” you can watch the twist and turns of how contemporary religion and politics have created this pathological outcome. As you watch these poor lands descend into yet another round of primitive, violent insanity, do remember all those politicians – secular and religious – who we have to thank for making all this possible. These same people with their destructive ideologies are ravaging the world on a daily basis, mostly with our consent, explicitly or implicitly.

Taking a quick look at a comprehensive list of today's bloodletting, can you find one example on that list that is not rooted in the competition between different religious and/or political ideologies?

While we are giving credit where it is due for this endless stream of barbarity around the world, we mustn't forget all the other beneficiaries, like the people making good money out of the sale of all those weapons, that technology, those uniforms, those medals of honour.... All totally legal of course, by courtesy of lawmakers you probably voted for, and who probably pray to Gods you may also bow down to.

Suzy Kassem inevitable predicted - When people can get away with crimes just because they are wealthy or have the right connections, the scales are tipped against fairness and equality. The weight of corruption then becomes so heavy that it creates a dent that forces the world to become

(Contd.. on p. 6)



Bail is the rule, but not for the poor!

Citing the precedent of Aryan Khan's bail, the Apex Court must suo moto grant bail to all undertrials, incarcerated in jails across India, for similar offenses.

Aryan Khan, son of popular film star Shah Rukh Khan, was released on bail after 28 days in jail, after being arrested in connection with the Mumbai cruise ship drugs case. Aryan Khan was fortunate to have a battery of legal luminaries arguing his case. Needless to say, his father will be happy to foot the bill amounting to several crores of rupees, which begs the question of how many undertrials can afford it?

There are over 3,30,000 undertrials, most of them poor, young and illiterate who are in jail because of petty crimes. They fight a lonely battle for getting bail. Many are still in jail even after being eligible for bail, simply because they cannot afford to pay the bail amount which for petty crimes amounts to between Rs 500 and Rs 5,000. Many are not even aware they are eligible to apply for bail. And they languish in jail sadly, nobody cares.

It would be a good gesture on the part of Shah Rukh Khan if he sets up a free legal aid cell, with full time advocates, at Arthur Road jail, for assisting undertrials. Other celebrities would do well to follow the example and set up similar cells across the country. Sharing is caring.

—Prof Robert Castellino
Malad Mumbai

Doctrine of Purgatory

Even though there is no explicit mention of any place called 'Purga-

tory' in the scriptures, where souls are purified after death before entering divine life, the Catholic church has always asserted as an article of faith, and through various church Councils the existence of such a place, where souls detained after death, are helped by the prayers of the faithful and especially the mass offered in their memory. Theologians have presented a frightening and cruel imagery of Purgatory where souls burned with fire before entering heaven, giving us a false picture of an unmerciful God. Today with the renewed church thinking, Purgatory has emerged as a place where souls are purified, and sins burnt away with the love of a merciful God. The duration of stay and suffering are unknown, but can be shortened and alleviated by our prayers on earth. The Pope is supposed to have jurisdiction over Purgatory and enjoys a special prerogative of granting indulgences to lighten the purgatorial sufferings or even terminating them. It was Martin Luther who opposed the doctrine of Purgatory, since it was linked to the un-Christian practice of the sale of indulgences during the days of the Reformation. Today, though this obnoxious practice of selling indulgences no longer exists, the church continues to grant indulgences for the remission of sins of the dead, which are obtained through acts of penance and sacrifice. Just today, it was amusing to read a Whats App prayer of St Gertrude forwarded to me by some unknown bigot, who believes that the prayer has the power to release 1000 souls from Purgatory, each time it is said. This is something akin to what Martin Luther published in his '95 Theses' that "as soon as the pennies start to jingle in the church coffers, souls start to fly out of Purgatory". Has anyone seen these things happen?

— A. F. Nazareth,
Alto Porvorim, Goa

The Side Effects Of Fire Crackers On Animals

Dogs and cats have a 100 times more powerful hearing capacity than humans. They get highly traumatized and some of them may even go deaf.

Many dogs and cats lose their appetite completely.

Many dogs and cats go missing as they run away out of fear on hearing the noise of crackers.

Many insects also die instantly.

Birds have poor vision, especially at night and they bump into unknown objects and injure themselves. They are also sensitive and many of them die out of shock.

—Jubel D'Cruz,
Mumbai.

Ruling party at the cost of country!

Last fortnight almost everyday petrol and diesel prices were rising by 35 paise continuously. But the moment the BJP suffered in byelections significantly -specially in Himachal Pradesh at the hands of the Congress and in West Bengal at the hands of the Trinamool Congress, the government reduced the petrol price by 5 rupees per litre and diesel price by 10 rupees per litre!

किसकी बापका क्या जाता है?

The BJP Sarkar seems to say let the government suffer financial loss by decreasing the prices of petrol and diesel but my party should win more seats. At the cost of 'Jai Hind' let the Lotus bloom! Is this Rashtrabhakti or Rashtra Droha?

That's why I had written to Pope Francis not to entertain Feku Modiji if he visits him at all on the occasion of G20 meeting. But Pope went further and embraced him, एम्ब्रचेद् हिम्, गले लगाया!

Now Modiji has invited the Pope in India. I hope the Pope does not simply praise him to skies and goes away, leaving us minorities to suffer mob lynchings!

सत्यमेव जयते!

—Fr Michael G, Vasai

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slanted, so much so – that justice just slips off.

If you feel trapped by this dilemma – using the conditioned mind to resolve the problems created by the conditioned mind – and you do not want to stay in this rut, a very clear set of alternatives for everyone to explore exist. There is no revolutionary cavalry of comrades coming over the hill to rescue us. There is no saviour waiting in the wings for “the right moment to come and save us.” Each of us individually is going to have to summon up the courage to just say “no” – and stop participating in our own destruction. And say “yes” to something totally different. Everything else has been tried and has failed. Everybody has tried to transform society.

After centuries of bloody revolutions, of theories, of philosophies, of ideologies, of beliefs, of this-ism and that-ism, always promising... And here we are on the verge of major global catastrophes, having to scour Steven Pinker’s statistics to convince ourselves that there is – as so many people still blindly insist – “No problem.”

All that is now left is the more arduous journey of individual transformation. Which no one can do for anyone else? Are we living in a hypocrite society as one sees society as one big conspiracy theory as anything based on belief is bogus?

There are some perpetual principles that govern everything in life. And to be specific, difficult times create strong men, strong men create good times, good times produce powerless men, and powerless men create hard times. Many will not understand, but posterity and prosperity in our country produces parasites rather than life fighters....

Ayn Rand predicted the inevitable - When you see that in order to produce, you need to obtain permission from men who produce nothing. When you see that money is flowing to those who deal, not in good but in favours. When you see that men get richer by graft and by pull than by work, and your laws don't protect you against them, but protect them against you. When you see corruption being rewarded and honesty becoming a self-sacrifice – You may know that your society is doomed.

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(Contd.. from p. 3)

Doval, the former master spy, and now National Security Advisor, being part of the Indian delegation to the Vatican. What was his role when no security threats were involved? He is believed to be the master strategist (other than poll management that is Amit Shah's role). It is he who plans the much touted “surgical strikes”. Remember that Modi asked for the meeting with the Pope. He again made the surprising announcement of the invitation to India, catching our bishops red faced with their red skull caps and sashes! Another master stroke from Doval.

If on the one hand Christian leaders in India have been caught off guard by the hug; then so has the RSS and Hindutva brigade, that immediately linked the invitation to a moratorium on religious conversions. The hug is over. Let us now see how the proposed papal visit unfolds. Political gainsaying apart, I personally feel that the Pope's sincerity and charisma may have touched our Prime Minister. Post the hug, it will be difficult for the so-called fringe elements to tom-tom their bugbear on conversions. Watch this space.

• *The writer is the Convenor of the Indian Catholic Forum.*

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Pope talks to Mumbai Nun

- Oct 22, 2021

Yvonne came and announced that we cannot go as the Pope is not keeping well. So he will give us a direct message online in the hall.

Rev Sr. Philomena D'Souza, FMA, of the 'Salesians' as the order is popularly known, belongs to the Mumbai province; she has been in leading roles and her contribution is noteworthy. In fact, with regard to her book "Don Bosco in Mangalore Before the Arrival of the Salesians" and has

was scheduled that the Chapter group would visit Vatican for the audience on October 22, 2021 - but, no one would ever dream that, instead the Pope would visit the venue and spend quality time with the delegates; that exactly is what happened and it was a rarest of the rare meeting. But,



then given the sterling qualities of Pope Francis his quiet humility, humane and qualities which endure him to the church it was another great happening that bodes well. Let us read what Sr. Philomena says about the Pope's visit in her own ex-

Everything was completely incognito and hush hush. Neither the Vatican nor the Italian security knew about this visit till 11am, that day. So we were told not to come out of the hall and not to send any message to anyone, till we were told that he had returned to the Vatican. When I met him, I told him, please bless and pray for the church in India. And he told me, you pray too, because in a few days time Modi is coming here to meet me! He came in a simple white and black car, with no sign of VIP lights, accompanied by two other navy blue cars. Everyone including service personnel in the house got to meet him personally. He gave them a rosary each. The Pope also told us that Pope John Paul I (the Pope of 33days, who was very much like Pope Francis) will soon be beatified."

*** An 8 minute video of Pope Francis visit to us last Friday with English subtitles, if you like to watch..... https://youtube.com/watch?v=DoZ_ULcUxow&feature=share

Indeed this was a singular honour for all Indian Catholics and church

figured in many publications over the years including 'Secular Citizen Weekly'. Rev Sr has Masters in Psychology from the Pontifical Faculty of Sciences of Education Rome, has done significant work in the field of Youth Ministry and Women Empowerment. One of her books on Mary, Behold the Woman was recognised by the Pontifical Marian Academy and was awarded by Pope St. John Paul II in Oct. 2002. She is also a member of the ACSSA, an International Association of the Promoters of Salesian History. Sr. Philomena D'Souza, is the daughter of Late Bonaventure and Benedicta D'Souza, devout Catholics, people of the soil and farmers from St. Ignatius Parish Paladka, near Mangalore.

citement :

" On October 22, Pope Francis gave us a surprise visit and when I met him, he told me to pray for Modi's meeting with him soon; seeing me in saree he said I know you must be from India. Pope Francis came to meet us at the Chapter in our Salesian mother house in Rome. After the near hour long message, he met each of us. His simplicity, at-homeness and personal attention to each one is something amazing. The Pope himself had offered to do this surprise visit as he had told Mother General that he was doing it out of gratitude to God and to the congregation. Everything was a complete surprise. We were supposed to go for the audience today. Yesterday evening, the Mother



through the presence of Rev Sr. Philomena D'Souza FMA., a [proud moment indeed.

Rev Sr. Philomena, was a delegate from India at the FMA General Chapter (a very important conference of the Salesian nuns world wide) that began about a month back. The nuns at such world meets in Rome, are usually given a special group audience with the Pope and accordingly it

- **Compiled :**
Ivan Saldanha-Shet.

Body Dysmorphia Disorder

The Cambridge Dictionary defines Dysmorphia as “A condition in which part of the body is a different shape from normal.” It is a deformity or abnormality in the body. But it is often used to indicate an obsessive preoccupation with a perceived flaw in one’s appearance. In reality the flaw, for instance a few pimples, may seem minor or non-existent to others but the person with the obsession. Such a person is suffering from Body Dysmorphia Disorder or BDD. It is estimated that around one million people suffer from BDD in India.

Sufferers from BDD tend to go into a shell and avoid social contact. They are constantly checking themselves in the mirror and try to hide the perceived defect. Another symptom is repetitive behavior such as constantly rubbing a perceived flaw. He longs for positive affirmations and needs to be reassured by others that he looks good. He fears ridicule. Sleep patterns are adversely affected. Muscular dysmorphia occurs when he perceives his body to be too thin and is obsessed with weights to build up muscles. She thinks she is too fat and goes into extremes of fasting. She follows diet fads and may land up being anorexic. The sufferer constantly checks herself in the mirror. She goes out of her way to hide her non-existent defect by wearing loose clothing, constantly picks into her pimples thus causing lesions and infections.

Plastic surgery is a necessity in cases such as acid, burn or accident victims. We all resort to some sort of creams and make up to hide skin blemishes. We may need to wear braces to correct our protruding teeth and dental caps. What makes BDD sufferers different is excessive use of plastic surgery for nose jobs, thinner lips, hair transplants, reduction in the size

of the jaw and so on. The person is obsessed with creams and cosmetics in order to hide blemishes. BDD is a mental disorder that needs to be treated as otherwise it could lead to serious consequences starting with anxiety, depression and, in some cases, even suicide.

Psychologists state that this disorder is likely to start during the teen years. Cultural, psychological and biological factors influence adolescents. Advertisements promoting the face and body beautiful, influencers, social media and peer group opinion aggravate insecurities among the young. The self verification theory states that adolescents use selfies in order to obtain more ‘likes’. This is because we suffer from a misconception that physical looks are very important. Many adolescents hero worship film stars and their seemingly perfect looks. The entertainment industry thrives on illusions. Actors must look attractive. In order to survive they are constantly under the plastic surgeon’s knife. Don’t get fooled by those wrinkle pimple free faces and pouting lips. Similarly models strutting the ramp need to have a slim body so that they can influence those with deep pockets to buy what are sometimes outrageous clothes. Beauty, it would appear, is in the eyes of the influenced beholder.

Maya’s mother Surekha works hard as a help in several homes in order to give Maya a college education. Much to Surekha’s disappointment, Maya quit college because of ‘body shaming’ as she did not fit the norms of being super slim. This is unfortunate. Ironically not being fair skinned is a cultural cause of BDD in a nation where most of us are brown skinned.

What is the way forward to get out of these obsessions? Experts have put forth many suggestions.

It is important to make an effort to mix with others. My friend recalls how insecure she felt about her dusky complexion which was considered a flaw by elders in her family. She would force herself to strike up a conversation with her batch mates in college.

Experts suggest focussing on goals such as learning more about a given subject. This will divert one’s mind from obsessing about looks. External appearances, after all, are not the be-all and end-all of life.

Psychologists suggest relaxation techniques and stress management. They suggest that we should not make any major decisions when we get into a fixation about our appearance. In extreme cases they recommend cognitive and behavioral therapies in order to correct false beliefs. Anti-depressants may be prescribed. All these techniques and therapies enable the individual to develop resilience. The support of family and close friends is of paramount importance to give a sense of belonging to a person who is unfortunately going through this disorder.

It may be necessary to accept certain shortcomings and move forward. Linda would never leave her home without her super high pair of stilettos in order to make up for her short stature. Her pals would joke, “So Linda you are flaunting a new pair of stilts today.” “Hey Linda! Better not try to climb Mt. Everest with your stilts.” This overuse of high heels could adversely impact Linda’s health but she was not confident enough to change her ways. When amputees accept their challenges and move on, why can’t others?

The world offers a plethora of areas to explore. There are new books to read, places to explore, adventure sports to get a thrill from, ever expanding horizons of learning – all catering to our uniqueness as individuals. Our lives could be multi-dimensional. However, in order to weave a rich tapestry of our lives, we should not allow ourselves to focus only on our outward physical appearances.



by Monica Fernandes

World Philosophy Day (WPD)!

Drs. Hazell & Trevor Colaso

WPD is observed annually on the third Thursday of November – This year 18 Nov. 2021. UNESCO introduced WPD in 2005. It is a Day for people to share thoughts, explore and discuss new ideas, and inspire debate on society's numerous challenges!

Its Director-General Koichiro Matsuura had said, "Philosophy gave the conceptual grounding to the principles and values that shaped world peace, democracy, human rights and gender equality. Reflection on contemporary society's unsolved problems was always at the heart of philosophical analysis!"

What is Philosophy!

It is a way of thinking about certain subjects, such as, ethics, existence, thought, time, etc. - its meaning and values! It involves the 4Rs – Responsiveness, Reflection, Reason, and Revaluation! The hope was that by studying philosophy, one could learn to think better, to act wisely, and improve the quality of one's life!

5 Famous Catholic Philosophers!

***St. Anselm:** This 12th century Benedictine monk is well known for his Ontological Argument for the existence of God; and is referred to as the 'Scholastic Doctor'!

***St. Thomas Aquinas:** He was a philosophical giant of the 13th century. His Summa Theologiae is a required text in many philosophy programs.

***Blessed Duns Scotus:** He is known as one of the four great philosophers of 'High Scholasticism'!

***William Ockham:** He taught a philosophy of simplicity; and is known for Ockham's Razor! – Commonly interpreted to mean that the simplest solution is always the best.

***Blaise Pascal:** Renowned for his Pascal's Wages – People should live as if there is a God, betting on the chance that there is, rather than living life that there isn't a God; and

being surprised in the afterlife by the reality of Hell!

Inspirational Catholic Philosophy Quotes!

*Love to be real, must cost, must hurt, and must empty us of self! – St Mother Teresa. *Disorder in society is the result of disorder in life! – St Angela Merici. *A servant is not holy if he/she is not busy! – St. Zita. *To love God is greater than to know Him... Devotion is a certain act of the will, by which a person gives oneself promptly to service ... Charity brings to life those who are spiritually dead! ... To convert somebody, go and take him by hand and guide him! - St Thomas Aquinas.

*Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you. ... This is the very perfection of man; to find out his own imperfections. ... If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself! – St. Augustine. *Unless there is a Good Friday, there can be no Easter Sunday! - Archbishop Fulton Sheen. *Occupy your minds with good thoughts, or the enemy will fill them with bad ones – St. Thomas More. *Charity is certainly greater than any rule. Moreover, all rules must lead to charity! – St. Vincent de Paul. *We

always find that those who walked closest to Christ in word and deed, were those who had to bear the greatest trials! You cannot be half a saint; you must be a whole saint or no saint at all – St. Theresa of Lisieux. *We are an Easter people, and halleluiah is our song! – St. Pope John Paul II. ***Christ beside me;** Christ before me; Christ behind me; Christ within me; Christ beneath me; Christ above me! - St. Patrick. *You can't give God deadlines. So pray, hope and don't worry. – St. Padre Pio. *Without the burden of afflictions, it is impossible to reach the height of grace. The gift of grace increases as the struggle increases. ... Apart from the Cross, there is no other ladder by which we may go to heaven – St Rose de Lima. *Jesus loves hidden souls. A hidden flower is the most fragrant. I must strive to make the interior of my soul a resting place for the merciful and heart of Jesus – St. Faustina Kowalka, in Divine Mercy in my soul. *When you reach the Tabernacle, remember that He has been waiting to teach you for twenty centuries. – St. Josemaria Escriva. *Love God, serve God. Everything is in that. To be a servant of Christ is to be truly free! – St. Clare of Assisi. *Charity and devotion are no different from each other; like the flame from the fire – St. Francis de Sales. *A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of oneself; so that those who govern do so properly. The best we can offer is 'Prayer'! – Pope Francis.

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Gifts are Parables!

Pope Francis is an excellent communicator! Like his Master Jesus, he also uses stories, real life examples, the burning context and even parables! Gifts are also parables. Jesus illustrates this so powerfully in the widow's mite! The generosity to give of one's all! Gifts, we know, speak volumes. We all experience this in our daily lives: the material cost of the gift is perhaps irrelevant; a pressed leaf, a shell from the beach, an unintelligible drawing by a child or even a flower that is spontaneously plucked, given with love and meaning all tell a story: not merely about the gift, but also of the giver and the receiver!

So, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Pope Francis in the Vatican on 30 October the exchange of gifts between the two was important.

Vatican News reports, "The Indian Prime Minister gifted the Pope a silver candlestick and a book on the commitment to the environment. The Pope reciprocated with a bronze plaque with the inscription "The desert will become a garden", volumes of papal documents, his message for World Day of Peace and the document on Human Fraternity, signed on February 4 of 2019 in Abu Dhabi by the Pope and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar".

The official communiqué from the Holy See Press Office following the visit was rather terse "Today, 30 October, the Holy Father Francis received in audience, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Mr. Narendra Modi". Then a couple of sentences more, referring to the meeting in the Secretariat of State where there was a 'brief conversation' about the 'cordial relations' between the Holy See and India. Very little has been made public about their conversations or of what transpired during the meeting, which from

a scheduled twenty minutes lasted for almost an hour! Interestingly, when US President Biden met Pope Francis the previous day the Holy See communiqué was more detailed "During the course of the cordial discussions, the Parties focused on the joint commitment to the protection and care of the planet, the healthcare situation and the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the theme of refugees and assistance to migrants. Reference was also made to the protection of human rights, including freedom of religion and conscience". Too much weightage however, need not be given to these communiqués even if they are strikingly different! But the gifts do speak!

The four gifts which Pope Francis gave PM Modi are extremely significant: they are parables!



BY FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH

SJ

The first, the pièce de résistance, is a bronze casting, opencast in parts 19 cm in diameter, manually treated with a polychrome veneer. It is done by the celebrated Italian artist Daniela Fusco. The words inscribed on the plaque state, "To the Honourable Narendra Modi Prime Minister of India 30 October 2021. The work is meant to represent the words of the Prophet Isaiah **"the wilderness will become a fruitful field"** (Is 32: 15) The dry, thorny branch that blossoms and bears fruit symbolizes the passage from selfishness to sharing, from war to peace; it is a parable of the change that takes place when men and women open their hearts to the authentic values of growth and social harmony. The tondo is not perfect, but missing some parts, as a sign of the commitment demanded of everyone." Just the words on the plaque, with an impartial reading, says it all! It is a way of proceeding, a direction which we must take, if we believe in change. The missing parts of the tondo signify the heavy responsibility entrusted to



all, particularly those in authority, if one has to move from selfishness to sharing, from war to peace! A parable of change takes place only when one's heart is open to the authentic values of growth and social harmony. Does that ring a bell? Does one have the courage to look into the stark realities that grip India today?

The words from the Prophet Isaiah (32:15) are powerfully directional. The entire Chapter 32 needs to be read and reflected upon if one needs to understand the meaning of this one statement! These include "a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice (#2). Then the eyes of those who see will no longer be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen. (#3) The fearful heart will know and understand, and the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear. (#4). No longer will the fool be called noble nor the scoundrel be highly respected (#5) For fools speak folly, their hearts are bent on evil: They practice ungodliness and spread error concerning the LORD; the hungry they leave empty and from the thirsty they withhold water (#6) Scoundrels use wicked methods, they make up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just. (#7). Familiar words indeed! Prophet Isaiah born in 765 BC took a stand against the powerful, unjust, fascist rulers of his time and on behalf of the poor and needy, the exploited and excluded. Jesus' Messianic Proclamation, is from the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah challenges the women to be less complacent "to rise up and listen"

(Contd.. on p. 11)

(#9). And goes on to add, *“the LORD’s justice will dwell in the desert, his righteousness lives in the fertile field. (#16) The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever. (#17).* In presenting the PM with this very meaningful gift – Pope Francis is clearly making a strong statement on what good governance is about! One has to be totally naïve, an absolute moron or very frightened, to think otherwise!!

The Second gift is Pope Francis’ Message for the 54th World Day of Peace (1 Jan 2021). Pope Francis never minces words. His annual peace messages are not the wishy-washy type. He strikes at what is endemic in society and demands that these issues are addressed if one needs sustainable peace. In his opening para he says, *“Sad to say, we have also seen a surge in various forms of nationalism, racism and xenophobia, and wars and conflicts that bring only death and destruction in their wake. These and other events that marked humanity’s path this past year have taught us how important it is to care for one another and for creation in our efforts to build a more fraternal society. That is why I have chosen as the title of this year’s Message, **A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace.** A culture of care as a way to combat the culture of indifference, waste and confrontation so prevalent in our time.”*

He defends human rights saying *“The very concept of the person, which originated and developed in Christianity, fosters the pursuit of a fully human development. Person always signifies relationship, not individualism; it affirms inclusion, not exclusion, unique and inviolable dignity, not exploitation”. Each human person is an end in himself or herself, and never simply a means to be valued only for his or her usefulness. Persons are created to live together in families, communities and societies, where all are equal in dignity. Human rights derive from this dignity, as do human duties, like the responsibility to welcome and assist*

the poor, the sick, the excluded, every one of our “neighbours, near or far in space and time”.

His message provides a roadmap , a compass pointing to a common path to those in authority, *“At a time dominated by a culture of waste, faced with growing inequalities both within and between nations, I urge government leaders and those of international organizations, business leaders, scientists, communicators and educators, to take up these principles as a “compass” capable of pointing out a common direction and ensuring “a more humane future”] in the process of globalization. This will enable us to esteem the value and dignity of every person, to act together in solidarity for the common good, and to bring relief to those suffering from poverty, disease, slavery, armed conflicts, and discrimination. I ask everyone to take this compass in hand and to become a prophetic witness of the culture of care, working to overcome the many existing social inequalities. This can only come about through a widespread and meaningful involvement on the part of women, in the family and in every social, political and institutional sphere”*

The third gift is the Document on ‘Human Fraternity: for World Peace and Living Together’ which is a path-breaking treatise jointly signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar on 4 Feb 2019. The document as is obvious in the title says three very clear things: we need world peace; in order to achieve it we must shed exclusiveness, hate and vio-

lence; we must begin now! The document has a gripping introduction, ‘In the Name of...’ a litany which cannot be put aside. Almighty God is first invoked and later on includes, *“In the name of human fraternity that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal; In the name of this fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit or by hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate the actions and the future of men and women; In the name of justice and mercy, the foundations of prosperity and the cornerstone of faith”*

The Document has to be read, reflected upon and acted upon. There is not a word or which is unnecessary. It contextualises the reality of today and sets forth challenges which need to be addressed *“This Declaration, setting out from a profound consideration of our contemporary reality, valuing its successes and in solidarity with its suffering, disasters and calamities, believes firmly that among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and a prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles.”*

There is total clarity in statements like, *“We likewise affirm that major political crises, situations of injustice and lack of equitable distribution of natural resources – which only a rich minority benefit from, to the detriment of the majority of the peoples of the earth – have generated, and continue to generate, vast numbers of poor, infirm and deceased persons. This leads to catastrophic crises that various countries have fallen victim to despite their natural resources and the resourcefulness of young people which characterize these nations. In the face of such crises that result in the deaths of millions of children – wasted away from poverty and hunger – there is an unacceptable silence on the international level.*

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Church Humour

Two little boys were sitting together in a church during a wedding ceremony.

As the couple said, "I do", one of the boys leaned over to the other and asked, "I wonder how many wives can a man have?"

The second boy looked at his friend like he was an idiot and said, "He can have 16 wives."

"How do you know that?" the first boy asked.

"Weren't you listening? The priest just said it. Four better, four worse, four richer, and four poorer."

— Jubel D'Cruz

Husband: "Why do you keep reading our marriage license?"

Wife: "I'm looking for an expiration date."

At every party there are two kinds of people: those who want to go home and those who don't. The trouble is, they are usually married to each other.

"Marriage is like a video game. Starts off easy, then gets harder, and eventually you go online and find a way to cheat." — Chris Burns

At the cocktail party, one woman said to another, "Aren't you wearing your wedding ring on the wrong finger?" The other replied, "Yes, I am, I married the wrong man."

Do you know why boyfriends are like cars? Because they drive you crazy!

Why should you never laugh at the choices your girlfriend makes? Because you're also one of them.

Increase in LPG price

I ordered two dosas in a restaurant. When I received the bill, I noticed that they had charged one dosa at Rs 40 and one at Rs 50. I asked the waiter why he had put two different rates for the same dosa. His reply was



epic, "Sir, by the time you ordered the second dosa, the price of the gas cylinder had increased by Rs 266."

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A grave situation

A church cemetery raises its burial costs and blames it on the cost of "living". A grave situation indeed!

--- Jubel D'Cruz

Mr. and Mrs. Brown had two sons. One was named Mind Your Own Business & the other was named Trouble. One day the two boys decided to play hide and seek. Trouble hid while Mind Your Own Business counted to one hundred. Mind Your Own Business began looking for his brother behind garbage cans and bushes. Then he started looking in and under cars until a police man approached him and asked, "What are you doing?" "Playing a game," the boy replied. "What is your name?" the officer questioned. "Mind Your Own Business." Furious the policeman inquired, "Are you looking for trouble?!" The boy replied, "Why, yes."

A woman gets on a bus with her baby. The bus driver says, "That's the ugliest baby that I've ever seen. Ugh!"

The woman goes to the rear of the bus and sits down, fuming. She says to a man next to her, "The driver just insulted me!" The man says, "You go right up there and tell him off – go ahead, I'll hold your monkey for you."

A 3 years old boy sits near a pregnant woman.

Boy: Why do you look so fat?

Pregnant woman: I have a baby inside me.

Boy: Is it a good baby?

Pregnant woman: Yes, it is a very good baby.

Boy: Then why did you eat it?!

Wife: "In my dream, I saw you in a jewelry store and you bought me a diamond ring."

Husband: "I had the same dream and I saw your dad paying the bill."

One day Jimmy got home early from school and his mom asked, "Why are you home so early?" He answered, "Because I was the only one that answered a question in my class." She said, "Wow, my son is a genius. What was the question?" Jimmy replied, "The question was 'Who threw the trash can at the principal's head?'"

A mother said to her son, "Look at that kid over there; he's not misbehaving." The son replied, "Maybe he has good parents then!"

Dad: "Can I see your report card, son?"

Son: "I don't have it."

Dad: "Why?"

Son: "I gave it to my friend. He wanted to scare his parents."

A: I have the perfect son.

B: Does he smoke?

A: No, he doesn't.

B: Does he drink whiskey?

A: No, he doesn't.

B: Does he ever come home late?

A: No, he doesn't.

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

A: He will be six months old next Wednesday.

(Contd.. from p. 11)

Many in India (including some Catholics) will surely wince at these words, "We resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women in order to make them act in a way that has nothing to do with the truth of religion. This is done for the purpose of achieving objectives that are political, economic, worldly and short-sighted. We thus call upon all concerned to stop using religions to incite hatred, violence, extremism and blind fanaticism, and to refrain from using the name of God to justify acts of murder, exile, terrorism and oppression. We ask this on the basis of our common belief in God who did not create men and women to be killed or to fight one another, nor to be tortured or humiliated in their lives and circumstances." Denigrating an entire religion, using obnoxious terms like 'love jihad' and 'narcotic jihad', spewing hate is not Christian!

Ultimately the document takes a stand for freedom of religion, pluralism, diversity and justice. "Freedom is a right of every person: each individual enjoys the freedom of belief, thought, expression and action. The pluralism and the diversity of religions, colour, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings. This divine wisdom is the source from which the right to freedom of belief and the freedom to be different derives.... Justice based on mercy is the path to follow in order to achieve a dignified life to which every human being has a right."

This Document, Pope Francis says was inspirational for his Encyclical 'Fratelli Tutti' where he says, "The root of modern totalitarianism is to be

found in the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who, as the visible image of the invisible God, is therefore by his very nature the subject of rights that no one may violate – no individual, group, class, nation or state. Not even the majority of the social body may violate these rights, by going against the minority". (# 273). 'Fratelli Tutti', the other incisive Encyclical 'Laudato Si': on the care of our common home (where he takes an unequivocal stand for the environment and how greedy vested interests are destroying it), the Apostolic Exhortation 'Querida Amazonia' (where he is in solidarity with the jal, jungle and jameen of the indigenous people and their legitimate rights) and several other papal documents comprised the **fourth gift** of 'volumes!'

Pope Francis is undoubtedly the most respected and admired leader in the world today. When he speaks, he touches the grim realities of today! His gifts to PM Modi provide a clear roadmap for governance based on justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. It is highly unlikely that Modi will read what was given, there are however, his advisors who can do so and give him a summary of them. It is therefore incumbent on the Church in India, particularly the hierarchy and the clergy, to first study these precious gifts and then let everyone know how concerned Pope Francis is about the people of India and their future!

In his celebrated work 'The Prophet', Khalil Gibran says it all
"And you receivers—and you are all receivers—assume no weight of gratitude, lest you lay a yoke upon yourself and upon him who gives.
Rather rise together with the giver on his gifts as on wings;
For to be overmindful of your debt, is to doubt his generosity who has the freehearted earth for mother, and God for father".

Gifts are parables indeed!

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



Ingredients:

4 eggs
1 cup spinach, finely chopped
2 onions, finely chopped
2 tomatoes, finely chopped
1 capsicum, finely chopped
5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1-inch piece ginger, finely chopped
2 green chillies, finely chopped
1 tsp ajwain
1 tsp red chilli powder
1 tsp cumin seeds (jeera) powder
1 tsp turmeric (haldi) powder
Salt and pepper according to taste

Method:

We begin making the Masala Palak Bhurji recipe by heating a pan with oil.
Splutter the ajwain seeds, add in the onions and capsicum. Saute till the onions become translucent.
Then add in the tomatoes and add the spice powders along with salt and pepper. Give it a stir.
Add the spinach along with a little water and cook till it wilts.
Then finally add the eggs.
Mix well and combine all the ingredients together till it is ready to eat.



“A BIBLE FOR EVERY HOME”

The Pauline Bible Year 2020-21, coinciding with the 50th Death Anniversary Year of Bl. James Alberione (1884 -1971), the Founder of the Pauline Family, will conclude on 26 November, the day the Church along with the Paulines celebrates the Feast of Blessed James Alberione.

Fr Alberione entered eternity on 26 November, 1971, soon after Pope (St) Paul VI visiting him on his death bed imparted his apostolic blessing on him. Earlier, on 28 June, 1969, the Holy Father, at a gathering of the representatives of the Congregations and affiliate Institutes he founded, conferred on him the gold medal “Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice” addressing Fr Alberione as “a marvel of our times.”

The Holy Father said, “.... Our Fr Alberione has given the Church new instruments with which to express herself, new means for giving vigour to her apostolate, new capacities and a new awareness of the importance and possibilities of her mission in the modern world with modern means....” On 27 April, 2003, Pope John Paul II declared Alberione Blessed.

In Mumbai, the special Pauline Bible Year was inaugurated online by His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, the Archbishop of Bombay, on 20 February, 2021. His Eminence also re-launched the Alberionian Project “A Bible for Every Home” making the Bible available at a highly discounted price, and at free of cost where needed. Fr Alberione had originally initiated the project doing everything possible, even setting aside a printing machine at the Pauline plant at Alba (Italy), to print the Bible in different editions.

As part of the “A Bible for Every Home” project, the Pauline Book Centres in Maharashtra have so far distributed, an entire English edition of the New Community Bible @Rs 250/-, 800 copies of the Catholic edition of the Marathi Bible @ Rs 200/- instead of Rs 375/- and 500 copies of the Hindi Bible @ Rs 50/- instead of Rs 150/- Though the Pauline Bible Year will formally close on 26 November, the Pauline effort to reach the Bible in as many homes as possible, in their respective languages, will continue in the coming years, too, with special emphasis on Hindi-speaking States, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. In a special message to the members of the Society of St Paul, Mumbai, Cardinal Oswald Gracias has said, “Congratulations, I thank you very much, and you have my full support.”

-- Fr Alfonso Elengikal, ssp

Cedric Prakash Bags ICPA Journalism Award 2021



Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA) will honour noted writer and human rights activist Cedric Prakash conferring its prestigious annual ‘Louis Careno Award for Excellence in Journalism’ for his bold writings against communalism and fundamentalism gaining ground globally.

The Award will be conferred on Fr Cedric Prakash, a Gujarat-based Jesuit, during the 26th National Convention of Christian Journalists, organized by the ICPA, scheduled to be held in Mumbai on December 1, 2021.

His incisive, thought-provoking writings on various subjects have broken new grounds. His razer-sharp analysis of socio-cultural and political issues, especially relating to communalism and fundamentalism, has led to soul-searching debates in the civil society and the secular world.

He minces no words in raising his voice against irrational, biased and unfair policies and decisions of the governments of all times. He also writes on Church-related issues without fear or favour.

His writings have appeared in national dailies and several secular magazines, many of which have gone viral on so-

cial media. His no-nonsense approach and extensive quotes make his writings authentic and irrefutable. His fierce attack on rising fascist tendencies in the country has hit where it really matters.

Conferred annually on individuals or institutions, Louis Careno Award for Excellence in Journalism is a joint venture of the Mumbai Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco and the Indian Catholic Press Association (ICPA), a Premier Organisation of Catholic journalists, Dailies and Periodicals in India founded in 1964 by Fr John Barrett, an American Jesuit belonging to the Patna Province.

Ignatius Gonsalves, President, ICPA
Fr. Suresh Mathew, Secretary, ICPA

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ICPA's SC/ST Reporting Award Goes to Sujatha Jena

The Indian Catholic Press Association is pleased to announce the ICPA Award for the best reportage on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, sponsored by the CBCI Office for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes, for Rev. Sr. Sujatha Jena for authentically and consistently being the voice of people's rights, especially the poor Dalits who are more susceptible to exploitation and injustice.

Sujatha Jena, a Catholic Nun-Journalist-Activist belonging to the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, has been regularly contributing to major national and international news portals, especially on Dalit issues. Through the power of reporting and storytelling, Sujatha amplifies the various aspects of Dalits and Tribals, women, children and the homeless, who have been sidelined by the elite, powerful, and societal structures.

Her reports focus on people who are either stymied, not written about or not comfortable speaking out. Her deep sincerity and perseverance in highlighting the rights of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes show grit, courage and conviction. Her writings showcase hopes and resilience that the deprived people and communities show despite many challenges, deprivations and exploitation. Her writings have shed light on issues that no secular journalist has ventured to report. It takes both courage and professional excellence to do so.

The SC/ST Special Award was instituted by the ICPA and sponsored by the CBCI office for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes to promote the welfare of the marginalized people.

The award will be conferred on December 1, 2021 at the National Convention of Christian Journalists at St Paul's Media Centre, Bandra, Mumbai.

Ignatius Gonsalves, President, ICPA
Suresh Mathew, Secretary, ICPA

Matrimonials

7259. USA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1994), Ht. 5' 3", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate, working. Contact email :
sevu.sequeira@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

7258. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in September 1993), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 58 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Post Graduate, Content Professional in a reputed MNC and freelancing as a copywriter ad social media Professional. Contact email :
forheralliance@gmail.com

7244. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1992), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 54 kgs, Edn. Chartered Accountant and M.Com., Employed in one of the Top reputed companies in Mumbai. Well cultured and good family background. Only Child. 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Royal Christian Family MATRIMONIALS - GROOMS

7265. MUMBAI : Mumbai born and broughtup Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in Masrch 1993), Ht. 6', Wt. 85 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. ME MTech., Construction Management, currently working as an Asst. Manager L&T in Ahmedabad. Contact email :

jovelpicardo@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

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

celeseinepereira@gmail.com

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

7101. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in April 1988), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 68 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters in Logestics doing part time MBA. Working as an Asst. Manager. Contact email :

gracian.moras@gmail.com

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

dcosta.ria@gmail.com

7203. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1985), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.E. MBA, working for International Company. Contact email :

delphinempinto@gmail.com

7202. MUMBAI : Keralite Syrian Catholic Bachelor (Born in May 1973), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 73 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., English Literature, Profession : Consultant Administration. Left Hand & Leg is weak due to earlier motor bike accident. Contact Email :

josephmullakara1973@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 Totonto. Contact email :

francisper@gmail.com

7224. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in September 1986), Ht. 6', Wt. 93 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Marine Engineering, working as a 3rd Engineer in Ship. Contact Mob.: 9773541522

7221. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in May 1985), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 72 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working in a Oil rig. Contact email :

renithamas@yahoo.co.in

7220. MUMBAI : Anglo Indian Roman Catholic Divorcee, (Born in May 1978), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 76 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. MBA PGDM, working as a HR. Contact email :

rodrigsmargaret69@gmail.com

7216. MUMBAI : Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1988), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 70 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, HR speacialization, Profession : Lead Recruiter. Contact email : willujames310@gmail.com

7213. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in October 1989), Ht. 6', Wt. 60 kgs, Fair

Complexion, Edn. B.Sc. in Hospitality Studies, working in a reputed organization. Contact email :

merwyn1989pinto@gmail.com

7183. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in February 1991) Ht. 5' 11", Wt. 86 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. PGDM and BMS., working as a Relationship Manager. Contact email :

ritadhawan10@gmail.com

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

clifford9948@gmail.com

OR 9920331773

7102. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in August 1988), Ht. 6' 1", Wt. 95 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Masters, working for MNC. Contact email :

am.pereira@rediffmail.com

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

ryan.intermilan@yahoo.co.in

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

7077. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Bachelor, (Born in March 1987), Ht. 5' 10", Wt. 80 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Manager. Contact email : leroy2266@gmail.com OR Mob: 9503282306

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7245. BANGALORE : Gujarati Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1985), Only Child, Ht. 5', Wt. 43 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Tech., Computer Engineering, Architect in German Company. Well settled. Seeks a match willing to settle in Bangalore. Contact email :

pmcandy1957@gmail.com

7251 MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic innocent Divorcee (Born in April 1990), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 55 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. MBA, Profession : HR., Contact email : fds140490@gmail.com

7266. MUMBAI : East Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1994), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 52 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. M.Com., Handling documentation and business development. Contact email :

rohana16@yahoo.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

7238. AHMEDABAD : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in April 1989), Ht. 5' 6", Wt. 50 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as a Sr. Recruitment Consultant. Contact email : fernandeseugenia58@gmail.com

7246. CANADA : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in December 1991), Ht. 5' 1", Wt. 71 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Masters in Global Business Management, working as a Social Media Co-ordinator. Contact email :

francispinto15@yahoo.com

7229. UAE : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in May 1994), Ht. 5' 2", Wt. 60 kgs, Fair Complexion, Good looking, Smart, Edn. PGDM, working

as a Human Resource. Seeks a suitable match from Dubai Or Canada. Contact email :

goanmatri7@gmail.com

7217. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in June 1995), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 77 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. B.A., & Post Graduate Diploma in Event Management, working in an reputed Multinational Company. Contact email :

naseemdmello786@gmail.com

7228. KOLKATA : Anglo Indian Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1988), Ht. 5' 4", Wt. 54 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Good looking, Smart, Edn. B.A., working as a HR. Contact email :

advtrresponse85@gmail.com

7215. MUMBAI : Mangalorean Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in November 1996), Ht. 5' 5", Wt. 54 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. BMS, CWM, pursuing CFA Level 2, working as a Operations Analyst in Limited Company. Contact email :

rachel.serrao96@gmail.com

7223. MUMBAI : Born Again Spinster, (Born in November 1994), Ht. 5' 8", Wt. 70 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. Masters in HR. working as Asst. Manager Learning and Development in Cargo Logistics firm. Seeks suitable match, first preference Born Again or Others. Contact email :

bernie_wicket@yahoo.com

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

7222. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in August 1984), Ht. 5' 7", Wt. 65 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.Com., working as accountant. Contact email :

josephppereira@gmail.com

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

marina.rodrigues1954@gmail.com

7209. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster, (Born in October 1986), Ht. 5' 9", Wt. 100 kgs, Fair Complexion, Edn. B.A., & PG HR, working as a Trainer. Contact email : sweetroan17@gmail.com

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

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

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

7204. MUMBAI : Goan Roman Catholic Spinster (Born in October 1989), Ht. 4' 11", Wt. 50 kgs, Wheatish Complexion, Edn. Graduate, PGD in Broadcast Journalism, working for National News Channel in BANGALORE. Contact email : stacypereira89@gmail.com

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She Preferred Death than ...

(Bl. Anna Kolesarova)

By Fr F. M. Britto

Here is a story of another Maria Goretti of our days.

Anna Kolesarova was born on July 14, 1928 in Vysoka nad Uhom village of Kosice region in the former Czechoslovakia (the modern Slovak). She was the youngest of three children to Jan Kolesar and Anka Kusnirova. She had a half sister Mary and a brother Michal. The rural peasant parents were pious and frequently attended Mass with their children and tried to live their religion.

Their mother died when Anna was only ten years old, and it fell on her shoulders to care the household. She was known to be a simple and modest rural girl, who frequented the church often.

In the final and bloodiest phase of the World War II the Russian soldiers were trying to liberate her area of Slovakia from the Nazi occupation. It was a violent transition period.

The Red Army soldiers were reputed for their rough and immoral behaviour. That prompted the young girls and women wear black dresses to avoid unwanted attention to themselves and to avoid misbehaviour from them. The villagers would flee to hide in their cellars, waiting in fright to avoid them.

The Soviet Army soldiers entered their town on Nov 22, 1944. Her father sheltered his children in the cellar under the kitchen. Searching the house, one drunken soldier discovered the hideout and peeped inside. Saying that he is hungry, the soldier requested the family to offer him some water and food. The father asked Anna to cook the food for him. She emerged from the hideout and walked to the kitchen above to cook his food.

After eating, the soldier began to make sexual advances towards Anna. Refusing his advances, the 16 years old girl pulled herself out of his grip

and ran down to the basement. The soldier pursued her. He jumped into the basement. Pointing his PPSH-41 automatic rifle at her, he threatened to kill her.

When she stoutly refused to give in to his desires, in front of her helpless father and brother, he killed her by shooting two shots on her face and chest at point blank range with his automatic rifle. Anna died crying, "Father, Jesus, Mary, Joseph." A few days before she had gone to the church for her confession and communion.

There was intense fighting in the area. Fearing reprisals, Anna was buried in a shallow grave next evening in secret. To remain safe, not even a priest was present. Her village parish priest Father Anton Lukac celebrated the solemn funeral rites one week later in a new grave.

Father Lukac then investigated her death by interviewing the villagers and getting signed statements. Recording the incident in the parish chronicles and registers, the parish priest noted that Anna died to defend her chastity. Jesuit Father Michal Potocky also provided information about her life. But, after the war, the new Communist Czechoslovakia government banned mention of the incident and enforced strict orders against gatherings at the graves.

Since the fall of the Communist government in 1989, Anna's grave has become a pilgrimage site. Pilgrimages are organised thrice a year to her grave and a special larger annual gathering began attracting many. The Catholic youth have founded an organization, Domcek, dedicated to Anna's memory and is dedicated to the cause of teenagers of her age. Her house is offered to this organization, who organises workshops, social events and



volunteer work.

Her beatification process began 76 years after her murder on July 3, 2004. Pope Francis approved her beatification on March 6, 2018, declaring that she died in defence of her virginity. The beatification was celebrated at Kosice archdiocese, in her native eastern Slovakia, on Sept 1,

2018, presided by Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Becciu, the new Prefect of the Congregation for the Cause of Saints, in a soccer stadium, attended by some 30,000 people.

In the homily the cardinal said that it was her parents who had taught her "to choose God above all things". That was proven, the cardinal said, when she found herself faced with a "tragic dilemma in which she had to choose between life or death. Choosing life would have meant surrendering to the brutal instincts of the Russian soldier, betraying her own conscience. Death, instead, would bring her pure to the embrace of God," he stated. Anna has become the Patron of Youth and Abuse Victims.

Describing her as a "heroine of love", Pope Francis later addressed the youth that Anna taught the youth "to aim high". He added, "Every one of us is a gift. Make life, your own life, a gift. Others, your communities, the poor are waiting for you."

Kosice Archbishop Bernard Bober remarked that the story of Anna Kolesarova was unknown until the fall of communism.

The simple, rural girl Anna has joined the scores of other virgin-martyrs like Agnes, the well-known Maria Goretti. "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." (Mt 5:8)

Today do we not have so many unsung Anna Kolesarovas amidst us?

2 Sacred Testaments Mirrored In One Frame

Plan and Preparation for Advent

“Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.”

- Mal. 7: 1.

The Gospel according to St. Luke informs us of the prophet Malachi’s prophesy, the oracle of the Word of the Lord to Israel, came to pass:

“Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son.” (Lk.1:57). On being asked what the name of the child should be, Elizabeth said, “he shall be called John.” (Lk.1:60). And so, John the Baptist was the chosen messenger to prepare the way of the Lord.

Two Covenants (The Old and the New Testaments) prove repeatedly the fulfillment of the prophet’s Word of God. The two Holy Books of Scripture are not confined only to the Jewish people but it is also open to the Gentiles. The Son of God, Jesus, was a Jew sent to the world that all who believe in him will receive eternal life.

The Jews, during their exile from Egypt had called for the visit of God, for this visit would be the signal of national restoration. The Lord God answered: “For thus says the Lord; when seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.” - Jeremiah 29:10.

The intervention of God in the history of Israel was the establishment of the messianic Kingdom.

“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when

you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.” – Jeremiah 29.12-14.

SCRIPTURAL PRESENTATION FOR ADVENT

This article is about prophecies and a preparation for the coming weeks of Advent. What the prophets relayed from the Word of God was fulfilled through the advent of the New Covenant.

Yahweh spoke...He then said: “Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying human patience that you should try my God’s patience too?

The Lord will give you a sign in any case: It is thus: the young woman is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel, a name which means “God is with us”. (Isaiah 7: 10 – 14).

In the Gospel of John, the apostle writes: “He was in the world that had come

into being through him and the world did not recognize him. He came to his own and his own people did not recognize him. He came to his own and his own people did not accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in his name who were born not free from human stock or human desire or human will but from God himself. The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he had from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and trust.” (John 1:1-18).

In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah made a prophecy about the coming of the Christ in the words of God. He said: Ours was the suffering he was bearing, ours the sorrows



he was carrying while we thought of him as someone being punished and struck with affliction by God whereas he was being hounded for our rebellions, crushed because of our guilt; the punishment reconciling us fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises”. (Is.52:13-53).

By reason of sacrifice the Son of God entered heaven, as the Jewish high priest entered the sanctuary with the blood of the victim; it is in the heavenly sanctuary that he exercises His office of priest interceding for us with the Father (Heb. 9: 11-24), there is then, an act of offering done “once for all”.

Saint Paul, apostle of Christ, in his letter to the Hebrews stated the sufferings of Christ at the celebration of the Lord’s Passion:

“During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, with loud cries and with tears, to the one who had the power to save him from death, and winning a hearing by his reverence, he learnt obedience, Son though he was, through his suffering; when he had been perfected he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation”. Heb. 4:14-16.

Within the confines of the coming four weeks of prayer, penance and preparation, the Season of Advent will pave the way for the arrival of Jesus, “And the Word was made flesh and God will dwell among us”.



BY MELVYN BROWN

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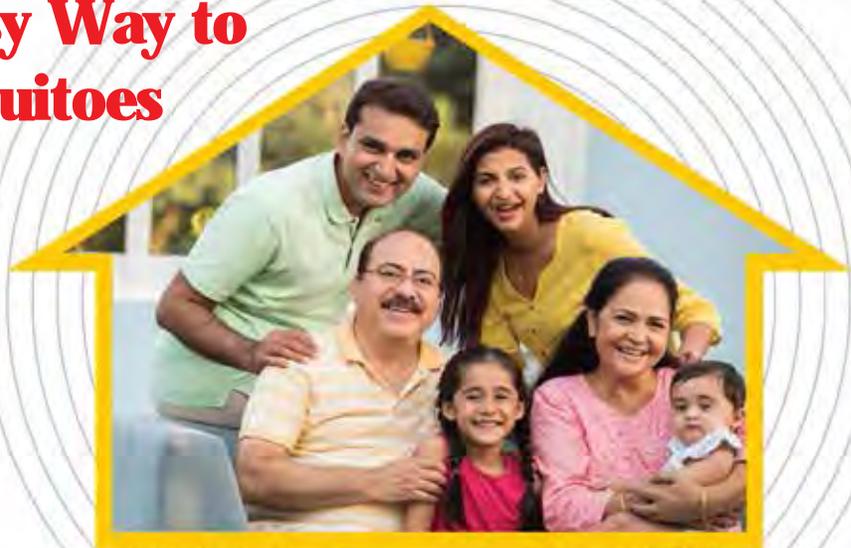
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