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Pope Francis: An encounter with a migrant is an encounter with Christ



By Linda Bordoni

In his message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis invites us to see migrations as a sign of the times and as a symbol of the Church's pilgrimage throughout history.

"See in the migrants of our time, as in those of every age, a living image of God's people on their way to the eternal homeland," writes Pope Francis in his 2024 Message for the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

The World Day, celebrated annually on 24 September, is a call to believers to show support and closeness to the millions of men, women and children who are forced to leave their homes. The current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population, and that number continues to rise. Pointing out that God not only walks with His people, but also within them, the Pope invites us all to walk in a "synodal" way - in the Church and in the world - in order to move forward on our own pilgrimage toward the heavenly homeland.

God walks with his people

The message's title, "God walks with His people," immediately points to the synodal dimension the Pope constantly invites the Church and the people of God to live every day and in every moment.

Recalling the introduction to the synthesis report released at the conclusion of the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Synodality last October, the Pope writes, "Synodality is mainly presented as a joint journey of the People of God" that allows the Church "to rediscover its itinerant nature, as the People of God journeying through history on pilgrimage, 'migrating', we could say, toward the Kingdom of Heaven."

Thus, as he so often does, the Pope calls us to recognize the Lord present in the millions of people who are forced to migrate due to conflict, persecution, poverty, and the climate crisis, "as a living image of God's people on their way to the eternal homeland."

Journeys of hope

"Their journeys of hope remind us that 'our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ'," he says.

"Their journeys of hope remind us that our citizenship is in heaven."

Recalling images of the biblical exodus, he notes it shares many similarities with the plight of migrants: "Like the people of Israel in the time of Moses, migrants often flee from oppression, abuse, insecurity, discrimination, and lack of opportunities for development. Similar to the Jews in the desert, migrants encounter many obstacles in their path: they are tried by thirst and hunger; they are exhausted by toil and disease; they are tempted by despair."

And God, he reminds us, "not only walks with His people, but also within them, particularly with the least, the poor and the marginalized. In this, we see an extension of the mystery of the Incarnation." "God not only walks with His people, but also within them."

From tent to tent

Pope Francis points out that "the fundamental reality of the Exodus, of every exodus, is that God precedes and accompanies His people and all His children in every time and place."

Thus, he adds, "God's presence in the midst of the people is a certainty of salvation history: "The Lord your God goes with you; He will not fail you or forsake you."

Indian Church official hails court order favouring minority schools

Delhi High Court order said 'no prior permission from the government required' for appointing staff in minority institutions. An Indian Church official has welcomed an order of the Delhi High Court allowing educational institutions run by minority communities to appoint their staff without government approval.

"This is a great order," said Father Maria Charles Antonysamy, the secretary of the Indian bishops' Office of Education and Culture, indicating that government-funded minority institutions across the country experienced a lack of freedom in appointing staff members. Delhi High Court, in its May 28 order, said, "So long as the principals and teachers, who are appointed possess the prescribed qualifications and experience, there can be no restriction whatsoever on the right of the petitioner sa minority institution to make appointments to fill in the vacancies in the schools run by it."

"No prior permission from the government is required for this purpose," observed Justice C. Hari Shankar, ruling in favor of the petitioner Delhi Tamil Education Association, which runs seven senior secondary schools in India's national capital region for the Tamil linguistic minority.

Indian constitution allows linguistic and religious minorities to establish and run educational institutions to serve their communities. The government also pays for the salaries and maintenance of several such institutions as they contribute to the state's educational service.

However, state governments increasingly began controlling staff appointments, and "because of this difficulty, in some cases, Church-run aided schools were closed down," the priest said.

The court's order "definitely will help us to maintain our ethos and standards. Only when we have the freedom to appoint principals and teachers of our choice can we maintain our values for a better society," said the Catholic priest.

The New Delhi court's order applies only to Delhi state, but the priest said it could be used as a guiding principle in asserting the rights of minority institutions across the country.

"The order will help us to appoint staff members who understand us. It will make a big difference in our functioning. Appointing a vested interested person will lead to a clash of interest," Father Antonysamy added. The priest said, "The high court order is a big relief not only in Delhi but also in other states where state-aided minority educational institutions faced similar problems. They can refer to this order in those states for relief."

The association moved court when the state's Director of Education failed to authorize the appointment of four principals and 108 teachers to vacant positions. The court ruled that the association is entitled to make appointments to the vacant posts of principals and teachers in its schools without the approval of the Director of Education.

"It is a laudable judgment," said A. C. Michael, a former member of the Delhi Minority Commission. The court order "is good for everyone to refer in case any government body creates unnecessary obstruction in appointing their staff including principals and teachers." "The only condition is that all such appointments must be made following the law, which includes academic qualifications and experience required for each post," he added. (ucanews)

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Church in India

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-- Editor

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- Editor

Indian state asked to remove illegal religious structures

Encroachments on public land are prohibited under law but religious structures, including Christian crosses, are seen everywhere

The top court in southern Indian Kerala state has asked its communist-led government to remove illegal religious structures on public land. The Kerala High Court's order "will have a widespread implication if implemented in letter and spirit," said a Church leader who did not want to be named.

He told UCA News on May 31 that the forceful removal of illegal religious structures might lead to opposition.

Encroachment on government land is prohibited under the Kerala Land Conservation Act. However, religious structures, including Christian crosses, can be seen across public lands in Kerala.

"Nowadays, it is a trend to erect stones or crosses in public places and thereafter to start worshipping these stones and crosses with religious color," said Justice PV Kunhikrishnan of the Kerala High Court.

People need not encroach upon government land "to construct religious structures," Justice Kunhikrishnan told the Kerala government, led by the Communist Party of India, in his May 27 order. Justice Kunhikrishnan has directed the state government to set a deadline for executing the order to remove illegal structures from public land.

The order of the top court in the state came in response to a petition by the Plantation Corporation of Kerala, the largest state-owned plantation company, seeking a direction from the court to evict people who encroached on its land by erecting temples and religious structures. The petitioner has alleged that political groups are deliberately attempting to trespass on corporations' properties by constructing temples.

The court asked the state government to free the petitioner's land from illegal encroachments.

"Any illegal religious structures on any government land, the government should take necessary steps to remove the same forthwith," the judge observed. The court has asked the state chief secretary, the highest official in the government, to direct all district collectors to obtain details on illegal religious structures in their respective districts.

The court directed that the district administration take action within six months if illegal structures are found on government land.

An action-taken report should be filed by the collector within one year before the court, the judge noted. (ucanews)

Indian diocese joins relief effort amid heatwave

At least 122 deaths reported in Rajasthan state as temperatures soared in northwest and central parts of country

A Catholic diocese in a northwestern Indian state has joined government agencies in providing relief to people reeling under severe heatwave conditions that have reportedly claimed over 120 lives. Local media reported 122 deaths in Rajasthan state due to the extremely hot weather, with nearly half of those occurring between May 23 and May 30.

The India Meteorological Department issued a red alert on May 30 for Rajasthan, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Madhya Pradesh in the northwest and central parts of the country.

Experts cautioned against heat-related illnesses and suggested that state governments take adequate preventive measures to protect vulnerable people.

The mercury surpassed 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit) in Rajasthan's Churu town and neighboring Haryana's Sirsa town.

A part of the national capital New Delhi recorded the country's highest-ever temperature: 52.9 degrees Celsius (127.22 degrees Fahrenheit). "It is very disturbing to learn that so many people have lost their lives in the extreme weather conditions," said Emeritus Bishop Oswald Joseph Lewis of Jaipur diocese in Rajasthan.

He told UCA News on May 31 that volunteers at the diocese's social service wing are reaching out to people to help and guide them.

"Our people are going house to house to make people aware of the extreme weather conditions, suggesting precautions to be taken and giving them medicines," the prelate said.

Lewis said most casualties were reported among daily wage laborers compelled to work under the hot sun. "Our volunteers are providing them free lunch and water" to compensate for the lost daily wages, he added. The prelate said theirs was a small effort to help the government agencies deal with the situation. Shashi Dharan, the public relations officer of the Delhi Archdiocese, said they have made arrangements for drinking water outside churches in the national capital.

India's Syro Malabar Church convenes extraordinary Synod to solve liturgy row



'Major Archbishop Raphael Thattil, the head of the crisis-ridden Eastern rite Syro Malabar Church, has convened an extraordinary synod of its bishops to solve the decades-old liturgy dispute in his seat of power in India.

In a June 3 communication to 65 bishops, Thattil said a special virtual meeting of the Synod, the top decision-making body of the second-largest Eastern rite Church, would be held to resolve the dispute.

The communication said the Church's online synod, based in southern Indian Kerala state, is scheduled for two hours on June 14.

The dispute stems from the persistent refusal of most priests and lay people in the Ernakulam-Angamaly archdiocese to follow a synod-approved rubric for Mass that requires celebrants to face the altar during the Eucharist prayer. They want priests to celebrate the Mass facing the people.

The archdiocese, the seat of the Major Archbishop, is where close to 10 percent of the Church's 5 million followers live.

The synod assumes significance for the future of the Syro-Malabar Church, one of the 23 Eastern Catholic Churches in full communion with Rome, as the liturgy dispute threatened to divide the Church.

In the first week of May, a delegation of lay Catholic leaders from the troubled Archdiocese called on Pope Francis in the Vatican, seeking his intervention to allow them to continue with their traditional Mass.

A week later, the Bishops of the Permanent Synod of the Church and the archdiocese's apostolic administrator met Pope Francis and discussed the disputes in the Vatican.

The pope wanted the dispute to "be amicably solved without any coercive action," said a Church source.

The opponents of the Synod-approved Mass wanted the Synod to withdraw its "clandestine decision" to implement the uniform liturgy or accord "liturgy variant" status to their version of mass, helping them continue with it.

The Synod has not accepted their demands but insisted on implementing Synod-approved Mass.

"We are aware of the special synod meeting, but there is no change in our stand," said Riju Kanjookaran, the spokesperson of the Archdiocesan Movement for Transparency (AMT), a body of priests, religious and laity that spearheads the protests against the Synod approved Mass.

It is rumoured that the Synod might initiate action against some priests leading the protest and warn the lay leaders of excommunication to tame their protests.

"Our position is very clear. Let the Synod take action against one priest or all the priests, we will not dilute our demand for traditional Mass as priests and the laity are together in this emotive issue," Kanjookaran told UCA News on June 5.

"When faithful will not allow a priest to celebrate the Synod-approved Mass, whatever disciplinary action the Synod contemplates will not help solve the dispute. It will only aggravate the crisis further," said a priest on condition of anonymity.

Sources said the priests and lay leaders have decided to go to the people once again to prepare them for the worst in case the Synod decides against their demand. (ucanews)

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The Herald

Church in the World

Myanmar conflict: a state of unprecedented turmoil and suffering, Cardinal Bo says

By Ana Paula Morales, Andrés Henríquez

In an interview with ACI Prensa, CNA's Spanish-language news partner, Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, archbishop of Yangon in Myanmar, said there is an "unprecedented state of turmoil and suffering, which seems to have no end" in the country resulting from a coup d'état at the beginning of 2021 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The conflict has already left more than 100 places of worship bombed or damaged, the cardinal said, and the violence has spread in many areas of the territory.

In addition, he said that almost 3 million people have been displaced and are in urgent need of assistance, which has been arriving little by little thanks to the work of the Catholic Church and other nongovernmental organizations such as 'Religions for Peace.'

Religious freedom under threat

Although Myanmar is a predominantly Buddhist country, the constitution guarantees religious freedom. However, Bo pointed out a worrying reality: "The last decade saw the emergence of fundamentalist forces that targeted minority religions."

The situation has been exacerbated by recent political unrest affecting people of all faiths who are suffering the consequences of an expanding civil war. "Peace is the common prayer of all the religions," the cardinal emphasized.

The conflict has left a devastating mark on the country's religious infrastructure, especially in the Sagaing region and the Diocese of Loikaw, the archbishop reported.

"The attack on places of worship has forced many congregations to abandon their churches, a significant blow to predominantly Christian communities such as Kachin," he lamented.

Furthermore, armed ethnic groups, which do not officially represent any religion, are often mistakenly associated with their particular faith, which quickly leads to attacks against places of worship. How is the Catholic Church surviving?

"Summer has brought unbearable heat and water is scarce. The Church has suffered but continues to be a source of healing, especially through the priests and religious and social work," Bo related. The prelate also said that Catholic churches have taken in numerous internally displaced people throughout the country.

"The needs are enormous and food security is an urgent need for our people," he emphasized.

The cardinal, who is also president of the Myanmar Bishops' Conference, said many religious communities have lost homes, monasteries, and churches due to the violence.

In November 2018, Pope Francis visited the country. According to the archbishop of Yangon, during his visit the pope gave "several messages of love and peace, but unfortunately it didn't register." Despite



everything, the pontiff, the cardinal added, brought a message of peace between religions and their leaders.

In the face of so much violence, the cardinal made a universal call to bring about peace in Myanmar: "We call on all parties to seek a path of peace. At the beginning of the war, the Church tried to bring together all parties to work for consensus. Recently, the avenues for peace seem to be limited, but the Church continues to reach out to all stakeholders in the hope of bringing peace."

United Nations warns: 'Never-ending nightmare' in Myanmar

In early March, the United Nations (U.N.) expressed its profound concern about the situation in Myanmar, describing the crisis as a "never-ending nightmare" that has inflicted unbearable levels of suffering and cruelty on its population.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk reported in May that the military regime has caused thousands of deaths, including airstrikes in towns and cities, and has arbitrarily detained more than 20,000 opponents, including 3,909 women.

Additionally, the U.N. Security Council in April called for an immediate end to violence, the release of arbitrarily detained prisoners, and improved humanitarian access.

Finally, the U.N. also reported that the humanitarian emergency will worsen this year, with 18.6 million people needing assistance in 2024, a figure 19 times higher than that recorded in February 2021.

The coup d'état in Myanmar

In early 2021, the Asian country's armed forces (known as Tatmadaw) seized control of the government, alleging election fraud in the general elections of Nov. 8, 2020, in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) party of Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1991, won a landslide victory.

However, these claims of fraud were not supported by independent observers and are seen by many as an excuse for the military to regain control of the country.

Although Myanmar moved to civilian rule in 2011, the country's constitution — enacted by the military in 2008 — ensures that the military retains significant control over the government, including control of important ministries and a quarter of the seats in Parliament.

Feast of Corpus Christi: Lebanon celebrates 199 years of miraculous Eucharistic event

By Marguerita Kallassy

Thousands of Christians flocked to Zahle, Lebanon, on Thursday, May 30, a city nicknamed "The City of 52 Churches," to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi.

This year's celebration held special significance, marking the 199th anniversary of a miraculous event credited with saving Zahle from a bubonic plague outbreak.

Preparations for the feast began a week prior, culminating in a moving candlelit procession on the eve of Corpus Christi. The procession weaved through the streets of Zahle, starting from St. Elias Al-Touak Monastery and concluding at the Melkite Cathedral of Our Lady of Deliverance. The faithful walked and prayed in unison, led by the stirring sounds of trumpets. The procession culminated in a blessing bestowed by the Melkite Patriarch Youssef al-Absi and Bishop Ibrahim Ibrahim. The procession in Zahle, Lebanon, for Corpus Christi. The procession weaved through the city streets, starting from St. Elias Al-Touak Monastery and concluding at the Melkite Cathedral of Our Lady of Deliverance. The faithful walked and prayed in unison, led by the stirring sounds of trumpets and bases. May 30, 2024.

By dawn on Thursday, churches across Zahle's diverse Christian communities were brimming with worshippers attending early morning Masses.

Following the services, a massive procession snaked its way through the city's streets, temporarily halting traffic by its sheer size. The procession culminated at the Government Seray, where priests and bishops from various denominations showered blessings upon the gathered crowds.



"This day holds immense significance for us in Zahle," explained the Melkite Bishop of Zahle, Ibrahim Ibrahim. "Despite our denominational differences, we Christians come together as one to glorify God present in the Bread and Wine. In Zahle, Christian unity has been a lived experience long before the term itself became popular." The procession in Zahle, Lebanon, for the feast of Corpus Christi, May 30, 2024.

The tradition of celebrating Corpus Christi in Zahle stems from a pivotal moment in the city's history. In 1825, the bubonic plague, a devastating disease, swept through the region. Following the urging of Bishop Ignace Ajoury, the residents of Zahle held a procession and offered fervent prayers before the Holy Eucharist. Remarkably, the city was spared from the plague's wrath.

While the feast of Corpus Christi originated in Belgium in 1246, Eastern Christians readily adopted the celebration.

"For nearly two centuries, this tradition has been meticulously passed down from generation to generation, ever since the Eucharistic Miracle saved our city," the bishop said. "The importance of the Holy Eucharist has been ingrained in our hearts since that time."

Pope: Gift of vocation must be 'kept and cultivated every day'

Vatican News: Pope Francis sends his greetings to Brazil's Congress of Consecrated Religious Life and praises their various charisms

Through the gift of their vocation and their different charisms, consecrated men and women play a central role in the Catholic Church's mission to spread the Gospel, Pope Francis said.

"Indeed in many places on the planet, the first proclamation of the Gospel bears the face of consecrated men and women who take up with great commitment and dedication of their lives the Lord's mandate: 'Go into the world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature,'" the pope said, quoting St. Mark's Gospel. Pope Francis' comments came in a message to participants in a conference for consecrated religious life in Brazil released by the Vatican on May 30. The theme for the conference is taken from Jesus' instruction to the disciples in St. John's Gospel: "Remain in my love." The pope told participants that "the gift of the vocation must be kept and cultivated

every day, so that it produces good fruits in the life of every religious man and woman."

To live out one's vocation in a good way, "it is necessary to remain in His love, through constant dialogue with Jesus in daily prayer and faithfulness to the vows that express our consecration in a beautiful way," he wrote.

Citing his homily for World Day for Consecrated Life in 2020, Pope Francis said that in consecrated life: "poverty is not a colossal effort, but a higher freedom;" chastity is not "austere sterility, but the way to love without possessing;" and "obedience is not a discipline, but victory over our own chaos, in the way of Jesus."

The pope congratulated the Conference of Religious Men and Women of Brazil for their 70 years of service to the church, and he encouraged them to live in the present while sustained by their specific charisms and "to look to the future with hope."

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The Month of June in Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The month of June holds immense importance in the Catholic faith due to its dedicated focus on the Sacred Heart of Jesus symbolizing His divine and compassionate love for humanity. This devotion serves as a powerful reminder of Christ's unconditional love and mercy, inviting believers to deepen their spiritual connection and embrace the transformative impact of His divine love in their lives.

The significance of this devotion is deeply ingrained in the historical, religious, and traditional fabric of the Catholic faith, offering believers a profound opportunity for personal renewal, spiritual growth, and a strengthened commitment to living out the teachings of Christ. This devotion, deeply rooted in history and tradition, invites believers to reflect upon the profound message of love and mercy inherent in the Gospel.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus can be traced back to the early centuries of Christianity, but it gained widespread recognition in the 17th century through the revelations received by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French nun. Jesus appeared to her multiple times, revealing His heart as a symbol of His burning love for humanity, laying the foundation for the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Pope Pius IX consecrated the entire Catholic Church to the Sacred Heart in 1854, recognizing the significance of this devotion. Later, Pope Leo XIII encouraged all bishops to promote this devotion and emphasized its importance as a means of spiritual renewal and strengthening the faith of the faithful.

The religious practices and traditions associated with this devotion, such as Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, prayers, and acts of reparation, provide believers with tangible avenues to express their devotion and seek a deeper understanding of Christ's love and grace. During the month of June, the Catholic Church offers numerous practices and devotions to foster a deeper connection with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Some of these practices include:

Attending Mass and spending time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament provide opportunities for believers to encounter Jesus intimately and offer their devotion.

A beautiful prayer consisting of various invocations and titles attributed to the Sacred Heart, encouraging believers to contemplate the different aspects of Christ's love.

Devotees often engage in novenas and the Rosary, meditating on the mysteries of Christ's life, passion, and resurrection.

Believers perform acts of reparation to console the Sacred Heart and seek forgiveness for offenses committed against God and others.

By consciously offering acts of love, compassion, and sacrifice throughout June, believers seek to honour and imitate the selfless love of the Sacred Heart.

The impact of this devotion on believers is immeasurable, as it calls them to embody the virtues of compassion, forgiveness, and selflessness, thereby enriching their spiritual lives and fostering a genuine transformation in their relationships with others. The Sacred Heart of Jesus serves as a symbol of hope, comfort, and unwavering love, inspiring believers to emulate His example and radiate His love in the world.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart calls believers to deepen their love for Christ, embrace His mercy, and follow His teachings. By contemplating the Sacred Heart, the faithful are encouraged to grow in compassion, forgiveness, and selflessness, enriching their spiritual lives and transforming their relationships with others.

As the faithful engage in the practices and traditions associated with this devotion, they are called to deepen their understanding of Christ's love and mercy, fostering a personal relationship with Jesus and radiating His love in the world.

The month of June stands as a testament to the profound importance of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Catholic faith, offering believers a sacred space to encounter the boundless love and grace of Christ, renew their commitment to His teachings, and become beacons of His love in the world.

Letters to the Editor

School fee hikes

Ref. Herald 31 May-06 June 2024 report Indian Church-run Schools Face Action for Charging Excess Fees, the Indian constitution in its original enactment defined education as state subject under Article 42 of the constitution. An amendment was added in 1976 and education became a concurrent list subject which means that both the central government and state governments have the authority to make laws and policies regarding education.

Under the concurrent status of education, the central government has the authority to formulate and implement policies and laws at the national level, while the state governments have the responsibility to govern and regulate education within their respective states. This arrangement allows for a shared responsibility in the field of education, with the central government providing overall guidelines and policies, and the state governments adapting and implementing them according to the specific needs and context of their regions.

The central government, represented by the Parliament of India, and the state governments, represented by their respective legislative

bodies, have the power to enact laws related to education. Both levels of government can introduce bills, debate them, and pass legislation on various aspects of education. Therefore, if several private schools, which also includes church-run schools, have been flouting the fee increase benchmarks fixed by a state government (in this case MP), then they can be justifiably pulled up.

In this connection, readers may read a 31.05.2017 report West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee Holds Meeting With Private Educational Authorities Over Fee Structure. Link:

<https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/news/india/west-bengal-cm-mamata-banerjee-holds-meeting-with-private-educational-authorities-over-fee-structure/articleshow/58927931.cms>

Much water has flown the Ganges since then with little relief to parents especially in post-Covid scenario of job losses/job uncertainty. While several state governments (Delhi, MP, Gujarat, UP) have Fee Regulatory Committees, West Bengal government is yet to come with one.

ISAAC HAROLD GOMES

Compassionate Confession

Thank you for your editorial on Confession (The Herald - 3 May -6 June 2024). I am sure that if the priests follow the Pope's advice urging priests "forgive everything" and not to scrutinize those who come for confession, it will be a non-judgmental and merciful approach to the sacrament and many will approach the confessional box.

Few months back, the Pope, while talking to priests, recalled two great confessors whose testimonies he still carries in his heart, he said. One was a 93-year-old priest, Father Aristi, who was the confessor of all the clergy in Buenos Aires, in Argentina. Even the lay people, including himself, went to him.

One Easter Sunday, the future pope came to know that Fr. Aristi had died and his coffin was in the basilica with only two old ladies praying the rosary. He felt pained that the man who forgave the sins of many had no flowers at his funeral. So, the Pope bought flowers and while arranging them noticed Fr. Aristi's rosary and wanted to have its cross. The Pope said, "I stole the cross of the rosary, praying to him, 'Give me half of your mercy'". Pope Francis said that still, he carries the crucifix with him always.

The other testimony was of a 96-year-old Capuchin priest, who continues to hear confessions at the Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii in Buenos Aires. At his confessional, there is always a long queue of priests, bishops, nuns, young people, old people, poor people, rich people, everyone...

One day, the priest came to Pope Francis, who was then Archbishop of Pompei, asking him to be relieved of "this torture". When the Pope asked why, he answered, "You know I always forgive, I forgive everything, I forgive too much. Sometimes I feel the scruples." So the Pope asked him what he does when he feels the scruples. The Capuchin priest said he goes to the chapel and asks the Lord for forgiveness. But immediately I feel something inside and I say: 'But be careful Lord, because it was You who gave me the bad example'."

In conclusion, Pope Francis reminded about the Apostolic Penitentiary of the 2025 Jubilee Year. He said that penitence is the "profound nucleus" of every Jubilee, and hence they should take care to make the Holy Year as fruitful as possible, so that God's mercy may reach everywhere and to everyone.

Dominic J. Azavedo

Two Suggestions

I used to contribute regularly to your newspaper when Fr. Sunil Rozario was its editor. I thank him and others who were part of the editorial team then for the welcome that you extended to a staunch Hindu. I write this letter with two suggestions. One, is it possible to make the archives and the entire publication from its inception totally digital? A fee may be charged for this digital access. If the logistics is huge, small steps in that direction will one day see everything digitised. This will be a great help to researchers and will help the interreligious dialogue ministry of both Hindus and Roman Catholics. Further, is it possible for you to start a column on Bengali

Christian and Hindu spiritualities? This need arises from the theological call to bloom where we are planted. Interreligious dialogue is not a new phenomenon. It has been practised before it was formalised. We have both deeply spiritual Bengali Christians and Bengali Hindus who have contributed to the growth of their own Faiths and of other religions in Bengal. And, we have so many women and men of deep faith from both religious traditions who are not children of the soil. They have given up their homes for the sake of Bengal. Perhaps the time has arrived when we celebrate these heroes.

Dr. Subhasis Chattopadhyay

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Liturgy

MY FAVOURITE SAINT Saint of the Day for June 13

Saint Anthony of Padua

The gospel call to leave everything and follow Christ was the rule of Saint Anthony of Padua's life. Over and over again, God called him to something new in his plan. Every time Anthony responded with renewed zeal and self-sacrificing to serve his Lord Jesus more completely.

His journey as the servant of God began as a very young man when he decided to join the Augustinians in Lisbon, giving up a future of wealth and power to be a servant of God. Later when the bodies of the first Franciscan martyrs went through the Portuguese city where he was stationed, he was again filled with an intense longing to be one of those closest to Jesus himself: those who die for the Good News.

So Anthony entered the Franciscan Order and set out to preach to the Moors. But an illness prevented him from achieving that goal. He went to Italy and was stationed in a small hermitage where he spent most of his time praying, reading the Scriptures and doing menial tasks.

The call of God came again at an ordination where no one was prepared to speak. The humble and obedient Anthony hesitantly accepted the task. The years of searching for Jesus in prayer, of reading sacred Scripture and of serving him in poverty, chastity, and obedience had prepared Anthony to allow the Spirit to use his talents. Anthony's sermon was astounding to those who expected an unprepared speech and knew not the Spirit's power to give people words.

Recognized as a great man of prayer and a great Scripture and theology scholar, Anthony became the first friar to teach theology to the other friars.

Soon he was called from that post to preach to the Albigensians in France, using his profound knowledge of Scripture and theology to convert and reassure those who had been misled by their



denial of Christ's divinity and of the sacraments. After he led the friars in northern Italy for three years, he made his headquarters in the city of Padua. He resumed his preaching and began writing sermon notes to help other preachers. In the spring of 1231 Anthony withdrew to a friary at Camposampiero where he had a sort of treehouse built as a hermitage. There he prayed and prepared for death.

On June 13, he became very ill and asked to be taken back to Padua, where he died after receiving the last sacraments. Anthony was canonized less than a year later and named a Doctor of the Church in 1946.

Anthony should be the patron of those who find their lives completely uprooted and set in a new and unexpected direction. Like all saints, he is a perfect example of turning one's life completely over to Christ. God did with Anthony as God pleased—and what God pleased was a life of spiritual power and brilliance that still attracts admiration today. He whom popular devotion has nominated as finder of lost objects found himself by losing himself totally to the providence of God.

Short Story

The Drowned Child

In Lisbon, Portugal, a boy called Parrisio decides to go on a boat trip with other boys, but without telling his parents. Suddenly, a violent storm breaks out and the boat capsizes. While the other boys, who were older



and knew how to swim, managed to save themselves, Parrisio drowned. Upon hearing this tragedy, the boy's mother ran to the beach and pleaded with the sailors to recuperate the body. They lowered their nets and soon were able to draw out Parrisio's lifeless body, which they gave to the desperate mother. On the next day the family wanted to take the body to church for the funeral and subsequent burial,

but the mother did not allow this. She continued to pray to St. Anthony, promising that if her child were brought back to life she would consecrate him to the Franciscan Order. On the third day, in front of his parents and relatives, the boy suddenly awoke

as though from a deep sleep; the mother's prayers to the Lord, through the intercession of St. Anthony, had been answered.

When he became older Parrisio entered the Franciscan Order, and always joyfully told his fellow friars of the wonder God had performed for him through the intercession of St. Anthony.

A Dead Man Speaks

In Lisbon, the city where St. Anthony was born, there were two people who hated each other to death. One evening the son of one of them met the son from the rival family, which was living close to St. Anthony's parents. Filled with hatred, and seeing that no one else was around, he stabbed the other young man to death.

He then buried the corpse in the garden of Anthony's father. Martin, Anthony's father, tried to prove his innocence, but the grisly evidence found in the family garden was enough to convict the poor man of the murder.

Just when things were at their worst, God revealed to Anthony, who was in Padua, the plight of his father. Immediately, the Saint

obtained permission to go away for a night. The distance from Padua to Lisbon is approximately 1,200 miles, but Anthony was there in a couple of hours through divine intervention. In the court room the Saint asked that the body of the murdered man be produced immediately. Anthony approached the corpse and, in a firm voice, asked the man to tell who had killed him. To the amazement of all, the corpse sat up and clearly said the name of the murderer and attested the innocence of Anthony's father, who was freed at once. The revived man then turned to Anthony and asked absolution from his sins, then he died again. Miraculously, the next day the Saint was back in Padua. After all, he had asked permission to be away only over night.

Sunday Reflections

10th ordinary Sunday [B] - Sunday 9 June 2024
Gen 3: 9-15; Ps 130; II Cor 4:13-5:1; Mk 3:20-35

Introduction: The readings for today, the Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, give the name "sin" to our offenses against God. When we sin — violate God's Commandments — we distance ourselves from Him; when we refuse, or fear, to admit our sins, we deny ourselves God's freely offered pardon and forgiveness.

Scripture lessons, summarized: In describing Adam and Eve's first sin, disobedience, our first reading, taken from Genesis, explains the beginning of evil in the world with its destructive results. The loving relationship joining man to God was destroyed, and the relationship of mutual love between Adam and Eve was weakened. Their default to a "blame game" allowed each to avoid taking personal responsibility for their joint choice. In the second reading, Paul declares to the Corinthians that the many adversities of his missionary work were God's plan for his spiritual growth; his sufferings, offered with Jesus for the Salvation of the world, would result a glorious reward for him and for all believers who did the same. Today's Gospel passage reveals how Jesus himself was misunderstood by his own relatives and was criticized, slandered, and rejected by the Sanhedrin-led scribes and Pharisees. His sufferings for us give us both courage and his offer of healing, strength, and forgiveness, so that we can do as he did when we face unfair treatment and criticism in our lives.

Life messages:

1) Today's Scriptures challenge us to face rejection with prophetic courage and optimism:

Very often our friends, families, or childhood companions fail to listen to us and refuse to accept the words of grace, love, and encouragement that we offer to them because they know so much about us and are so used to us, they disregard what we have to say, if they even hear it! But we have to face such rejection with prophetic courage because by our Baptism we are called to be prophets like Jesus, sharing his prophetic mission. As prophets, our task is to speak the truth in love and oppose the evils in our society, refusing to condone or encourage sinful behavior even in our dear ones, though we do not "excommunicate" them, from our lives, but continue to love them while we pray for them.

2) We need to have the courage of our convictions:

Modern "liberal-minded" people may find the genuine Christians' belief in and practice of Christ's ideas and ideals "just plain crazy!" Hence, what is needed in a Christian is the courage of his or her convictions based on the authority of Jesus as God and the truth of his doctrines and expressed in the Magisterium of the Church.

3) We need to live as members of God's family:

Let us remember that by Baptism we become the children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus, and members of the Heavenly family of the Triune God. Hence, let us observe our obligations of treating others with love and respect and of sharing our love with them in corporal and spiritual works of mercy. We are also His disciples, and so are obliged to be hearers as well as doers of the word of God. Let us keep our souls daily cleansed and filled with the Spirit of God, leaving no space for the evil spirit to enter our souls.

Homily starter anecdote: "What's in a name? and 'Whatever Became of Sin?'" Among William Shakespeare's contributions to English literature, there are literally thousands of memorable lines that continue to be quoted because of their eloquence and timeless significance. One of these is the famous line, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet" (Romeo and Juliet, act 2, sc.2, l.43). I would paraphrase it, what's in a name? That which we call sin, by any other name would still be sin! There appears to be a tendency in contemporary society to disregard or minimize sin, or to call it by another name. Similarly, there is a tendency to ignore or rename evil. The sense of shame regarding sin has been renamed and the so-called "guilt complex" has become public enemy number one. In today's readings, the Lord God in Genesis, St. Paul, and Jesus all call sin a sin. (Patricia Sanchez)

— Fr. Anthony Kadavil

Archdiocese



Bible Commission : planning meeting for Theology Course 2024-2025

THE ARCHDIOCESAN BIBLE COMMISSION INVITES YOU TO JOIN
Theology for the Laity: Session 2024-2025
 10 new modules to expand your understanding of our faith!

Sacred Liturgy Divine Revelation Church Pastoral Constitution CCC: Sacraments
 CCC: Ten Commandments CCC: Our Father CCC: Methods of Prayer CCC: Meditation CCC: Contemplation

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:
 Morning Star Regional Seminary, Barrackpore

Commencing Saturday 13th July 2024
 Scan QR to WhatsApp for details/registration

'THEOLOGY FOR THE LAITY' COURSE TO START IN CALCUTTA ARCHDIOCESE COURSE-II / 2024 – 25

By Fr Dominic Gomes (Vicar General)

Hosea 4: 6 "My people will perish because of lack of knowledge."

On 25th May 2024 His Holiness Pope Francis addressing the general assembly of the pontifical mission societies insisted on a renewed commitment to the Second Vatican Council Constitutions on Sacred Liturgy, Light of the Nations, Word of God, and the Church in the Modern World. The purpose and mission of the Church is "making everyone know and live the 'new' communion that the Son of God made man has introduced into the history of the world" (Praedicate Evangelium, I, 4).

Following up on the success of 2023-24 Theology course Most Rev. Thomas D'Souza (Archbishop of Calcutta) and Father Dominic Gomes VG (Director of Bible Commission) met with Rev. Fr. Dr. Henry Jose MSFS (Dean of Morning Star Regional Seminary) and the fruit of this meeting was the decision to structure the 'Theology for the Laity 2024-2025' course in line with the Holy Father Pope Francis's exhortation on the Constitutions of the II Vatican Council.

Theology for the Laity 2023-2024 course conducted by the Morning Star Regional Seminary faculty under the aegis of the Bible Commission concluded successfully on 24 April 2024. 58 lay members from our parishes completed the course with distinction and received their certificates at the hands of Archbishop Rev. Thomas D'Souza. This year-long course covered subjects such as Christology, Mariology, the Doctrine of the Trinity, sanctification through the Sacraments, Social Teachings of the Church, the fundamental principles of Catholic Liturgy, Lay Spirituality deals with the role of the Laity both in the Church and the society at large and much more.

From June this year the Bible Commission of Calcutta Archdiocese has started the process of training animators (from amongst the 2023-24 Course graduates) and forming Bible Cells in every parish with the aim of maintaining a continuity in theological teaching-learning process to ensure a spread in theological knowledge at the parish grassroots level.

To maintain the continuity of teaching-learning at the Diocesan level, the Bible Commission in association with Morning Star Regional Seminary, Barrackpore will commence the second year of "Theology for the Laity 2024-2025" course with an inauguration ceremony on Saturday 13 July 2024 at the Archbishop's House.

It is a reality that the Church in today's modern times is faced with a variety of challenges, both from within and without, that are temporal, spiritual, cultural and intellectual in nature. Besides, this our Holy Father Pope Francis has, through the Synodal process, exhorting the Church to live a Christian life in mission mode of service and hope in the world. The Church is the united body of Christ comprising the clergy, religious and lay faithful.

Today we have a large number of lay people, young and old, actively involved in the service of the Church and the communities at large through the Pastoral Commissions and various ministries of the parish action groups who also proclaiming the Word of God. Moreover, it is the laity who are truly immersed in the world of families, communities, work, and public life. In order to face these challenges, we need more and more lay Catholics who have sound theological knowledge of the various aspects of the Faith so as to be able to practice it meaningfully and fruitfully while engaging actively in the pastoral endeavors of the Church.

The lesson content for 2024 – 2025 course to be covered over a period of 32 days (classes) will provide an opportunity for the Laity to be well-informed on following subjects:

No. of Classes	SUBJECTS
2	On Sacred Liturgy – <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>
2	On Divine Revelation – <i>Dei Verbum</i>
2	On Church – <i>Lumen Gentium</i>
4	Pastoral Constitution on Church in the Modern World – <i>Gaudium et spes</i>
4	Catechism of the Catholic Church: Life in Christ: Sacraments
10	Catechism of the Catholic Church: Ten Commandments
2	Catechism of the Catholic Church: Our Father
2	Catechism of the Catholic Church: Methods of Prayer
2	Catechism of the Catholic Church: Meditation
2	Catechism of the Catholic Church: Contemplation

Besides an email letter to all Parish Priests from the Head of the Bible Commission, Father Dominic Gomes, the newly appointed Animators and other members of the Commission will be visiting the Parishes in the Calcutta Archdiocese to encourage

the laity to register for the course. During the month of June, the Commission will also publicise this Course through posters, banners and flyers giving the subjects to be covered and other details of the course will be handed out for further information.

Archbishop Thomas D'Souza has announced that a course on 'Theology for the Laity' will be conducted by Morning Star Regional Seminary, Barrackpore in collaboration with Calcutta Archdiocese's Bible Commission headed by Father Dominic Gomes. From Morning Star, the course will be conducted and coordinated by Rector Revd. Fr. Dr. George Panthamackel, MSFS; Dean of Theology Revd. Fr. Dr. Henry Jose, MSFS; and Dean of Philosophy Revd. Fr. Dr. Thumma Mariadas Reddy, MSFS.

THEOLOGY FOR THE LAITY – 2024-25		
Course Starts: 13 th July 2024	Course Concludes: 26 th April 2025	Duration 9 months
Classes will be held 3:30 pm to 6:30 pm on every Saturday (as practicable)		
Venue: Archbishop's House, 32 Mother Teresa Sarani, Kolkata 700016		
Registration Fee = Rs. 400/-	Course Fee = Rs. 1,600/-	Total = Rs. 2,000/-
For more details Contact:		
Rev. Fr. Dr. Henry Jose MSFS: 9895612966		Rev. Fr. Dominic Gomes: 9830416538



St. Teresa's Church celebrates the Feast of Visitation

St. Teresa's celebrated the Feast of the Visitation of Mary on May 31, 2024 followed by Rosary at 5:30 p.m. at the Grotto and concluded with the Eucharistic celebration at 6:00 p.m. The event was organized on 31st May, 2024 at Mother Mary's Grotto in our Church premises by Mr. James Lingham a member of the Fatima Apostolate, Bengali unit of St. Teresa's Church with the help of five Parishioners of our Church.

It drew a significant congregation to honor this important occasion in our Catholic liturgical calendar. The Visitation of Mary commemorates the visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, as described in the Gospel of St. Luke. This visit is celebrated for its themes of faith, humility, and service, as Mary was with Jesus in her womb, and she offers support to Elizabeth, who is expecting John the Baptist.

St. Teresa's Church, a historic landmark in Kolkata, provided a fitting backdrop for the solemn festivities. The church was adorned with flowers and candles, creating a reverential atmosphere for the day's events. The celebrations included a special Mass celebrated by Fr. Subroto Baidya, Fr. Arun Lucus, Fr. Naveen Tauro and our Altar servers. The procession began from Mother Mary's Grotto by carrying our "Mama Mary" in a Palanquin by our Parishioners. The entire congregation sang songs dedicated to our Mother with their melodious voice.

Fr. Subroto blessed the statue of Mother Mary and incensed it, Fr. Naveen Tauro garlanded the statue with the holy rosary and Fr. Arun Lucus crowned Mother Mary's statue with a crown.

The celebration of the Visitation of Mary reinforced community bonds and spiritual commitment among the parishioners. The involvement of the Fatima Apostolate highlighted the active participation of various church groups in fostering faith and unity within the parish.

We thank all the Fatima Apostolate members who took the initiative to organise this event and bringing them closer to Mother Mary. A special thanks to Mr. James Lingham who supported the community by sacrificing his time for making this event a memorable one.

—Report by Dominic Panja

News & Views



The Perpetual Profession of Salesian Sisters

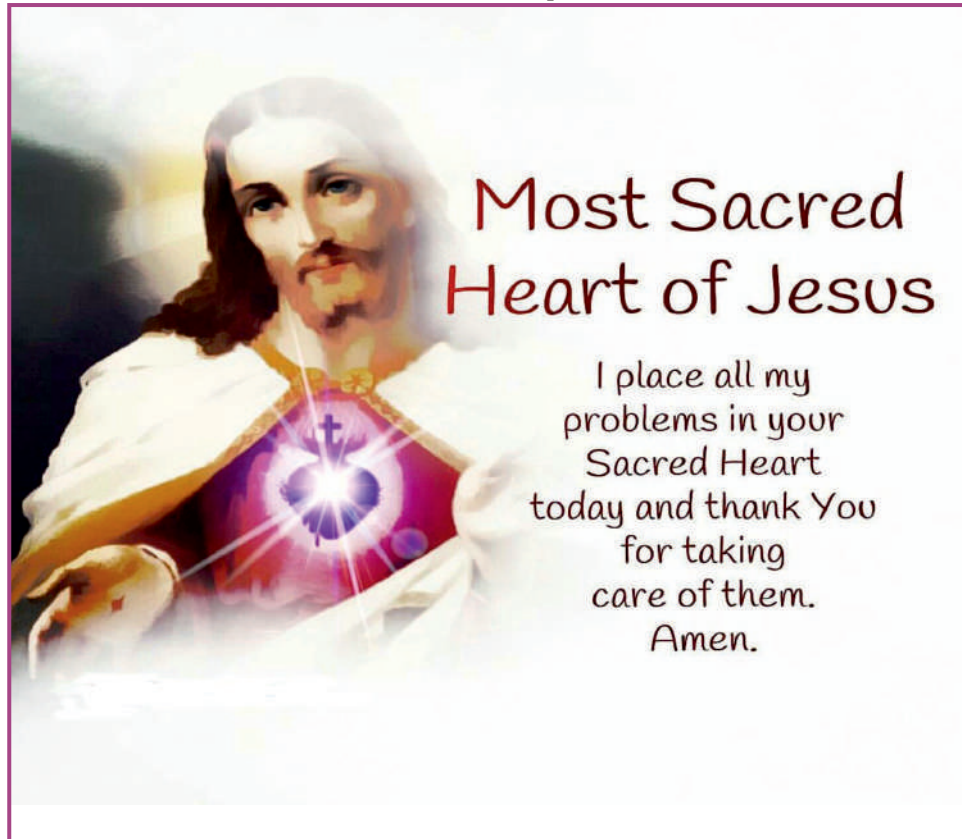
By Sr. Pranati Sabasundar FMA

The perpetual profession of Sr. Ba-I-Thiang Sten, Sr. Binita Bara and Sr. Shashikanta Xalxo was held on 26 May 2024 at St. Patrick's Church Dum Dum on the solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. Most Rev Thomas D'Souza, the Archbishop of Calcutta officiated the Holy Eucharist along with eight Con-Celebrants. The theme of this celebration was taken from Isaiah 49:5 "I have carved you in the palm of my hand." The Holy Mass commenced with an entrance dance led by the candidates. It was an incredibly inspiring and touching moment when the would-be perpetuals were handed over by their parents to the provincial Rev. Sr. Leelamma Palliparambil FMA and she, in turn, offered them to the Lord.

This great and glorious event was witnessed by parents and relatives of our sisters, friends, parishioners, well-wishers and the special invitees. The event was also blessed by the graceful presence of Sr. Elizabeth George the provincial of Shillong Province. In his homily, the Archbishop exhorted

about the Trinitarian love and sacrifice. He then explained this love should be transmitted by all the baptized so, the Lord has chosen and called these sisters to share the love of God among His people by following the charism of Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello. Soon after the Mass Rev. Fr. Irudaya Raj the parish priest of St. Patrick parish and Archbishop Thomas D'Souza congratulated and felicitated the perpetually professed sisters with a token of love. Dr. Utpal Goswami, Parish Pastoral Council Secretary, expressed the joy of witnessing the celebration and then he thanked Sr. Provincial and parish priest for hoisting the profession in the parish. It was indeed a great moment for all who were present for this occasion.

After which all proceeded to the community hall for a short cultural programme which was performed by aspirants, parents and relatives of the perpetually professed. The rich culture of our country brings a variety of joy and enrichment. It was followed by a sumptuous meal served for all.



Bible Summer Camp at Fatima Shrine

Fatima Shrine Youth group organised the summer camp from 22 - 26 May for a hundred and fifty children of 8 to 22 years under the guidance of the Parish Priest, Assistant Parish Priest, and the Youth Animator, and the Financial contribution of the parishioners helped to meet daily expenses for food, drink and other requirements.

Day one comprised Holy Mass, division of the camp participants in four teams - St Alphonse, St Clement, St Gerard, & St Peter, post- breakfast orientation by Fr Anto, Treasure Hunt for juniors, Scavenger Hunt for seniors to encourage team- work, and Bible Quiz.

Day two Featured rosary prayer, Holy mass, Spiritual talk, post- breakfast showcasing of talent through the event - Two minutes to Fame, obstacle race, followed by a round of Brain Teasers and another Bible Quiz

Day three Saw career guidance session conducted by experts for the seniors who find themselves at cross roads, unable to decide the course of study to

be pursued, T- shirt painting for seniors, games for juniors. Special attraction was a skit competition based on the parables of Jesus to bring out the creative and acting talent of the participants.

Day four consisted of queries of campers answered by youth organisers to fulfil the inquisitiveness of youngsters. The events entitled Star Glitz, and Creative Ads brought into play fashionable trend, acting ability, improvisation of costumes and props.

The Final day had competition like Non-fire cooking to display the camper's cooking ability in presenting low budget innovative dishes. Singing and dancing competition saw the campers taken to new height of zeal and enthusiasm. The curtains were brought down with Prize distribution where St Gerard team bagged the Winner's Trophy. The campers went home with food packets and smile of satiation and enriched experience.

By Staff Reporter



Pope: Jubilee Year an occasion to cancel foreign debt

By Joseph Tulloch

Speaking to participants in a Vatican conference on debt in the Global South, Pope Francis says that the upcoming Jubilee Year is an opportunity to cancel or reduce debt owed by poorer countries.

On Wednesday morning, Pope Francis met with participants in a conference entitled "Debt Crisis in the Global South", organised by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

The Pope joked about the early start to the meeting, which was held at 7:45am, apologising to participants for "dragging you out of bed."

Millions left without future

Pope Francis then moved on to discuss the debt crisis, underlining the extent of the problem.

"After a mismanaged globalisation, after pandemics and wars," he said, "we are now faced with a debt crisis that mainly affects the countries of the Global South, generating misery and distress." This situation, he said, deprives "millions of people of the possibility of a decent future."

Debt forgiveness

In the final section of his address, Pope Francis turned to discuss the upcoming Jubilee Year of 2025.

The Catholic Church celebrates a Holy Year every quarter of a century, a practice with roots in the ancient Jewish tradition of the Jubilee, when slaves would be freed and debts forgiven.

Noting that, during the last Jubilee in 2000, Pope John Paul II encouraged the reduction or even forgiveness of foreign debt, Pope Francis said that he wanted to "echo this prophetic appeal. "We are only custodians and stewards" of our money, he emphasised, "not masters."

Conclusion:

Pope Francis brought his address to a close by inviting participants in the debt conference to "dream and work together for the improvement of our common home." "What you are doing is important", he said. "I will pray for you, and please, do not forget to pray for me."

Special feature

Pope: Jesus didn't just talk about eternal life, He gave it to us

Pope Francis pens the preface to the Italian version of the book "Come Forth: The Raising of Lazarus and the Promise of Jesus's Greatest Miracle" by American Jesuit Father James Martin, in which he reminds us that Jesus didn't just talk about eternal life; He gave it to us.

By Pope Francis

Father James Martin, the author of many other books that I know and appreciate, deserves our gratitude for this new text devoted to what he calls "Jesus's greatest miracle": the resurrection of Lazarus. There are many reasons to thank him, closely tied to the way Come Forth unfolds. It's always fascinating, and never predictable.

First and foremost, Father James makes the biblical text come alive. He analyzes it with the eyes and erudition of a diverse set of writers who have probed this passage deeply, capturing their many facets, emphases, and interpretations. But his reading is always "loving," never detached, nor coldly scientific. Father James has the perspective of a person who has fallen in love with the Word of God. As I read the careful arguments and exegeses of the biblical scholars he cites, it made me wonder how often we manage to approach Scripture with the "hunger" of a person who knows that that word really is the Word of God.

The fact that God "speaks" should give us a little jolt each and every day. The Bible truly is the nourishment we need to handle our lives. It's the "love letter" that God has sent—since long ago—to men and women living in every time and place. Treasuring the Word, loving the Bible, carrying it with us every day, with a little book of the Gospel in our pockets, maybe even pulling it up on our smartphones when we have an important meeting, or a difficult encounter, or a moment of unease... actions like these will help us grasp the extent to which Scripture is a living body, an open book, a vibrant witness to a God that is not dead and buried on the dusty shelves of history. Instead, Scripture journeys with us always, even today—and it walks with you, too, who are now opening this book, perhaps intrigued by this well-known story whose deep, full meaning has nevertheless not been understood by everyone.

What's more, these pages contain one of the truths of Christianity that always stays current, and that remains fruitful. The Gospel is concrete, and eternal; it has just as much to do with our inner being and our interior life as it does with history and daily life. Jesus didn't just talk about eternal life; He gave it to us. He didn't just say "I am the resurrection"; He also resurrected Lazarus, who'd been dead for three days.

Christian faith is the ever-present comingling of the eternal and the contingent, of heaven and earth, of the divine and the human—never one without the other. If our faith were just "earthly," what would distinguish it from any well-intentioned philosophy, or well-structured ideology, or well-developed mode of thought? That remains simply that—a theory detached from the times, and from history? If Christianity were just concerned with the "after," or with eternity alone, this would

be a betrayal of the choice that God carried out once and for all, casting His lot with all of humanity. The Lord did not 'pretend' to incarnate. He chose to enter human history, so that the history of men and women might take the form of the Kingdom of God, the time and place where peace sprouts, hope becomes substantial, and love brings life.

All of us, then, are Lazarus. Rooting himself firmly in the Ignatian tradition, Father Martin brings us directly into the story of this friend of Jesus. We're His friends, too—"dead" as we sometimes are on account of our sins, our failings and infidelities, the despondency that discourages us and crushes our spirits. Jesus is hardly afraid to get close to us—even when we "reek" like a dead body that's been buried for three days.

No, Jesus isn't afraid of our death, or our sin. He waits just outside the closed door of our hearts, that door that only opens from within, that we lock with a double bolt whenever we think God could never forgive us. But as we read James Martin's detailed analysis, we can practically feel the profound meaning of what Jesus does when He finds Himself before a dead man who is really dead, whose body gives off a nasty odor—a metaphor of the moral rot that sin produces in our souls. Jesus isn't scared of coming close to sinners—to any sinner, even the most brazen and undaunted. He has one single preoccupation: that no one goes missing, that none are deprived of the possibility of feeling the loving embrace of His Father.

It's interesting that even a well-known contemporary novelist like Cormac McCarthy, who died in 2023, lingered over the question of what the "work of God" might be. One of the characters in *Cities of the Plain* (1998) says: "He believed in God even if he was doubtful of men's claims to know God's mind. But that a God unable to forgive was no God at all." That's exactly right: God's "job" is to forgive.

Reading Father James Martin's book also made me remember a line by Alberto Maggi, an Italian Bible scholar. He wrote about the raising of Lazarus like this: "What Jesus teaches us with this miracle is not so much that the dead rise, but that the living do not die!" What a wonderful insight, and what a paradox! Of course, the dead rise, but how true it is to recall that we the living never die! Yes, death does come, not just for us, but for our families and those dear to us—for everyone, really.

We see so much death all around, unjust and painful death, death caused by war, by violence, by Cain's abuse of power toward Abel. But we men and women are destined for eternity. All of us are. Each of us is a "half-line" or "ray," to borrow a concept from geometry: we each have a starting point—our birth on this planet—but our lives all point toward the infinite. Yes, that's right, toward infinity! What Scripture calls "eternal life" is the life that awaits us after death. It's the life we can already touch right here and right now, as long as we dwell not in the egoism that saddens us but in the love that widens, that dilates our hearts. We are made for eternity.

A Mom's Lesson to her beloved Son

By Arockia Dhas Rayappan

It is that time of the year when summer-job applications for students here in Canada are being admitted and processed! Some parents shared with me that their teenagers learn to prepare the CV at home around this time, and the process itself is a big learning for the growing kids when they apply for summer-job. Some teenagers save some part of their earning for their future studies, i.e., bachelorette/degree/undergraduate studies; and they get also updated about the kind of profession they wish to pursue in future.

I recently learned of a mom who was updated of the summer job recruitment at the ice-cream shop by her friend. The mom and her son prepared the CV. The son was delighted to learn of the very many good qualities his mother wrote about him in the CV, i.e., leadership, communication, collaboration, organizational skills, flexibility, detail oriented, reliability, punctuality, problem-solving ability, and by nature honest, industrious, compassionate, and caring. The boy's joy knew no bounds. He gave mom a big hug. At the evening, the mom called up the ice-cream shop and enquired of their availability for the submission of the CV. Upon receiving the positive response, they rushed instantly to submit the CV on foot instead of using the public transit.

The distance covered on that day took them some thirty plus minutes. They happily submitted the CV. Mom had a photo of her son submitting the CV. It is rare that a teenager obliges for a photo session while submitting the CV for the summer job here in Canada. He was an exception. Her son is the protagonist of this story!

It is during the way back from the ice-cream shop, the son hinted at the distance both had to cover for his future/probable job-location. The son pinpointed to his mom that the commutation for the job would last thirty plus minutes. The son told mum with a tone of surprise, "Mom, isn't it quite far from our home? It took almost thirty minutes for us. I think, it is a lot of distance. May be, I will have to cover much distance to do the summer job if I will be recruited here." For the readers, he is just thirteen years old—a year one teen.

Then, his mom responded to him smilingly, "My son, it is a lot of distance for you walking from home to the ice cream shop. What about the distance I covered from India to fly to arrive at Canada for the job to provide for our family and my family back home.

My son, remember that your mom came from India to work in Canada. The real distance for job is between India and Canada, not between our home and the ice-cream shop/corner here in Montreal." The boy had a big laughter and looked at the sky. Then he embraced his mom and responded to her saying, "I understand, Mom." They walked back largely adorned with blissful smiles on their faces.

On that day, mom had a big relief too that her son's CV for the summer job was submitted. Not only that, but she also had the opportunity to educate him about the sacrifices she had made to travel to Canada from India.

Having listened to their fun-filled conversation on their way to ice-cream shop and back, I am sharing with you some meditative, spiritual, and Christian lessons from this ordinary conversation between a mom and her son that might have often occurred at your homes.

How often we have grumbled against God about the daily responsibilities we had to fulfill. Are we happy at the end of the day that we finished our job and responsibility? Were we concerned about our neighbours, other family members, and relatives who have less responsibility, or may be some of them might be without a responsibility? Do we complain also like the boy in the anecdote about the distance we cover daily for the job? Does this happen in our spiritual life? Then it struck me. Often, I did carry my own personal, spiritual, and pastoral grievances to Jesus in prayer. Our Jesus suffered much. Then in prayer, I discern and meditate on the distance Jesus travelled from heaven to come to earth to offer salvation and lifelong friendship with you and me, the whole humanity, the mother earth, and the entire planet system; the distance Jesus walked during his teaching, healing, and preaching ministry; the miles Jesus walked to be with the grieving sisters when He learnt of Lazarus' death; the distance Jesus covered walking after His arrest at the Garden of Gethsemane; the shame Jesus suffered at the hands of the soldiers, and the Sanhedrin, and Pilate before being Crucified; the suffering and pain caused to Jesus by the soldiers who whipped him many times; the distance Jesus walked carrying the Cross; the way Jesus was stripped off before His loved ones, both political and religious figures including strangers as a person sentenced to crucifixion; His being nailed to the Cross; His experience of being crucified and dead on the Cross before Mary His mom; the agony of His mother looking at His Son Jesus' crucified and lifeless body - being placed on her lap. Then I remain mum for a long time. I do not utter a word. I keep on meditating on his Crucified image. Now words know their limits. I experience stillness and calmness.

Then, the words of that mother start ringing in my ears: "My son, it is a lot of distance for you walking from home to the ice cream shop. What about the distance I covered from India to fly to Canada to take up the job to provide for our family and my family back home. My son, remember that your mom came from India to work in Canada. The real distance for job is between India and Canada, not between our home and the ice-cream shop/corner here in Montreal."

What a spiritual lesson for you and me! Just seeing our grievances, daily hassles, adversity, crisis, pain, strain, disappointments, difficulties, betrayals, demotions, shame-filled experiences, struggle, trials, tribulations, persecutions, and misunderstanding in the light of Jesus' sufferings, we get a new meaning and insight. None of our suffering is our own because those are inextricably linked to those of Jesus! For Jesus has carried them all by himself when He carried the Holy Cross!

Perspective

Hindi Journalism: its Development and Challenges in Post Modern World

By Francis Sunil Rosario

Kolkata: The city of joy, Kolkata is the birth place of Hindi journalism. The maiden Hindi weekly newspaper 'Udant Martand', by Jugal Kishor Sukl was published from Kolkata, West Bengal, on May 30, 1826. This day has been celebrated as Hindi journalism day.

To celebrate this day a well-organized Panel discussion was held on May 30, 2024 at Rajasthan Information & Media Centre, on the topic, 'Hindi Journalism, its development and challenges in the post-modern society'. It was a well thought out critical appraisal of Hindi journalism, highlighting both its dark side and brighter future. The goal of healthy journalism should be the common good of society. To help the readers to think well, for development, the well-being of all and good of nation.

Mr. Bishwambhar Newar, the Editor in chief, Chapte Chapte, a leading daily journal from Kolkata city, also a proprietor and producer of Taza TV News channel has consistently observed this day to celebrate and promote Hindi literature and reporting. Both in print and electronic media, Mr. Newar has made a significant contribution to promote Hindi journalism. His yearly special issues, 'Utsav' bring together the intellectuals in Hindi literature across the city and beyond. The pioneer in Hindi Journalism, Mr. Jugal Kishor Sukl's endeavor to promote Hindi literature began with an idea to fight against oppressive policies of British and to fight strenuously for freedom of expression and country's freedom from foreign bondages. It was the period of Bengal renaissance. Bengali Newspapers began to publish thought provoking articles to fight for the cause of freedom from the clutches of British rule. Bengal's pioneer reformist Raja Ram Mohan Roy fought against many of the atrocities inflicted in socio-economic fronts due to oppressive structures existing during the period.

Those who took part in the panel discussion on May 30 were the erudite scholars in their respective fields. The thought-provoking discussion by the eminent authors and critics in the field of journalism both in print and electronic media spoke on the relevance of 'Hindi journalism today and in the context.

The Chief guest, Dr. Soma Bandopadhyay, Vice Chancellor, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University, in her message spoke very convincingly, how Hindi media and journalism has moved out of original vision and mission. Before independence, the values Hindi journalism had set by Jugal Kishor Sukl are no more today.

The business entrepreneurs have bought media channels, and their mission is to promote vested interest of the political leaders to remain in power to dominate and to discriminate the voiceless and marginalized. What the readers want to read and want to know, the media is not doing justice to information and news. She spoke on the importance of developing skills in communication to improve quality journalism and to keep such media secure, to promote and protect from all vices, threats and corrupt thoughts.

Dr. Shambhu Nath, Director, Bhartiya Bhasha Parishad giving the meaning of 'Udant Martand' the first Hindi journal published on May 30, 1826,



'Sun of News and views' however he regretted that today, such enlightened thoughts and presentation are no more. He also said, "From where we began our journey and where we have reached today in our thinking and presenting our news and views."

Dr. Kripa Shankar Chowbey, Director, Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, Wardha said, "Our journalism should be people oriented. That's the primary criteria. Media today has moved out of real issues that affect the lives of people in general. It has become a profit-oriented business, where populism plays a huge role. After Independence, Hindi journalism has become the victim of Market economy and fake news.

Shri Raj Mitouliya, Former Chairman and senior journalist, Kolkata Press club said, "Hindi journalism is well connected with political and cultural movement of India's freedom struggle, awakening the minds of every citizen. In principle, the Indian journalism played a role in nation building soon after independence. He praised the Bengali News papers who inspired Hindi journalism to play huge role to motivate people towards freedom and transformation. In 1854, the maiden daily News paper was published by a Bengali scholar, Mr. Babu Shyam Sundar Sen.

Priyanka Paliwal, Bhartiya Sanskriti Sansad, Salahkar said, Earlier media was a commitment to a cause, a mission, today it has become a profession. One of the journalists said from his own experience, 'If I get three Cs, (Cinema, Cricket and Crime) my news will sell. They are the sources to promote journalism, much away from the values of true journalism.

Shri Hinglaz Ratnu, Director, Rajasthan Information Centre spoke on the situation of Rajasthan media. The culture and the huge desert landscape of Rajasthan have always remained the hallmark of media coverage. The Rajasthan people have played a huge role in promoting Hindi journalism. Rajasthan tourism is promoted by both Hindi and Bengali media in Bengal. That has helped to improve on the economy of Rajasthan.

Those who took part in the discussion besides the speakers at the panel, Sitaram Agarwal, Poet Suresh Chowdhuri, Rita Chand Patro, Khawaja Ahmed Hussain, Ajendra Nath Tiwari, Fr. Sunil Rosario, Sakun Trivedi, Editor, The Wake, Kali Prasad Jayswal Dubela, Jayprakash Mishra, West Bengal, Head of Media and Communication, Ravi Pratap Singh, Poet Anju Sethia, Roma Das, Seem Bhavsinghka, Seema Gupta, Jaygovind Indoriya, Journalist Purushottam Tiwari, Sacchidanand Parekh, Rawel Pushp, Kaushal Kishor, Editor, Prabhat Khabar, Jitendra Jitanshu, Editor, Sadinama, Meenakshi Sanganeria, Pradeep Agarwal, Omprakash Chowbey, Pradeep Dhanuk, Suresh Shaw and others.

Silence as Interreligious Dialogue

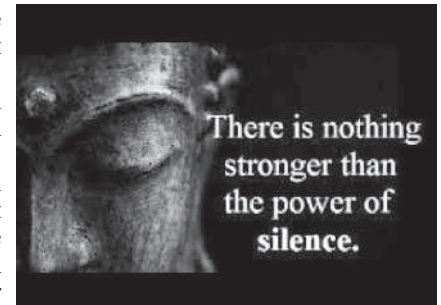
By Dr. Subhasis Chattopadhyay

Roman Catholics and Hindus are terrified of silence and its life-giving and life changing power. When one religion speaks to another, without silence, our inner chatter damages the conversation. Interreligious dialogue was never meant to be a cultural war or a war of ideas. Instead of putting forth our own ideas of what the other religion is about or, what dialogue should be; we ought to listen to the Other with respect. This silent act of listening to the Other is known as dialogue. Love in silence of the Other is interreligious dialogue. If I am not silent, I will not be able to hear you. It is that simple. Both Hinduism and Roman Catholicism have a long-shared tradition of silent meditation. We Hindus tell the beads in silence, and we call it japa. Roman Catholics during Holy Mass and at home have times of silent prayer. It is during this silence that a Hindu family and a Roman Catholic family are truly in communion with each other in the best sense of interreligious dialogue. As the popular saying goes -- those who speak, do not know. Those who know, do not speak.

My own tradition from within Hinduism is of Shakta worship. 'Shakti' is misunderstood as being the feminine aspect of the Supreme Godhead. Actually, Shakti is cognate with power, and It is the Power of God. It is an attribute of God. In this tradition we have to divinise the body. One needs to be a bit technical here. Within the Christian economy of salvation, the body is often associated with the negatively connotated sarx. But in Bengali Shakta worship, the body has to be seen as Christ commanded us to prepare the body --- as an abode of His Father, qua, in this case, as a divinised Being in the here and now. By this we mean the Heideggerian dasein which is no longer death oriented but following the greatest Christian theologian of the last century, Karl Rahner SJ, this new dasein to be used in Shakta worship is God-intoxicated and thus, life oriented in the here and now. This transformation of the being struggling for self-actualisation in the here and now can only be possible through silence. It is in silence that generations of holy women and men have transformed their bodies into fit receptacles for Shakti. It is in this cradle of silence that ordinary Hindus have become extraordinary and began to reflect Shakti, or the Power of the Supreme

Godhead in the here and now. Shakta worship is centred on chaste householders and therefore, has yet to be explored by celibate Christian clergy and Religious. Unlike Advaita Vedanta (non-qualified non dualism), Bengali Shakta worship is a very well-established path which hundreds of householders and monks follow. They visit the siddha-peethas like Tarapith at Birbhum and Dakshineswar temple to practice their asceticism. This asceticism is based on the bulwark of silent prayer. The Shakta worshipper moves in this world as if s/he does not belong to this world. The need to give up kith and kin is not there --- one is called to be perfect while within the warp and woof of this passing world where we all, both Hindus and Christians, are just sojourners. Unless there is an effort to tap into this silence of the Hindu Shakta practitioner, there cannot be a successful dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism within Bengal. Bengal is the seat of Shakti worship. We worship God as Durga. Unless we Hindus engage with the deep silence of cloistered women and men in Bengal, the interreligious dialogue will fail. Silence is the bulwark of both Hindu and Roman Catholic spirituality.

If we can be silent, not in an angry way, we will not stray from perfection. We will follow the injunctions of Christ to never judge others so that we are not judged. A Yogi is someone who does not get disturbed, nor does s/he disturb others. The paths of both Roman Catholicism and Hinduism lead us to become Yogis. The Bhagavad Gita says that a Yogi is silent in the face of blame and praise --- not a Stoic silence. Rather, a Yogi has transcended the dualities of praise and blame. This is the purpose of silence. The ontic beginning of interreligious dialogue is silence, but mere silence is never the telos. But interreligious silence aims at liberating the human person in the here and now. This is the result of deep silence leading to deeper listening. This is why Thomas Merton enter the Trappist monastery at Gethsemani and this is why so many Hindus, married and celibate, keep 'maunvrats' or, spend lives of silent service.



Where are all the pilgrims? The current state of religious tourism in the Holy Land

By Marinella Bandini

During the month of May in Jerusalem, the major holidays of the three major religions — Christian Easter, Jewish Passover, and the month of Ramadan — passed with an almost total absence of pilgrims from abroad.

The holy sites and the streets of the Old City are usually crowded with tourists and pilgrims at this time of year, but they have been empty for the past eight months due to the Israel-Hamas war.

Muslims orderly make their way to the entrances of the Al-Aqsa mosque compound for noon prayer, but otherwise, the Via Dolorosa is completely empty. There are no pilgrims ascending to the Holy Sepulcher. The Sanctuary of the Flagellation, maintained by the Franciscans at the starting point of the Via Crucis path, is always open — but that is empty, too. The "Sacred Garden," the oldest part of the Garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives where Jesus prayed on the night of Holy Thursday. "Before the war, we had more than a hundred groups a day. Today, we welcome two or three groups on a good day," said Brother Siniša Srebrenović, the guardian of the Franciscan Convent of the Agony (Gethsemane), to CNA. May 2024.

Things aren't any better at Gethsemane. "Before the war, we had more than a hundred groups a day. Today, we welcome two or three groups on a good day," Brother Siniša Srebrenović, the guardian of the Franciscan Convent of the Agony (Gethsemane), told CNA. "They mostly come from Asia or South America. Some come from Eastern Europe, mainly Orthodox Christians."

The absence of pilgrims also means the absence of income.

"We friars sustain ourselves with the offerings of the pilgrims. The charity of the pilgrims also helps cover the maintenance expenses of the sanctuary and some development projects," Srebrenović explained. "Today, everything is at a standstill. Workers from the Palestinian Territories do not have permission to come, and the financial resources are only enough for the ordinary. Despite this, the custody continues to financially support its workers and has not laid off any of them."

At the Holy Sepulcher, the waiting time to enter the edicule (where Jesus' tomb is kept) is just a few minutes, compared with up to two hours last year. The daily procession of the Franciscan friars inside the basilica is attended by only a handful of faithful — mostly residents of Jerusalem. The Via Dolorosa, at the location of the Church of the Flagellation, is completely deserted in the afternoon of Friday, May 24, 2024. Usually, Friday is the day when many Christian pilgrims walk the Via Dolorosa in the footsteps of Jesus to the Holy Sepulcher.



Even Bethlehem is empty

"Tourism in Palestine is effectively zeroed out. Every day we lose \$2.5 million" lamented Majed Ishaq, director general of the marketing department of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine.

He described to CNA a dramatic situation: "Tourist facilities are closed; people working in the sector — including many Christians — have had no income for months. People are trying to sell houses, cars, furniture, to survive."

"International tourism passes through Israel; they control our borders. We are under a kind of siege," Ishaq continued. "Reaching Bethlehem is still possible, but cities in the north, like Nablus or Jenin, and also Hebron further south, are almost unreachable. Even local tourism and internal travel are severely affected due to attacks by settlers."

Some groups arrive, especially via Jordan. The hope is that something will move at least by the end of the year, especially for the Christmas holidays.

According to data from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, just over 80,000 people (tourists and pilgrims combined) entered the country in April — a decrease of 77% compared with April 2023 and 80% compared with April 2019, the peak year before the pandemic.

Cumulatively, from January through April, about 285,000 tourist arrivals were recorded, a decrease of about 78% in relation to the corresponding period in 2023.

"The decline is attributed to the impact of the 'Iron Swords' war the name Israel has given to the campaign against Hamas in the Gaza Strip following the events of Oct. 7, 2023, although in the months that have passed since the outbreak of the war, there has been a certain increase in the number of tourist arrivals to Israel, but it is not yet possible to identify any trend."

A small group of Orthodox Christians from Romania inside the Basilica of Gethsemane kiss the stone on which, according to tradition, Jesus sweated blood during the night of Holy Thursday. May 2024.

Dr. Yaron Ergas, director of research, statistics, and information management at the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, told CNA that "the Ministry of Tourism conducts a survey among incoming tourists, where they are asked several questions including the main purpose of their visit.

Hopes for the 2025 Jubilee

"A special exhibition of the Isaiah scrolls will be held in 2025 at the Israel Museum to commemorate its 60th anniversary. We are confident that many people will show interest. We will try to engage people who come on pilgrimage to the Holy Land to visit this special exhibition," Shani said.

Furthermore, in 2025, Catholics will celebrate a jubilee year.

"We were very encouraged by the pope's call for the jubilee," Shani said. "The churches of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, the Annunciation in Nazareth, and the Nativity in Bethlehem will be jubilee places; people will be encouraged to visit them, and we're sure it will help to recover tourism." Some pilgrims pray at the eighth station of the Via Crucis. The holy sites and the streets of the Old City, usually crowded with tourists and pilgrims at this time of year, have been empty for the past eight months due to the war. "We want to encourage Jews and Christians leaders to push their believers to come on a

pilgrimage to the Holy Land," Pini Shani, deputy director general and head of marketing administration of the Israel Ministry of Tourism, told CNA. May 2024.

The main Christian religious leaders in the Holy Land have never stopped issuing appeals to pilgrims to return to the holy places. "Do not be afraid, return to Jerusalem and to the Holy Land! Your presence is always a presence of peace, and we sincerely need peace today; may you come and bring us your peace," said the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, at the end of the Palm Sunday procession.

"The interest that moves millions of tourists can easily be linked with the commitment to brotherhood, so as to constitute a network of 'messengers of peace' who speak to the entire world to invoke the end of all war and the reopening of territories full of history, culture, and faith. ... Being peace-builders is not only possible; it is required of those who embark on a journey," the dicastery's message said.

Seeing the Eucharist through the eyes of 10 saints



effort would we put forth in order to assist at it!"

4. St. Louis Marie Grignion de Monfort

Before Communion, "Implore Mary to lend you her heart so that you may receive her Son with her dispositions."

5. St. Teresa of Jesus (or of Ávila)

"After having received the Lord, since you have the Person Himself present, strive to close the eyes of the body and open those of the soul and look into your heart."

6. St. John Bosco (Don Bosco)

"Dear young people, do we want to be happy and joyful? Let us love Jesus in the Sacrament with all our hearts."

7. St. Catherine of Siena

"O boundless charity! Just as you gave us yourself, wholly God and wholly man, so you left us all of yourself as food so that while we are pilgrims in this life we might not collapse in our weariness but be strengthened by you, heavenly food."

8. St. John Paul II

"Dear brothers and sisters: we must feel challenged by the needs of so many brothers. We cannot close our hearts to their requests for help. And we cannot forget that 'man does not live by bread alone.' We need the 'living bread come down from heaven.' This bread is Jesus. Feeding on it means receiving the very life of God, opening ourselves to the logic of love and sharing."

9. St. Therese of Lisieux

"I remembered having heard that one obtains all the favors asked for on one's First Communion Day. This thought consoled me immediately, and though I was only six years old at the time, I said to myself: 'I will pray for my poor old man (someone she had tried to give alms to) on the day of my First Communion.'"

10. St. Francis of Assisi

"When I cannot attend Holy Mass, I adore the Body of Christ with the eyes of the spirit in prayer, the same as I adore him when I see him at Mass."

By ACI Prensa

Jesus is present in the Eucharist and the Catholic Church, and many of the Church's saints have encouraged Catholics to prayerfully participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Throughout the centuries, the saints have taught us through their witness and their writings, the vital importance of the Eucharist in the Christian life.

Below 10 saints offer their wise counsel on loving the Eucharist more:

1. St. Alphonsus Mary Liguori

"Know for certain that the time you spend with devotion before this most divine Sacrament will be the time that will bring you the most good in this life and will console you the most in your death and in eternity. And know that perhaps you will gain more in a quarter of an hour of adoration in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day."

2. St. Francis de Sales

"When prayer is united to this divine sacrifice (of the Mass), it becomes so unspeakably efficacious as to cause the soul to overflow, as it were, with heavenly consolations. Here she reclines upon her well-beloved."

3. St. John Mary Vianney

"If we knew the value of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, how much greater

Miscellaneous

Relevant Concerns in Series – 146
Poets of India – 73
Gopi Chand Narang (1931 - 2022)

By Francis Sunil Rosario

Gopi Chand Narang (11 February 1931 – 15 June 2022) was an Indian theorist, literary critic, and scholar who wrote in Urdu and English. His Urdu literary criticism incorporated a range of modern theoretical frameworks including stylistics, structuralism, post-structuralism, and Eastern Poetics.

Early life

Narang was born in Dukki, a town in Balochistan, British Raj (now Pakistan). His father Dharam Chand Narang was a litterateur himself, and a scholar of Persian and Sanskrit, who inspired Gopi's interest in literature.

Education

Narang received a master's degree in Urdu from the University of Delhi, and a research fellowship from the Ministry of Education to complete his PhD in 1958.

About his linguistic journey Narang said: "My journey with Urdu is a journey of *ishq*. Urdu was not my mother tongue; my paternal and maternal families spoke Seraiki. But I never realised that Urdu is not my mother tongue".

Teaching Career

Narang taught Urdu literature at St. Stephen's College (1957–58) before joining Delhi University, where he became a reader in 1961. In 1963 and 1968 he was a visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin, also teaching at the University of Minnesota and the University of Oslo. Narang joined Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi as a professor in 1974, rejoining the University of Delhi from 1986 to 1995. In 2005, the university named him a professor emeritus.

Narang's first book (Karkhandari Dialect of Delhi Urdu) was published in 1961, a sociolinguistic analysis of a neglected dialect spoken by indigenous workers and artisans in Delhi. He has published over 60 books in Urdu, English, and Hindi.

Achievements

He has produced three studies: Hindustani Qisson se Makhoos Urdu Masnaviyan (1961), Urdu Ghazal aur Hindustani Zehn-o-Tehzeeb (2002) and Hindustan ki Tehreek-e-Azadi aur Urdu Shairi (2003). Narang's related volumes— Amir Khusrow ka Hindavi Kalaam (1987), Saniha-e-Karbala batur



Sheri Isti'ara (1986) and Urdu Zabaan aur Lisaniyat (2006)—are socio-cultural and historical studies.

In addition to teaching, Narang was vice-chairman of the Delhi Urdu Academy (1996–1999) and the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language – HRD (1998–2004) and vice-president (1998–2002) and president (2003–2007) of the Sahitya Akademi.

Honours

Narang was an Indira Gandhi Memorial Fellow of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts from 2002 to 2004, and a 1997 resident of the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Italy. Narang received the Mazzini Gold Medal (Italy, 2005), the Amir Khusrow Award (Chicago, 1987), a Canadian Academy of Urdu Language and Literature Award (Toronto, 1987), an Association of Asian Studies (Mid-Atlantic Region) Award (US, 1982), a European Urdu Writers Society Award (London, 2005), an Urdu Markaz International Award (Los Angeles, 1995) and an Alami Farogh-e-Urdu Adab Award (Doha, 1998). He is the only Urdu writer honoured by the presidents of both India and Pakistan. In 1977 Narang received the President's National Gold Medal from Pakistan for his work on Allama Iqbal, and received a addma Bhushan (2004) and Padma Shri (1990) from India. He received honorary Doctor of Letters degrees from Aligarh Muslim University (2009), Maulana Azad National Urdu University (2008) and the Central University in Hyderabad (2007). Narang received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1995, the Ghalib Award in 1985, Urdu Academy's Bahadur Shah Zafar Award, Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award (both in 2010), Madhya Pradesh Iqbal Samman (2011) and the Bharatiya Jnanpith Moorti Devi Award (2012). The Sahitya Akademi conferred on Narang its highest honour, the Fellowship, in 2009.

COMMON QUESTIONS ON LITURGICAL NORMS

Efficacy of the Penitential Rite

Answered by Father Edward Mc Namara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university

Q: What is the efficacy of the penitential rite in the Mass as far as the forgiveness of sins are concerned? One prominent priest in our area advanced the reason for the reduction in Catholics going to confession is because of the penitential rite. — J.W., Buffalo, New York

A: This subject is clearly addressed in No. 51 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal:

"Then the priest invites those present to take part in the Act of Penitence, which, after a brief pause for silence, the entire community carries out through a formula of general confession. The rite concludes with the priest's absolution, which, however, lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance."

Thus it is clear that the absolution formula that concludes the act of penance is not sacramental absolution and in no way dispenses from the obligation of confessing grave sins before receiving Communion.

Only recently have some people purported the theory that this rite absolves sins and could substitute confession. It is certainly possible that such a defective catechesis regarding the sacramental nature of this rite could contribute to a falling away from the sacrament of reconciliation.

However, I do not believe that the fault can be laid at the door of the rite itself. Some form of general admission of sin and unworthiness has formed part of the Mass since earliest times. It has always been seen as a positive element of confession, petition of forgiveness, and interior purification before entering into the celebration of the sacred mysteries.

The non-absolutory nature of the penitential rite does not mean that venial sins are not forgiven during this rite; they are also forgiven by receiving Communion and by the other intercessory prayers of Mass.

This forgiveness is due to the general reparatory nature of all positive acts of prayer, sacrifice, devotion and worship which in some way create a positive counterbalance to those common sins, defects and imperfections which plague our daily lives.

Since participation in Mass is infinitely the greatest form of reparatory and intercessory prayer that a human being can undertake, it is clear that his or her venial sins are likewise forgiven during Mass.

This is not true of mortal sins because the state of grace is necessary in order to receive Communion and fully benefit from the other blessings of the Mass. These sins ordinarily require sacramental confession and absolution to be forgiven. Moreover, even a person in a state of mortal sin is not deprived of all graces while attending Mass.

Such a person may still, for example, receive the grace of being moved by God's Word, by the homily, or by one of the prayers and hence gain a deeper knowledge of the state of his soul, of God's great mercy, and thus find courage to seek forgiveness

Follow-up: Penitential Rite

There were some related questions to our piece on the penitential rite (June 28) which I would like to tackle here.

A Maryland reader asked: "In one parish the Mass started with the opening blessing and then to the prayer. There was no penitential rite. ... Later, I was told the penitential rite at that parish is silent, but there was no pause between the opening blessing and the prayer. Is it OK to have a silent penitential rite at the Mass?"

Another reader, from Pennsylvania, inquired: "Instead of using one of the options for the penitential rite in the Roman Missal, our pastor makes up his own words, usually about the Gospel or feast day. When we are supposed to be 'calling to mind our sins,' our pastor has us reflecting on the Gospel message, the saint of the day, etc. I approached our pastor about this and he said, 'We have options and I am using options.'"

To repeat the norms of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, No. 51, quoted last time:

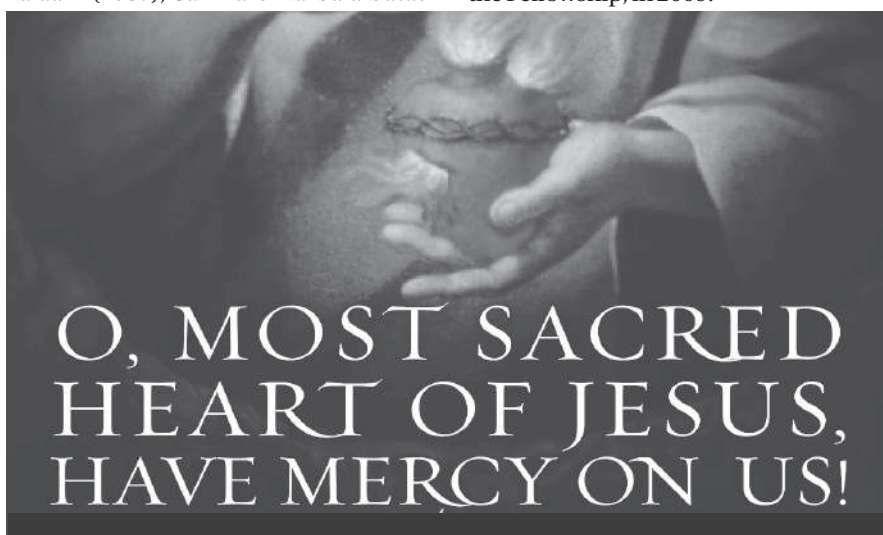
"Then the priest invites those present to take part in the Act of Penitence, which, after a brief pause for silence, the entire community carries out through a formula of general confession. The rite concludes with the priest's absolution, which however, lacks the efficacy of the Sacrament of Penance."

"On Sundays, especially in the Season of Easter, in place of the customary Act of Penitence, from time to time the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place."

In addition, GIRM No. 31 states: "It is also up to the priest, in the exercise of his office of presiding over the gathered assembly, to offer certain explanations that are foreseen in the rite itself. Where it is indicated in the rubrics, the celebrant is permitted to adapt them somewhat in order that they respond to the understanding of those participating. However, he should always take care to keep to the sense of the text given in the Missal and to express them succinctly. The presiding priest is also to direct the word of God and to impart the final blessing. In addition, he may give the faithful a very brief introduction to the Mass of the day (after the initial Greeting and before the Act of Penitence), to the Liturgy of the Word (before the readings), and to the Eucharistic Prayer (before the Preface), though never during the Eucharistic Prayer itself; he may also make concluding comments to the entire sacred action before the dismissal."

The rubrics proper to this rite state: "After the introduction to the day's Mass, the priest invites the people to recall their sins and to repent of them in silence. He may use these or similar words."

Although this last point is still a valid option, it is not clear if it will remain in the new English missal currently in translation as the Latin missal does not foresee the possibility of personal composition of the introduction to the rite of penitence.



Mother Teresa Chair Professor for Peace at SXUK



By Dr. Somak Sen

The higher education department has created a chair professor post at St Xavier's University, Kolkata (SXUK), in memory of Mother Teresa. The post will be called The Mother Teresa Chair Professor for Peace.

The post was created following an announcement by chief minister Mamata Banerjee at the fourth convocation of the university on February 6, 2023. The total grant approved by the government is ₹30 lakh per annum, said Father John Felix Raj, the university's vice-chancellor.

Speaking on the significance of the post, the VC said: "The chair professor will carry out a lot of research on peace both at the national and international levels. Today we need peace, especially immediately, when there are divisions, hatred, violence in the name of religion, in the name of even political parties, in the name of castes and interest groups."

"Peace is a human right. It is my right to be peaceful. This is one of the reasons why we have created this post of chair professor."

VC Fr Felix Raj said the duration of the chair is initially one year and can be extended for one more year. Any academic, currently holding the post of professor in a university or higher education institution aged between 55 and 62 years, may be nominated for the post.

"We have appointed a search committee comprising three experts. The expert committee met on May 25 and decided to seek nominations. Nominations can be forwarded by current and former VC's of universities, directors of research institutions or organisations and chair Professors.

An advertisement in newspapers will appear on June 2. Nomination forms are available on the university website. The last date for nominations is June 23.

The expert-cum-search committee will shortlist the eligible candidates and suggests five names to the VC who has the discretionary power to choose anyone from them.

"The post will be filled by July 2024," Fr Felix Raj said.

The areas of expertise will cover social work, psychology, English literature, development economics, management, environment, sustainability and peace studies and other allied areas. The chair professor will be attached to the university under the Father Lafont Centre for Excellence in Research and Innovation (LCERI).

"The chair professor may also be required to take some classes as and when required," the vice-chancellor said.

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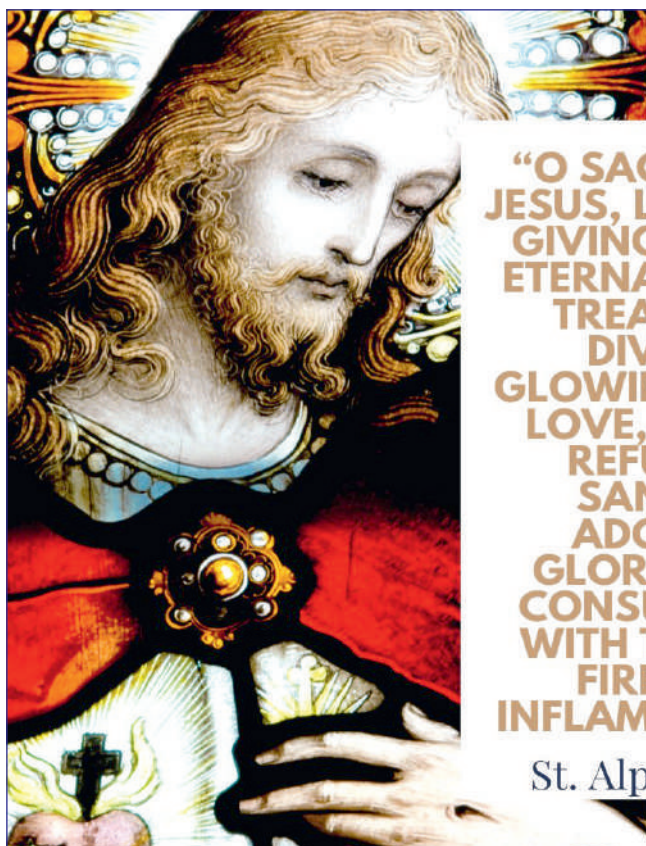
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St. Alphonsus Liguori

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