

Letter to the Editor

The Sacrament of Marriage

Sir, The indissolubility of the sacrament of marriage is germane to both Roman Catholicism and Hinduism. We both consider this as a sacrament which is indelible in nature. It is a matter of great concern that civil courts throughout the globe are attacking this theo-anthropological foundational cradle of both our Faiths. Divorces are on the rise. I draw your readers' attention to one of the greatest intellectual and saintly priests your Archdiocese has ever known, the late Jesuit Fr. Lawrence Abello SJ. Fr. Abello who was my mentor and a grand-father figure to me, wrote for this newspaper weekly and untiringly advocated for the need for couples to live together till death did them part. He wrote for the Catholic faithful. In a spirit of joyous lived-dialogue, I find today great value in his and the Catholic Church's teachings on

marriage in India in the here and now. I have faithfully written of the need for the indissolubility of marriage in an interreligious vein at ESamskriti. In a lighter vein, many questioned the saintly Fr. Abello who barely subsisted on two pairs of torn clothing which he stitched himself that why did he not write in more academic places than this paper? His answer will always ring in my years: the job of a theologian is to first educate at the grassroots in simple language since the healthy do not need a doctor but the sick do. This is the very same response I had the good fortune of getting from my first Guru, an Australian Christian Brother who served this Archdiocese for long — Bro. Robert Cataldus Whiting cfc. I have written on both men online in Indian Catholic Matters and the interested reader can find their brief biographies there. It is high time that this paper remembers and gives shape to the unique

vocation of being a Brother in the last century. And, also celebrates the lives of the likes of Bro. Whiting cfc and the Canadian, Fr. Abello SJ. My Hinduism has been made strong and firm by these men of God. I am who I am today because Bro. Whiting cfc took pity on a middle-class waif and Fr. Abello took the trouble from his busy schedule to teach me philosophy late after he returned each night teaching generations of nuns and would-be couples. Both men transformed me with love. I miss them. The world knew one as a very orthodox priest and the other as a great missionary Brother. I knew them as grand-dads I never had. Neither remotely tried to convert me to their Faith. Instead, I learnt great asceticism from both of these celibates. They showed me as a child that one can be perfect as their Father in Heaven is perfect.

Dr. Subhasis Chattopadhyay