

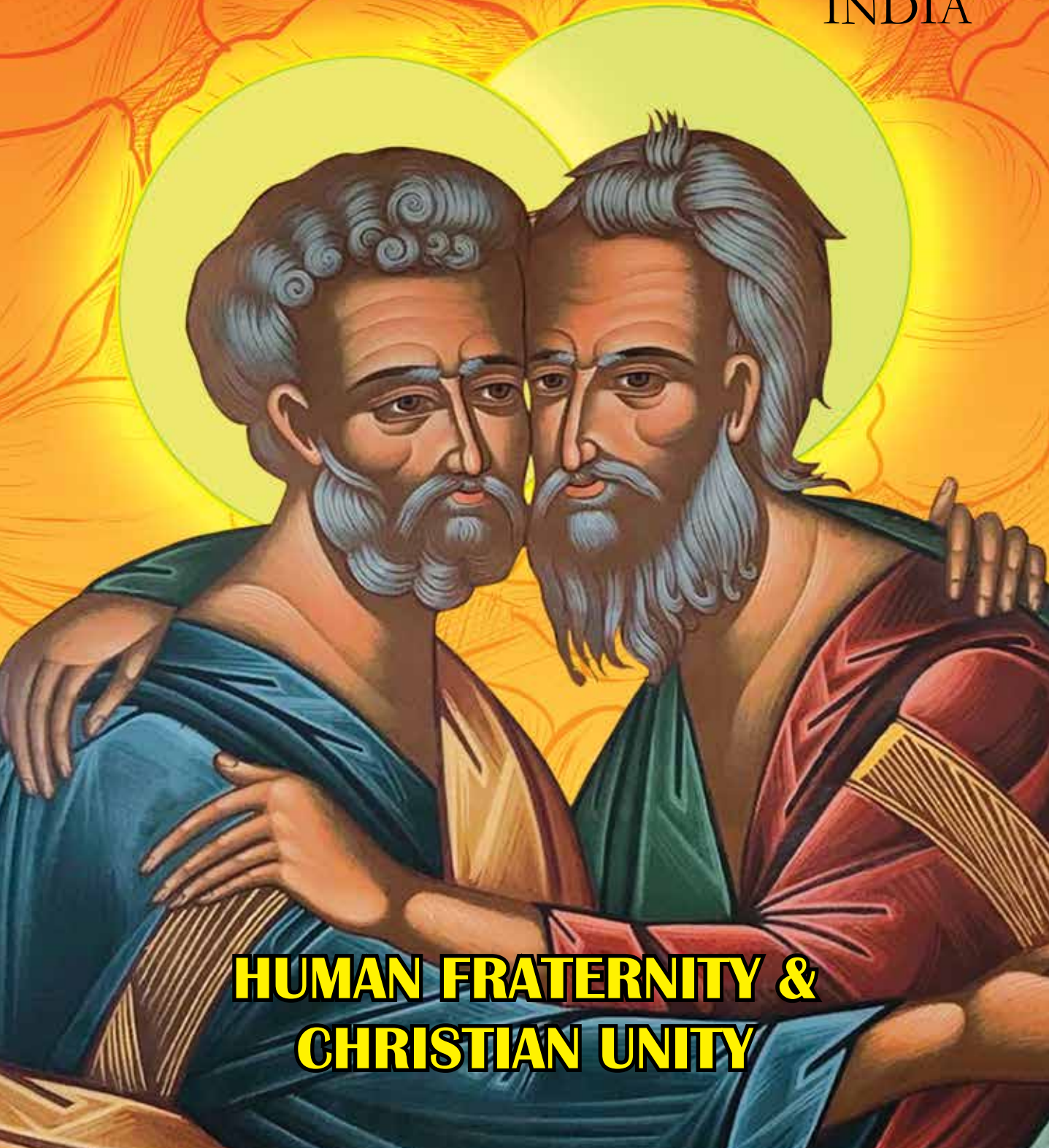
SMART

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# COMPANION

INDIA



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## Journeying Together

On 7 May 2022 the Emmaus Province of the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament (MCBS) was bifurcated and a new province called MCBS Param Prasad was established with its headquarters at Kalady, Ernakulam. This new province undertakes the publishing of Smart Companion Magazine launched in 2010 under the leadership of Fr Jacob Naluparayil MCBS and late Fr Jacob Srampickal SJ. Companion is an accompaniment, a journeying together just like Jesus walked together with the disciples of Emmaus explaining the scriptures and interpreting the mystery of salvation. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them. Jesus ignited their minds, opened their eyes and they recognized him (Lk 24,13-32).

Pope Francis inspired by the teachings of St Francis of Assisi and St Charles de Foucauld has been advocating the spirituality and lifestyle of human fraternity which has become a golden string in the contemporary milieu of war, crime, and disharmony. One of the significant fruits of Second Vatican Council is the concept and practice of Christian unity launched by Augustine Cardinal Bea with the establishment of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a joint global initiative of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. In 1908 Episcopalian Reverend Paul Wattson in Graymoor, New York initiated the Octave for Church Unity. This is held annually between the Feast of the Chair of St Peter (18 January) and the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul (25 January). The theme of the Christian Unity Octave of 2023 is “Do good; seek justice’ (Is 1:17) which reminds us that only by being good to others and only by maintaining justice in our relationships a better world can be expected. Christian Unity Week invites us to do good together; to seek justice together, to help the oppressed together, to protect orphans, and defend widows together.



On 15 January 2023, Pope Francis, recalling this ecumenical time, announced a new event: “We thank the Lord who faithfully and patiently guides His people towards full communion, and we ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten and sustain us with His gifts. The path for Christian unity and the path of synodal conversion of the Church are linked. I therefore take this opportunity to announce that an ecumenical prayer vigil will take place in St Peter’s Square on Saturday 30 September, in which we will entrust to God the work of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops”.

Dr. Francis Kodiyan MCBS



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**Human Fraternity & Christian Unity**



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# THAT THEY MAY BE ONE

No longer must Christians go out “to conquer the world for Christ” as it used to be said, but rather go out to listen — to other Christians, to men and women of faith and goodwill everywhere, to the cries of the Earth itself as seen in climate change — and to learn from all creation how to es[1]tablish new relationships.



Myron J Pereira<sup>1</sup>

In St. John’s Gospel (ch.17), Jesus prays that his disciples may all be united in mission. Unfortunately, the history of the Church has not borne him out.

In 1054, the Christian Church split into two — the Roman Catholic Church under the pope, and the Orthodox Churches under various Patriarchs.

Later, in 16th-century Europe, the Catholic Church was further divided into various ‘Reformed’ or Protestant churches.

In addition, there are various ‘Pentecostal’ or revivalist groups, each claiming to be guided directly by the Spirit (whence ‘pentecostal’). Today they are the fastest-growing segment of Christians.

Sadly, each of these traditions has been antagonistic to each other, a counter-witness to church mission everywhere.

However, in 1908, Father Paul Wattson, an Episcopalian priest in the U.S.A., with Mother Lurana

White, founded the Society of the Atonement and introduced a Prayer Octave for Christian Unity.

Reverend Wattson strongly believed that Jesus’ atonement for mankind’s sins demanded unity — or “at-one-ment” — from his followers. In other words, Christians should be re-united as Christ wished. The first Church Unity Octave took place on Jan. 18-25, 1908.

In 1936, a pioneer of ecumenism in French Catholicism, Abbé



Paul Couturier, brought in a new interpretation of the Unity Octave.

Couturier perceived that the idea of "return" made it difficult for many Christians to join with Catholics in prayer.

"Churches have to overcome the prejudices of the past and the many historical wrongs which each group inflicted on the other"

So he began what he called the "Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity," keeping the same dates of Jan. 18-25, but urging people to pray for the unity of the Church "as Christ wills it."

Today, the Church prays for the unity, the full communion, of all the baptized, in a way and at a time that the Lord, through the work of the Holy Spirit, will arrange.

In recent times, it was Pope John XXIII who gave a major push to Church unity at the beginning of Vatican II. It was he who introduced the word "ecumenical" into Catholic vocabulary, meaning by this, a communion of Christian churches united by baptism and the Eucharist, in discipleship with Christ.

The Vatican Council also introduced us to ecumenical dialogue, that is, to speak to and to listen to those others belonging to the vast Christian oikumene (universe).

The way is long and arduous, for the churches have to overcome the prejudices of the past and the many historical wrongs which each group inflicted on the other.

Our challenge in Asia, however, is slightly different. It is inter-faith dialogue: reaching out to appreciate the world religions, and understanding their different ways of approaching God and society.

In India, for example, much has been done by way of understanding and adapting to Hinduism,

Islam and even tribal religions, but the rise of fundamentalism everywhere threatens these precarious relations.

In fact, dialogue with Islam has become more urgent than ever. This is because so many Muslims identify the West with a Christendom which exists only in their fantasy, and also because so many Western Christians will not ask forgiveness for their exploitation of Muslim societies in the past.

But there remains yet another area of dialogue, "dialogue with the world."

This is the saeculum — secular values and beliefs which have become a whole system of values for our contemporaries, independently of religion.

"To engage in dialogue with secularism means confronting the social evils of caste, communalism, gender discrimination and violence"

Like the great religions, secularism too has positive and negative aspects. To be 'of this world' is to live rationally, to embrace the scientific spirit and its technological outreach, to overcome prejudice based on gender, caste and race. All these are positive.

But there is a darker side to the saeculum: its godlessness and hubris; its practice of injustice, oppression, violence and hatred; its lust for financial power and contempt for the deprivation of millions across the globe.

To engage in dialogue with secularism means confronting the social evils of caste, communalism, gender discrimination and violence, the displacement of peoples, consumerism and ecological crime.

Such dialogue cannot be the work of a single uniform community, but a larger "communion of communities" which may be religiously, ethnically and linguistically

diverse, but is united and focused in seeking an equitable and peaceful society.

Take gender issues for example, we need to see how from time immemorial all societies have discriminated against women, kept them poor and dependent, and have practiced violence against their bodies, and all in the name of God and family honor.

And finally, is there yet another dialogue called for today? There is. It is the dialogue — or reconciliation if you will — with Mother Earth and all creation.

When the World Council of Churches prayed for "peace, justice and the integrity of creation," it is this which was in mind. And in *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis decries humanity's 'sinful' treatment of Mother Earth, and of those who dwell upon it.

Earth's multiple crises — air pollution, climate change, water scarcity, acid rain, biodiversity loss, inequality, continuing poverty, disease and alienation (a "deep and melancholic dissatisfaction") — are stated with clarity in Pope Francis' exposition, but most of us are too caught up with the short-term benefits of our industrial civilization to pay much heed.

Pope Paul VI used to say, "Dialogue is the new way of being Church".

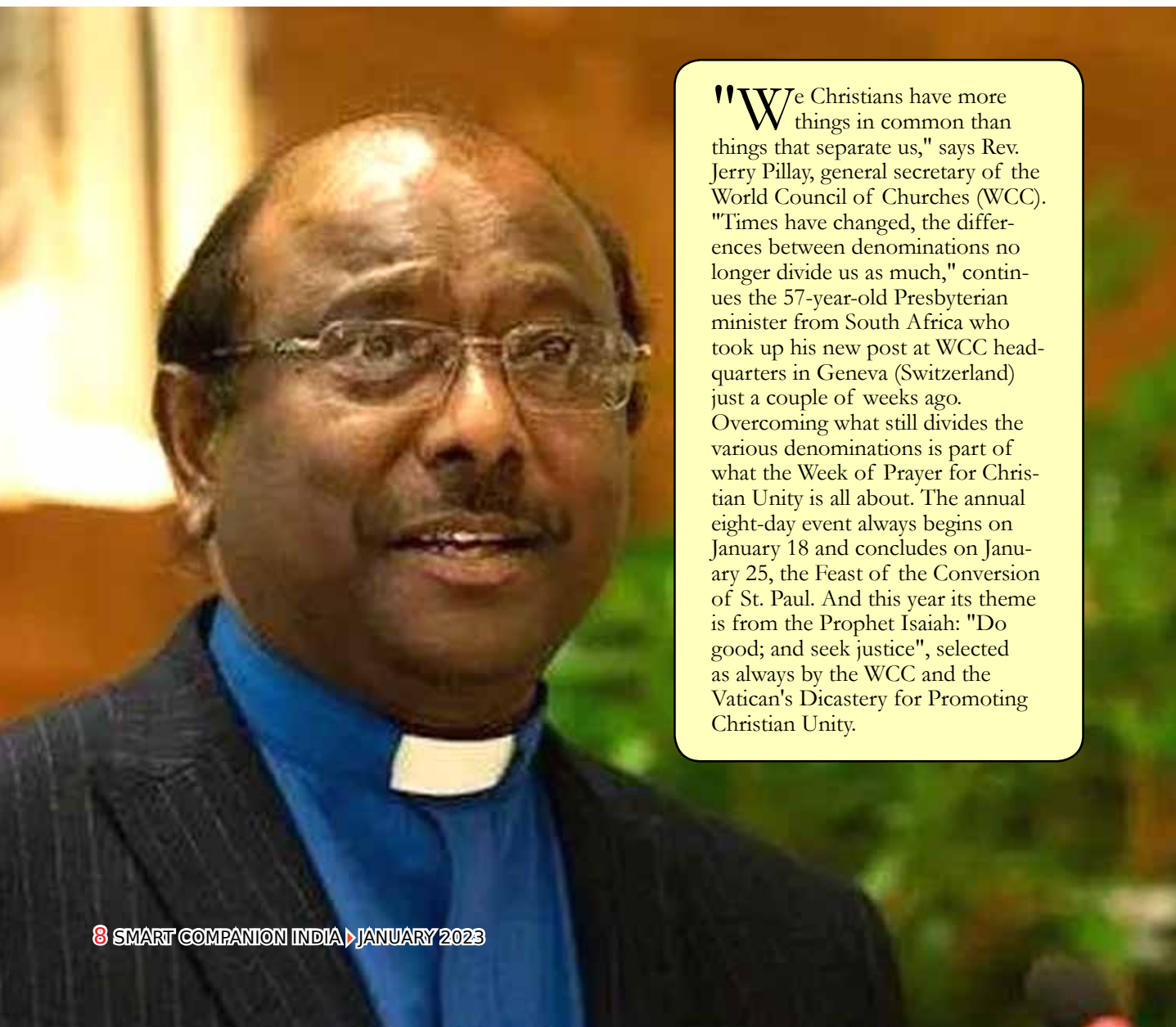
No longer must Christians go out "to conquer the world for Christ" as it used to be said, but rather go out to listen — to other Christians, to men and women of faith and goodwill everywhere, to the cries of the Earth itself as seen in climate change — and to learn from all creation how to establish new relationships. Church Unity Week encourages Christians everywhere to take this initiative.

---

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy to UCA News  
January 12, 2023 03:28 AM GMT

# MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

**Interview with Rev. Jerry Pillay, the  
South African Presbyterian minister who is the World  
Council of Church's new general secretary**



"We Christians have more things in common than things that separate us," says Rev. Jerry Pillay, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC). "Times have changed, the differences between denominations no longer divide us as much," continues the 57-year-old Presbyterian minister from South Africa who took up his new post at WCC headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland) just a couple of weeks ago. Overcoming what still divides the various denominations is part of what the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is all about. The annual eight-day event always begins on January 18 and concludes on January 25, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. And this year its theme is from the Prophet Isaiah: "Do good; and seek justice", selected as always by the WCC and the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity.



# THREE NECESSARY ELEMENTS FOR PRIESTLY FORMATION

As you carry out the spiritual and corporal works of mercy through the various educational and charitable apostolates in which you are already engaged, you will always be signs of a Church that goes forth, sharing the presence, compassion and love of Jesus with our brothers and sisters”.

On January 14, Pope Francis received in private audience the formators, seminarians and staff of the Pontifical North American College of Rome.

Your time here in Rome coincides with the synodal journey that the whole Church is presently undertaking, a journey that involves listening, to the Holy Spirit and to one another, in order to discern how to help God's holy



people live His gift of communion and become missionary disciples. This is also the challenge and task you are called to take up as you walk together along the path that leads to priestly Ordination and pastoral service.



In this regard, I want to share with you some brief reflections on three elements that I think are essential to priestly formation: dialogue, communion and mission. We can see these in the passage from Saint John's Gospel about Andrew and another disciple of John the Baptist who meet Jesus, stay with Him for a time and then lead others, particularly Simon Peter, to encounter the Lord (cf. John 1:35-42).

## Dialogue

First, dialogue. When Jesus noticed the disciples following Him, He asked what they were seeking. When they questioned

Him about where He was staying, He invited them: “Come and see” (vv. 38-39). Over the course of your lives, and especially throughout this time of seminary formation, the Lord enters into a personal dialogue with you, asking what you are looking for and inviting you to “come and see”, to speak with Him from your hearts and give yourselves to Him confidently in faith and love. Doing so involves fostering a daily relationship with Jesus, one



nourished especially by prayer, meditation on the Word of God, the help of spiritual accompaniment and listening to Him in silence before the Tabernacle. Always remember this: listening in silence before the Tabernacle. For it is in these moments of familiar relationship with the Lord that we can best hear His voice and discover how to serve Him and His people generously and wholeheartedly.

## Communion

Saint John tells us that the disciples “stayed with” Jesus that day (v. 39). Here is the second essential element: communion. By staying with Jesus, the disciples began to learn, from His words, gestures and even His gaze, what really mattered to Him and what His Father had sent Him to proclaim. In a similar way, the journey of priestly formation demands a constant communion: first with God, but also with those joined together in Christ’s Body, the Church. During your years in Rome, I invite you to keep your eyes open both to the mystery of the Church’s unity,

manifested in legitimate diversity yet lived in the oneness of faith, and to the prophetic witness of charity that the Church, particularly here in Rome, expresses through her concrete acts of care for those in need. It is my hope that these experiences will help you develop that fraternal love capable of seeing the grandeur of our neighbour, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 92).

## Mission

Finally, mission. After staying with Jesus, Andrew went and found his brother Simon and brought him to the Lord (cf. vv. 40-41). Here we see how witness, born of dialogue and communion with Christ, becomes mission: the newly called disciples go on to attract others by their testimony. Whenever Jesus calls men and women, He always does so in order to send them out, in particular to the vulnerable and those on the margins of society, whom we are not only called to serve but from whom we can also learn much. People nowadays need us to listen to their questions, anxieties and dreams so that we can better lead them to the Lord, who rekindles hope and renews the life of all. I trust that, as you carry out the spiritual and corporal works of mercy through the various educational and charitable apostolates in which you are already engaged, you will always be signs of a Church that goes forth (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 20), sharing the presence, compassion and love of Jesus with our brothers and sisters.

*Picture copy right @ VATICAN MEDIA*



# POPE BENEDICT XVI

## AN INTELLECTUAL WITH INTEGRITY

**The pontificate of Pope Benedict was distinguished by a significant emphasis on the value of religion and morals in contemporary culture as well as a focus on traditional Catholic doctrines.**



*Kuruvila Pandikatt SJ*  
Chair Professor of JRD  
Tata Foundation for Business Ethics  
at XLRI, Jamshedpur

From 2005 until 2013, Pope Benedict XVI, also known as Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger, presided over the Catholic Church. On April 19, 2005, he was elected Pope, becoming the first German Pope since the eleventh century. The pontificate of Pope Benedict was distinguished by a significant emphasis on the value of religion and morals in contemporary culture as well as a focus on traditional Catholic doctrines.

### Childhood and Career

On April 16, 1927, Ratzinger was born in Marktl am Inn, Germany, as the third of his family's six children. His mother worked as a homemaker, while his father was a police officer. He was an altar boy at his local church and was brought up in a strict Catholic environment. He was enlisted into the German anti-aircraft corps in 1943 when he was 16 years old. Later he was drafted into the German infantry and was taken prisoner

by the American forces in 1945 and held there for a number of months.

During his pontificate from 2005 to 2013, Pope Benedict XVI made a great contribution to the Catholic Church as an intellectual of strong moral character.

### Student Revolt

Prior to becoming pope, he also served as a theology professor at the University of Tübingen in the 1960s, when he participated in the German student uprising at the time.

A social and political movement known as the student movement of the 1960s originated among students in West Germany and sought to further the nation's democracy and freedom. The movement demanded a more democratic and open society in response to the time's conventional values and authoritarian governance.

Ratzinger was well recognised for his intellectual criticism of the student movement and its extreme Marxist ideology. He considered the movement as a

threat to the Catholic Church and its teachings because he thought it was driven by a desire to destroy established values and institutions. He was one of the signatories of the "Declaration of the Ninety-Three" in 1968, which was a critique of the student movement by German academics for its acceptance of revolutionary socialism and rejection of conventional values.

Ratzinger's conservative Catholic beliefs influenced his opinions on the student revolt, and his resistance to the movement stemmed from his conviction that it constituted a threat to the Church and her doctrine. He thought that the student movement was promoting moral relativism, postmodernism, and secularisation, and that the Church needed to defend itself against these ideas.

### His Contribution to Vatican II

Ratzinger continued his studies when he went back to his homeland following the war. At the

University of Munich, he pursued philosophical and theological studies before being ordained as a priest in 1951. The same university later awarded him a doctorate in theology. He started teaching theology at different German institutions in 1953.

A key figure in Vatican II was undoubtedly Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. The purpose of Vatican II, a significant council of the Catholic Church that met from 1962 to 1965, was to update and revitalise the Church in response to the times.

Cardinal Ratzinger, a young theologian at the time, took part in the council as Cardinal Frings of Cologne's peritus, or expert adviser. He was renowned for his rigorous theological approach and dedication to the established Church teachings.

Ratzinger participated actively in the council's debates and deliberations and was well-known for holding strong views on many of the topics under consideration. The council's focus on collegiality, or the sharing of authority between the Pope and the bishops, which he perceived as a danger to the Pope's primacy in the Church, was of special concern to him.

The council's strategy for ecumenism, or the attempt to foster better ties between the Catholic Church and other Christian faiths, also worried Ratzinger. The council's emphasis on communication and collaboration with other Christian faiths, in his opinion, ran the risk of weakening the Catholic Church's distinctive character.

He took active part in the formulation of some of its important documents such as: the Declaration on Religious Freedom and the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum*

*Concilium*) (*Dignitatis Humanae*).

## **Papacy**

He was named the Archbishop of Munich and Freising in 1977, and Pope John Paul II elevated him as Cardinal in 1981.

Cardinal Ratzinger was chosen as the 265th Pope on April 19, 2005. At the time of his election, he was 78 years old, making him the oldest pope since Pope Clement XII in 1730. He took the name Benedict, recalling the religious reformer and the patron of Europe.

During his pontificate, Pope Benedict made upholding traditional Catholic doctrine and encouraging a revitalised feeling of faith among Catholics his top priorities. He made it a point to highlight the value of the sacraments and the Church's active role in society. Additionally, he highlighted the value of the family and the necessity of upholding traditional morals and values.

Additionally, Pope Benedict worked to strengthen ties between the Catholic Church and other world religions. In 2006, he made a historic journey to Turkey when he met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, the spiritual head of all Eastern Orthodox Christians worldwide. He also attended Jewish leaders' meetings and visited Holocaust memorials and synagogues.

The topic of clergy sexual abuse of minors was also raised by Pope Benedict. He expressed regret to the victims and admitted that the Church had not done enough to address the issue. He also dismissed some bishops who had been charged with covering up abuse and enacted stronger rules for handling abuse cases.

Pope Benedict XVI worked to enhance ties between the Catho-

lic Church and other faiths and to address the problem of clerical sexual abuse during his time as pope. He also underlined the necessity to defend conventional values and morality, the significance of the sacraments and the Church in society.

## **Resignation and Legacy**

Pope Benedict announced his resignation as the Pope on February 11, 2013, citing his elderly age and deteriorating health as factors in his decision. Since Pope Gregory XII in 1415, he was the first pope to resign.

The pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI was distinguished by a significant focus on traditional Catholic teachings and the value of religion and morals in contemporary society. Additionally, he worked to address the problem of clerical sexual abuse and to strengthen ties between the Catholic Church and other faiths. It was a momentous occasion when Pope Benedict resigned. He was a trustworthy individual who had no reluctance in resigning from his position in order to serve God.

## **Conclusion**

Pope Benedict XVI, who served as pope from 2005 to 2013, was an important figure in the Catholic Church. His significant focus on traditional Catholic teachings and the value of religion and morals in our contemporary culture defined his pontificate. Additionally, he worked to strengthen ties with the Catholic Church. He had a strong foundation in European ideals that were fostered by the Christian religion. He placed strong emphasis on ecumenism and discussion, as well as the worth and dignity of each individual human being. He died on December 31, 2022 after having served the church with integrity.

COMP





# MY SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT - POPE BENEDICT XVI

For 60 years now, I have accompanied the path of theology, especially biblical studies, and have seen seemingly unshakeable theses collapse with the changing generations, which turned out to be mere hypotheses: the liberal generation (Harnack, Jülicher, etc.), the existentialist generation (Bultmann, etc.), the Marxist generation.

When, at this late hour of my life, I look back on the decades I have wandered through, I see first of all how much reason I have to give thanks. Above all, I thank God Himself, the giver of all good gifts, who has given me life and guided me through all kinds of confusion; who has always picked me up when I began to slip, who has always given me anew the light of his countenance. In retrospect, I see and understand that even the dark and arduous stretches of this path were for my salvation and that He guided me well in those very stretches.

I thank my parents, who gave me life in difficult times and prepared a wonderful home for me with their love, which shines through all my days as a bright light until today. My father's clear-sighted faith taught us brothers and sisters to believe and stood firm as a guide in the midst of all my scientific knowledge; my mother's heartfelt piety and great kindness remain a legacy for which I cannot thank her enough. My sister has served me selflessly and full of kind concern for decades; my brother has always paved the way for me with the clear-sightedness of his judgements, with his powerful determination, and with the cheerfulness of his heart; without this ever-new going ahead and going along, I would not have been able to find the right path.

I thank God from the bottom of my heart for the many friends, men and women, whom He has always placed at my side; for the co-workers at all stages of my path; for the teachers and students He has given me. I gratefully entrust them all to His goodness. And I would like to thank the Lord for my beautiful home in the Bavarian foothills of the Alps, in which I was able to see the splendour of the Creator Himself shining through time and again. I thank the people of my homeland for allowing me to experience the beauty of faith time and again.

I pray that our country will remain a country of faith and I ask you, dear compatriots, not to let your faith be distracted. Finally, I thank God for all the beauty I was able to experience during the various stages of my journey, but especially in Rome and in Italy, which has become my second home.

I ask for forgiveness from the bottom of my heart from all those whom I have wronged in some way.

What I said earlier of my compatriots, I now say to all who were entrusted to my service in the Church: Stand firm in the faith! Do not be confused! Often it seems as if science - on the one hand, the natural sciences; on the other, historical research (especially the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures) - has irrefutable insights to offer that are contrary to the Catholic faith. I have witnessed from times long past the changes in natural science and have seen how apparent certainties against the faith vanished, proving themselves not to be science but philosophical interpretations only apparently belonging to science - just as, moreover, it is in dialogue with the natural sciences that faith has learned to understand the limits of the scope of its affirmations and thus its own specificity. For 60 years now, I have accompanied the path of theology, especially biblical studies, and have seen seemingly unshakeable theses collapse with the changing generations, which turned out to be mere hypotheses: the liberal generation (Harnack, Jülicher, etc.), the existentialist generation (Bultmann, etc.), the Marxist generation. I have seen, and see, how, out of the tangle of hypotheses, the reasonableness of faith has emerged and is emerging anew. Jesus Christ is truly the Way, the Truth, and the Life - and the Church, in all her shortcomings, is truly His Body.

Finally, I humbly ask: pray for me, so that the Lord may admit me to the eternal dwellings, despite all my sins and shortcomings. For all those entrusted to me, my heartfelt prayer goes out day after day.

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# TOTUM AMORIS EST

## EVERYTHING PERTAINS TO LOVE

The Apostolic Letter "Totum Amoris Est" takes us to the life journey of a saint who is known as "The Gentleman Saint". His spirit of optimism, hope, freedom, confidence in God's love asks the people of God to please God by doing everything with love - big or small enthusiastically and well.



**Sr Lini Sheeja MSC**  
Former Chief Editor  
Prison Voice Magazine

“Guide of souls, capable of reading the signs of his time.” This is how Pope Francis refers to St. Francis de Sales in his Apostolic Letter “Totum Amoris Est,” “Everything Pertains to Love,” published on 28 December 2022, exactly four hundred years after the death of the saintly bishop from Geneva, Doctor of the Church, patron of journalists and communicators. This Apostolic Letter “Totum Amoris Est” takes us to the life journey of a saint who is known as “The Gentleman Saint”. His spirit of optimism, hope, freedom confidence in God’s love asks the people of God to please God by doing everything with love - big or small enthusiastically and well. He consecrated himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary and decided to dedicate his life to God with the vow of chastity. He then became a tertiary of the Minim Order. De Sales ultimately concluded that God had good in store for him, because “God is love”, as John’s First Epistle attests.

### Everything Pertains to Love

The title “Totum Amoris Est,” comes from the preface of the Swiss Saint’s book “Treatise on the Love of God,” in which St Francis De Sales wrote that “In the Holy Church, everything pertains to love, lives in love, is done for love and comes from love.” Francis De Sales, born on 21 August 1567 in the Castle of Sales, “was an outstanding witness to that love,” the Word who became flesh, Pope Francis exhorts. After his early education, first in the College of La Roche-sur-Foron and then in that of Annecy, Francis went to Paris, to the recently founded Jesuit College of Clermont. In the capital of the Kingdom of France, devastated by the wars of religion, he experienced two consecutive interior crises that would have a lasting mark on his life. “Everything pertains to love” are the lived words of St Francis De Sales who died four centuries ago, on 28 December 1622, in Lyon. On December 26, 1622, he suffered a cerebral haemorrhage and died the following day. He was buried in the Church of the first Visitation monastery in Annecy, France. St Francis de Sales was a priest and bishop who taught against Protestant heresies and encouraged holiness in all people, no matter their

vocation. He is known for his spiritual writings, including two books that are still widely read today: “An Introduction to the Devout Life” and “Treatise on the Love of God.” In 1877, he was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church.

### Charity never Fails

Pope Francis recalls how the Doctor of the Church was able to help people seek God in charity, joy, and freedom in an era of great changes. The Supreme Pontiff, Pope Francis portrays the life of a saint through his Apostolic Letter, St. Francis De Sales, a Saint who teaches us that “devotion to God is meant for everyone, in every situation.” As we face a lot of brokenness as individuals, families and society, a saint who lived 400 years ago teaches us that charity never fails. “Truly, charity never fails. Cultivate it then, and thinking holy thoughts, bring forth fruits of justice. And if you should discover anything else in praise of charity beyond what I have said here, let it become evident in your life”, exhorts Pope Francis. Our Christianity is not a career; it’s a way of life. Holiness is not a part time value; it should be a breath of life for every baptised Christian who said yes to the Word, which became flesh with love, by love and for love.





## God Loves to be born in the Crib

We just celebrated the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Word who became flesh. 400 years ago, on 26 December, St Francis De Sales spoke to the Sisters from the heart of the Christmas mystery: “Do you see the baby Jesus in the crib? He accepts all the discomforts of that season, the bitter cold and everything that the Father lets happen to him. He does not refuse the small consolations that his Mother gives him; we are not told that he ever reached out for his Mother’s breast, but left everything to her care and concern. So too, we ourselves should neither desire nor refuse anything, but accept all that God sends us, the bitter cold and the discomforts of the season”, recalls Pope Francis. The birth of Christ is celebrated in the entire universe today. After two years of COVID 19 pandemic, we had maximum celebrations of Christmas. But, in our celebrations, the person of Jesus may have been missing and the very values which he taught us through his birth may also have been missing in our celebrations. Posh cribs were prepared forgetting the Jesus who embraced the bitter cold on that day 2000 years ago.

## To Refuse nothing and to Desire nothing

St Francis De Sales was in Lyon for his mission. The Duke of Savoy had asked him to accompany Cardinal Maurice of Savoy to Avignon, where they were to pay homage to the young King Louis XIII, then returning to Paris through the Rhône valley following a victorious military campaign in the south of France. Exhausted and in poor

health, Francis had undertaken the journey in the pure spirit of service. He could have refused it, but he did not do so but accepted it. He accepted it, because he realized that it was helpful for them. Upon his arrival in Lyon, he stayed at the monastery of the Visitation Sisters and he said these words to the sisters, “I say everything in just two words, to refuse nothing and to desire nothing; I have nothing more to say to you”, exhorts Pope Francis.

## Love Grants Perfection to Our Works

In the final conference in Lyon, on the feast of Saint Stephen, on the next day of Christmas, two days before his death, St Francis De Sales had said: “It is love that grants perfection to our works. I will tell you much more. Take a person who suffers martyrdom for God with an ounce of love; that person merits much, since he could give nothing greater than his own life. It is charity and love that give value to our works”, exclaims the Supreme Pontiff. God’s love is revealed in the manger and on the cross. Birth and death are important for every human being. Jesus created history through his birth in a manger and death on a cross. Jesus chose to be born in a manger, because he loved us! The same Jesus chose to die on a cross, because he loved us! Love, love and love! Everything pertains to love.

## Human Heart responds to God’s Heart

According to St Francis De Sales, “We are not drawn to God with iron chains, like bulls and buffaloes, but through invitations, delicious attractions, and holy inspirations, which are the

bonds of Adam and of humanity; that is, suitable and convenient for the human heart, for which freedom is natural”. The Pope observes: “It is through these bonds that God has drawn his people from slavery, teaching them to walk, holding hands, as a father or mother does with their child. No external imposition, therefore, no despotic and arbitrary force, no violence. Rather, the persuasive form of an invitation that leaves man’s freedom intact”. Man’s heart needs to respond to God’s heart. The heart needs to be active to respond and that comes from our deep conviction of being loved by God.

## God of the Human Heart

St Francis De Sales was in deep love with the God made flesh. We cannot love something deeply without having personal conviction. To have personal experience of God made flesh, God born with a human heart moves us forward to live and die for him. “A heart without affection has no love and a heart that has love is not without affection. Nothing sways the human heart as much as love. Jesus Christ died for us; he gave us life through his death. We live only because he died, and died for us, as ours and in us”. These words are profoundly moving; they reveal not only a clear and insightful understanding of the relationship between God and humanity, but also the deep bond of affection between Francis de Sales and the Lord Jesus” observes the Pope. “God of the human heart” invites us to love everything as God loved, Jesus loved and St Francis De Sales loved on whose 400th death anniversary, the Apostolic Letter “Totum Amoris Est” was released and tells us that Everything Pertains to Love.

COMP

# THE REPUBLIC @74!

**We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens: justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.**



Fr. Cedric Prakash SJ  
Human Rights Activist

**A**t a Press Conference held in New Delhi on 18 January 2023, the Government spokesman said, “*The Nation will celebrate its 74th Republic Day on January 26, 2023. The celebrations include the traditional march past at Kartavya Path comprising a grand parade by the contingents of the Armed Forces & Paramilitary Forces; tableaux display by the States and Central Ministries/Departments; cultural performances by children; acrobatic motorcycle rides and a fly-past, besides Beating the Retreat ceremony. The Republic Day celebrations are going to be week-long commencing on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of the great national icon Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and will culminate on 30th January which is observed as Martyrs’ Day...Many new events are being organised as part of the Republic Day celebrations this year. These include Military Tattoo & Tribal dance festival; Veer Gatha 2.0; second edition of Vande Bharatam dance competition; performances of*

*Military & Coast Guard bands at the National War Memorial; an All-India School Band Competition at the NWM; a Drone Show and projection mapping during Beating the Retreat ceremony”.*

All of this definitely needs to be applauded. There will be much pomp and pageantry at the parade; the muscle of India’s military might will be demonstrated with full spectacle. There will be a plethora of speeches; politician after politician will wax eloquent. Some may even claim (and many will believe their lies!) that India became a Republic only after 2014! Few will remember that on that first Republic Day: 26 January 1950, we the people of India began to live by a visionary Constitution. The day (26 January) itself is very significant: it was chosen by our freedom fighters and the first Government of India, because on this day in 1930, the Indian National Congress revealed

Purna Swaraj, the declaration of India’s independence from the colonial rule. The Republic@ 74 is a memorable day indeed and pregnant with meaning!

At the heart of ‘The Republic@ 74, is the Preamble of the Constitution, which unequivocally states “*we, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens: justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation”.* A couple of months earlier, on 26 November 1949, the Constituent Assembly ‘*adopted, enacted and gave to ourselves*’ a visionary Constitution.

The Republic@ 74 is a painful reminder of the grim reality today. In February 2019, Justice DY Chandrachud now the Chief



Justice of India, delivering the Justice K. T. Desai Memorial Lecture at the Bombay High Court on 'Why Constitution Matters', strongly said, *"the people who work the constitution may go terribly wrong and sometimes they do as when we jail a cartoonist for sedition or when we jail instead of bail is given to a blogger who is critical of our religious architecture. When a mob lynches a person for the food that she or he eats, it is the constitution which is lynched. When we deny to human beings the power of a lover for reasons of religion or caste it is the constitution which is made to weep. That is exactly what happened yesterday when a groom belonging to the Dalit community was asked to climb down from a horse in a wedding procession. Let's make no two bones about it. It is the constitution which weeps when we read of such incidents"*

The Republic@ 74 is the Supreme Court collegium challenging the government's rejection of Advocate Saurabh Kirpal, as a Delhi High Court judge because he is gay and has a foreign national as a partner? Kirpal is the son of former Chief Justice of India B.N. Kirpal; he has vast knowledge of commercial law and is an active member of the NAZ Foundation, which successfully fought a decade-long legal battle for LGBT rights, culminating in the apex court de-criminalising gay sex between consenting adults in September 2018. The collegium emphatically states, *"Decisions of the constitution bench of this court have established the constitutional position that every individual is entitled to maintain their own dignity and individuality, based on sexual orientation. about his orientation...In view of the constitutionally recognised rights which the candidate espouses, it would be manifestly contrary to the constitutional principles laid down by the Supreme Court to reject his candidature on that ground. Shri*

*Saurabh Kirpal possesses competence, integrity and intellect. His appointment will add value to the bench of Delhi High Court and provide inclusion and diversity. His conduct and behaviour have been above board."*

The Republic@ 74 is the courage to take on those who destroy the independence and the autonomous functioning of several Constitutional and other statutory bodies. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) the National Investigating Agency (NIA) have become 'caged parrots'. The police kowtows to those who have rendered them spineless! All these agencies, together with the Income Tax Department, are systematically used (rather, abused) to throttle voices of dissent and anyone who stands up for truth and justice! The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is browbeaten to bend backwards to cater to the whims and fancies of a government that has sent the country into a downward economic spiral! Media, the fourth pillar of a vibrant democracy, has been made largely impotent, completely godified! Other important bodies, like the Information Commission, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and even the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) have been made toothless and filled with pliable henchmen!

The Republic@ 74 is a monumental tragedy where the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. Oxfam India's latest report which was released on the opening day of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland reveals that the total number of billionaires in India increased from 102 in 2020 to 166 billionaires in 2022. From 2012 to 2021, 40 percent of the wealth created in India has gone to just one percent of the popu-

lation and only a mere 3 percent of the wealth has gone to the bottom 50 percent. The combined wealth of India's 100 richest has touched \$660 billion (INR 54.12 lakh crore) – an amount that could fund the entire Union Budget for more than 18 months. Besides on several other global indicators the country has reached abysmal depths!

The Republic@ 74 is the openness to internalise and actualise the passionate speech to the Constituent Assembly by Dr B.R. Ambedkar, on 25 November 1949. Ambedkar said, *"If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgement we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives.... where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for (...) unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the Grammar of Anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us. The second thing we must do is to observe the caution which John Stuart Mill has given to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, namely, not "to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with power which enable him to subvert their institutions in politics; Bhakti or hero-worship is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship. The third thing we must do is not to be content with mere political democracy. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it, social democracy. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood!"*

The Republic@ 74 is above all, is the courage of we the people to make our Constitution and all that is enshrined in it – a reality for every single citizen of India!

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# CARDINAL GEORGE PELL: A SUFFERING SERVANT OF CHRIST

Too often the irreligious want to eliminate the cause of suffering through abortion, euthanasia, or exclude it from sight, leaving our loved ones unvisited in nursing homes. Christians see Christ in everyone who suffers - victims, the sick, the elderly - and are obliged to help.



Dr Jaison Kunnell MCBS

His Eminence Cardinal George Pell, Prefect emeritus of the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy, a suffering servant who was unjustly hunted by false sexual allegations, has gone to the abode of God on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at 09:00 pm in Rome at the age of 81. April 7, 2020, was a day of good news for the global Catholic Church, especially the Australian Catholic Church, the day when their former spiritual leader Cardinal Pell was acquitted after a 404-day prison stay.

## Who was Cardinal George Pell

George Pell was born in Ballarat, a town in Victoria State, to an English-born Anglican father, George Arthur, and a devout Catholic mother of Irish descent Margaret Lillian Pell on June 8, 1941. He was ordained a priest on December 16, 1966. Pell was made an auxiliary bishop of Melbourne in 1987 and nine years later became Archbishop of the same, where he served until being appointed Archbishop of Sydney in 2001. The Australian Archbishop



was made a cardinal by Pope John Paul II in October 2003. So when Pope Francis created the new Secretariat for the Economy to lead efforts at reforming Vatican's financial affairs in 2014, he saw none other than Cardinal Pell in this position. A towering personality of the Church, Pell tried to reform the economic affairs of the Vatican until he took leave on June 29, 2017. He was also a member of the advisory committee of Pope Francis during the period from 2013 to 2018. Pell left Rome for Australia to defend his innocence of sexual abuse charges in 2017. After 404 days in prison, he was finally acquitted in 2020.

### How Cardinal Pell Ended up in Jail

In 1996 a former choirboy later testified that Pell molested him and a friend that December inside St. Patrick's Cathedral. The choirboy died of a heroin overdose at age 31 on April 8, 2014, without alleging the crime and having told his mother he had not been abused. In the same year, Victoria state police established a task force to investigate how religious and other non-governmental organizations handled accusations of abuse. The surviving choirboy gave his first statement to detectives outlining criminal allegations against Pell in 2015. The Australian detectives went to Rome and questioned Pell in the middle of October 2016, and Pell heard details of the choirboy's allegations for the first time. In the year 2017, Police charged Pell with multiple counts of historical sexual assault offenses, which made him the most senior cleric to be accused in the church's abuse crisis. Pell denied the accusations and took leave of absence to return to Australia

to prove his innocence. On July 26, 2017, Pell made his first court appearance on charges that he sexually abused multiple children in Victoria State decades earlier and vowed to fight the allegations. On May 1, 2018, a magistrate committed Pell to stand trial in 2018. He pleaded not guilty to all the charges. So a judge separated the charges into two trials; the first dating to his tenure as Melbourne archbishop and the other when he was a young priest in Ballarat in the 1970s. A jury unanimously convicted Pell on all charges in the Melbourne case on December 11, 2018. In February 2019 a suppression order forbidding the publication of any details about the trial was lifted. Prosecutors abandoned the prosecution on the Ballarat charges. On March 13, 2019, a judge announced that Pell was sentenced to six years in prison on five sex abuse convictions and must serve three years and eight months before he would be eligible for parole; then, on August 21, 2019, Victoria State Court of Appeal ruled 2-1 to uphold the convictions. The Cardinal had experienced prison stay in HM jail in Bourbon, the southwestern province of Melbourne. Then on April 7, 2020, the High Court's seven judges unanimously agreed to dismiss all convictions, and Pell was released from prison.

### Redemptive Suffering

Soon after his release from prison, Cardinal George Pell wrote an Easter message anchoring on suffering, which brings redemption. His Easter message was published by The Australian on April 10, 2020. He wrote: "it is a mystery; all suffering, but especially the massive number of deaths through plagues and wars. But Christians can cope with suf-

fering better than the atheists can explain the beauty and happiness of life." The cardinal acknowledged his detention in his message, writing, "I have just spent 13 months in jail for a crime I didn't commit; one disappointment after another. I knew God was with me, but I didn't know what He was up to, although I realised He had left all of us free. But with every blow, it was a consolation to know I could offer it to God for some good purpose like turning the mass of suffering into spiritual energy." "The only Son of God did not have an easy run and suffered more than his share. However, Jesus redeemed us, and we can redeem our suffering by joining it to His and offering it to God," Pell added. Then he mentioned the secularized world's temptation, which finds no meaning in suffering, so he wrote candidly: "Too often the irreligious want to eliminate the cause of suffering through abortion, euthanasia, or exclude it from sight, leaving our loved ones unvisited in nursing homes. Christians see Christ in everyone who suffers - victims, the sick, the elderly - and are obliged to help."

In an online guided retreat for the Australian Catholic Students' Association group on the 5th and 6th of June 2020, Cardinal George Pell said that his Christian faith helped him persevere through his time in prison and offered advice on overcoming grief and stress situations. The cardinal said his 13 months in prison were "difficult and unpleasant" but not the worst possible form of suffering. As reported by The Catholic Weekly, his time in prison reinforced the truth of the Christian view of redemptive suffering: "I'm still teaching the same Christian mes-

sage, “And I’m here simply to say that it works. Not in the sense that I was acquitted, but that this Christian teaching helped me to survive.” During the retreat, Pell also gave five suggestions for anyone who is going through emotional hardship, including grief, loss, and personal suffering. The cardinal’s suggestions were exercise, avoiding large amounts of alcohol, eating healthy food and regularly, sleeping a certain number of hours a night, and waking up at the same time each day. He added that this routine, particularly ensuring regular exercise, helped him very much when he was in prison. He told the students at the retreat that it was crucial to take this advice sooner rather than later as young people. Pell said that by creating these “good habits of mind and habits of practice,” a person will be led in the right direction during the inevitable times of intense suffering.

## Prison Journal

Cardinal Pell noted down his prison experiences while he was in prison in Melbourne. These notes were released in 2020 under the title *Prison Journal*, Vol. 1: *The Cardinal Makes his Appeal*, a collection of the Cardinal’s daily diary between 27 February and 13 July 2019. In an interview with *Vatican News*, Cardinal elucidated why he wrote a diary of 13 months imprisonment? “I thought it might be helpful for those who are in difficulty, for those who are going through a time of suffering, like I was. Then I thought that keeping a diary would be of some interest from a historical point of view because there weren’t many cardinals who had the experience of prison. But then also because I had discovered that many prison-

ers had dedicated themselves to writing, starting - in the Catholic sphere - with St Paul. Writing when you are in prison is good therapy.”

The cardinal talks about how prayer helped him overcome the humiliation and discomfort of prison: “Faith and prayer were fundamental; they helped me to completely change the perspective during those days of detention. Today I tell everyone, using an English expression, that in prison, I have had confirmation that “the Christian package works.” My experience shows how much the Church’s teachings help us, how much praying and seeking God’s grace helps. Especially when we understand that we can live our personal suffering for the greater good, that we can associate our suffering with that of Jesus. As Christians, we know that we have been redeemed by the passion and death of the Son of God. Living this teaching on the value of suffering really changes everything when you find yourself in a situation like mine.” It was recorded in the journal that the Cardinal prayed for the accused every day in prison, blessed them, and forgave them.” Cardinal Pell saw prison stay as “a prolonged meditation.” He got plenty of time for thought, writing, and praying. “Prayer throughout this period, including the prayers of others, has given me great strength. I am extremely grateful to all those who have prayed for me and helped me during this challenging time,” the Cardinal said. Cardinal Pell remembered to thank all for the support and wishes he received through letters and cards during his prison stay. This is what the Cardinal wrote about the people who accused him in the public statement he made

after his release from prison “I have no enmity with those who accused me. I don’t want to increase the pain and anguish many feel for my acquittal. Of course, they are hurt and bored. Truth is the only foundation for long-term healing; the truth is the only foundation of justice because justice is truth for all.” According to Cardinal Pell, the important lessons he learned from the thirteen months as a man of the Church were the importance of perseverance and simple things, like faith, forgiveness, the redemption of suffering, etc.

Upon the death of Cardinal George Pell, Pope Francis expressed his earnest commiseration. He has recalled the late Cardinal’s “consistent and committed witness, his dedication to the Gospel and to the Church, and particularly his diligent cooperation with the Holy See in its recent economic reform, for which he laid the foundations with determination and wisdom.” The Pontiff commended him for his witness and work, and said he is praying “this faithful servant, who unwaveringly followed his Lord with perseverance even in the hour of trial, may be received into the joy of heaven and receive the reward of eternal peace.” I would like to pen down these lines with a prayer that Cardinal Pell wrote on Saturday, 6 April 2019: “For faith only sees what is, and Hope sees what will be. Charity only loves what is, and Hope loves what will be. God our Father, help us always to be people of Christian Hope even when, humanly speaking, the situation seems hopeless. May we always believe in the Resurrection as well as the crucifixion and be sustained by the promise of eternal life with you, your Son, and the life-giving Spirit.”

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# WE NEED A REVOLT AGAINST COMMUNAL / RACIST INDOCTRINATION

**Education in India is training a generation of youngsters to imbibe regressive communal and racist values. They're taught that society is immutably communal and racist, while their bodies can be medically fixed to align with their inner identities.**

School children in India today are taught that India is Communal and Racist, that Hinduism is changed to Hindutva and that 'communal privilege' is a fact of life. This is not education, it is indoctrination. And in 2023, we need to kick it out of the classroom.

The present ruling party, its ideological wing and government, has revealed the full extent of this insanity. Accordingly, 60 per cent of school-leavers say they were explicitly taught or had at least heard about ideas associated with so-called critical race theory

at school. Similarly, 65 per cent say that they were taught ideas about the patriarchy or about the existence of a Hindu Rashtra.

This is the kind of 'teaching' getting through to youngsters. Almost half of young people aged 18 to 24 believe that India was founded on Hindu Rashtra, and that it is still 'structurally Hindu Rashtra' today. Meanwhile, among the general public, only the secular reject the idea that India is on its way to becoming a Hindu Rashtra.

This kind of ideologically motivated teaching comes not

only from individual activist teachers, who seek to pass on their ideological political beliefs to a young and impressionable captive audience. Communal and Racist indoctrination is also being led up and down the country by charities, educational alliances, teaching unions, local authorities and devolved governments. Most worryingly, there is very little transparency about what children are being taught and who is shaping school's syllabuses.

This communal and racially divisive teaching material is widespread. Almost one in four



schools in India (of those that were transparent about their policies) promote similar ideas in their schools. The majority of these schools outsource their teaching guidance to third-party providers, although most schools are not forthcoming about which groups they work with and what materials they provide.

Even when communal and racists ideas are not taught explicitly, they are shaping the very nature of the curriculum. Activists in the education world are working hard to 'decolonise' syllabuses and education materials. The secular list of authors and poets considered acceptable to teach in a secular democratic India is shrinking each year and replaced by the communal and racists authors. All of this is happening without any conversation or consultation.

This New Year, once again a Church was vandalised this time in Chhattisgarh, India. The law and order situation in Narayanpur has become very bad as Christians are being targeted and attacked. On 2nd January 2023 afternoon a crowd of over 1000 people came to the Narayanpur Catholic Church and destroyed the Church and presbytery. They are going to attack other institutions as well.

The fanatics are inciting tribals to fight against each other, albeit on the false narrative of conversion,

Resulting in dozens of anti-Christian attacks forcing thousands of Christians and Muslims to convert to Hinduism or flee their homes/villages should they resist says report of fact finding team that visited places that were attacked. This amounts to forced conversion by the Sangh Parivar but the law enforcement authorities take no action on applying the anti-conversion law, but side with them.

Chhattisgarh is not ruled by the BJP; it has a Congress government which claims to be the protector and defender of minority communities. With the Sangh Parivar baying for the blood of the Adivasi Christians, it is incumbent upon the State government to see to it that they are able to go back to their homes; they enjoy their freedom to profess and practice Christianity. Chhattisgarh saw the second highest number of attacks on Christians in India, Uttar Pradesh being the topper in this regard.

Everyone Needs To Know, It's A Well Planned Strategy To Corner The Ruling Congress Government. As Chhattisgarh Is Due For ELECTIONS, This Year... Now, It's A Classic Case Of: DAMN, IF YOU DO & DAMN, IF YOU DON'T!

Political parties don't have many saints among them and they make use of any existing situations, properly or improperly, for their own advantage. Of course, here, they happen to be the BJP and the RSS.

Recently a fund raising event was carried out in the US by NRIs. They openly announced it was done to raise funds to demolish Churches in India. It's now being fought in the US court of Law. In India Churches have vanished from vast swaths under severe persecution and dioceses have become smaller than some parishes in Bombay.

Arguably, even more concerning is what children are being taught about communal and racists values. It would be one thing if children were being given space to discuss these values. It is quite another for children to be taught the views of communal and racists activists as if they are facts.

As with critical race theory, the influence of external pressure groups is all too clear here.

This not only tells teachers and children how they should think about communal and racists values and gender, but also how schools should respond to children who may be struggling with their understanding and identity.

Concerned secular parents have started to fight back against the communal and racist indoctrination going on in their schools. They have put education firmly on the political agenda – education was among voters' key concerns in the recent Indian States Midterms, just behind crime and the economy. Their children have a right to an education free from political indoctrination.

The trouble in India is that, while the devolved governments are largely on board with this agenda, the education ministry in charge of India's schools doesn't even recognise what is happening. Earlier this month, the education minister dismissed MPs' concerns during a select committee and claimed they had never seen nor heard anything communal and racists being taught in schools. Even when presented with the evidence, they seemed remarkably unmoved. This won't do.

Education in India is training a generation of youngsters to imbibe regressive communal and racists values. They're being told following the Hindutva religion is of supreme importance, while their biological sex is optional. They're taught that society is immutably communal and racist, while their bodies can be medically fixed to align with their inner identities. 2023 has to be the year we kick this pernicious ideology out of our schools.

COMP

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**Don Aguiar**  
President, ALL INDIA CATHOLIC UNION  
(AICU), Maharashtra State  
Secretary, Bombay Catholic Sabha (BCS)



**It is precisely the Church documents, local, regional, national, continental and universal, which ultimately show what inculturation of the Church and theology ultimately means, that is, as “a task of the local church in the process of its self-realization in history.”**

# CATALINO AREVALO: FATHER OF ASIAN THEOLOGISING

## FATHER DANIEL FRANKLIN PILARIO<sup>1</sup>

Filipino Jesuit Father Catalino Arevalo, whom many consider the “Father of Asian Theology,” died at the age of 97 on Jan. 18. His funeral Mass is scheduled for Jan. 22 at Ateneo de Manila University’s Church of the Gesu.

The Jesuit brought his own method into conversation with other theologians in the Philippines, recalls Vincentian Father Daniel Franklin Pilario, a theology professor in the Philippines. In the following tribute, Father Pilario provides excerpts from a 2004 article he wrote on the theology of Father Arevalo:

Theologians need to have a concrete grasp of the country’s main political and economic movements, so as to act on them in the spirit of the Gospel. This intrinsic connection of theology with time and historical circumstance can be discerned in Filipino Jesuit Father Catalino Arevalo’s theological method of “reading the signs of the times,” a term introduced by Vatican II. Somewhere in his writings, Father Arevalo wrote: Ours is “a theology of bits and pieces gathered and scotch-taped together in hours of doing and suffering, in dialogue and confrontation, in reflection and prayer, in emptiness, in confusion and paralysis — in all the times and seasons of Qoheleth, it would seem — in struggle, sometimes in anguish and despair, sometimes with the shedding of real blood and tears.”

Founded on the authority of magisterial statements, the theology of the signs of the times is “a theology of the discernment of the action of God and the grace of God in history.” It tries to feel the pulse of ‘what is going on’ in history in order to discern ‘what is going forward’ in the aspirations of peoples.... In other words, this methodology challenges the theologian ‘to live as close to the people as possible as to be able to hear their heartbeat’ so that s/he can ‘walk with’ them and help point to their destination in their journey to the Kingdom.

I would like to highlight three positive characteristics of this approach: (a) its ad hoc theologizing; (b) its liberationist concerns; and (c) the centrality it accords the magisterium and its texts.

### Ad hoc theologizing

First, theology as played in the midst of pressing needs and urgency, as it is in any other part of the Third World, can only be done in an ad hoc manner. It is not a theology of theological journals and academic conferences. It is a theology-on-the-spot. Its home is “the heat of the day and the dust of the road, the wayside inns of the evening, with the inevitable partialities of half-formed questions and unfinished discussions: a theology in via, of a people also on its way.”

In a way, theologians in the Third World are not just ‘interested’



in contextual theology; they are forced by circumstance to 'do it,' as Arevalo himself attests.

Called to speak in grassroots seminars and workshops, regional or diocesan discernment processes, or among religious communities and laity, theologians from the Two-Thirds world do theology, not with the publication of a magnum opus in mind. They do not wrestle with concepts and hair-splitting distinctions but with "real flesh and blood issues, with concrete policies and decisions which had to be worked out."

This is exemplified in the life of Arevalo himself who has not only been a teacher of several bishops and hundreds of priests but also drafted numerous church documents and pastoral letters, written speeches, homilies, and statements, of bishops and cardinals, of Jesuit general and provincials, etc. If all these written pages are collected, by his estimate, it will amount to around 8000-9000 typewritten pages. Yet none of these, except for a few articles, are credited under his name.

This humble anonymity under which a theologian labors, but which is also due in part to the many persistent demands with which s/he has to cope (e.g., teaching, meetings, conferences, organizing, administration, etc.), mainly characterizes most of the Third World theologizing. Arevalo describes it as a kind of theology 'done on our feet' in order to help the Church (e.g., communities and leaders alike) 'think her way through' its ever-changing situations.

The provisional and transitory character of this theologizing shows itself in many titles of Arevalo's articles which most often bear the title 'notes,' 'pre-notes' or just 'some thoughts' on something. Such a life-witness of a theologian exemplifies the

notion of theology done at the point of urgency and difficult circumstance.

### Liberationist character

Second, among Filipino theologians, it was Arevalo who, after having interviewed and exchanged views with Gustavo Gutiérrez, Lucio Gera and Juan Luis Segundo in Latin America in 1970, pioneered the introduction of liberation theology to Philippine audiences (just at a time when the movement itself was beginning to make itself heard in the international theological community).

Even before the term 'preferential option for the poor' gained worldwide currency, Arevalo already speaks of the Church 'siding' with the oppressed as he also takes issue with "attitudes of selfishness and structures of institutionalized egoisms" found in "politics and trade systems that exploit the poor".

From the very start, however, Arevalo already distanced himself from the uncritical appropriation of Marxist categories by Latin American theologians, thus, describing himself as never having been a total 'convert' of liberation theology.

This critical relationship with both the political status quo and Marxist-Maoist thought characterizes mainstream theologizing in the Philippines. It relies not so much on these ideologies as on Church's teachings.

### Texts of the Magisterium

This leads us to the third feature of this method; its very close and integral link with the magisterium and its texts. Theology, in this context, founds itself on, and consciously makes, the magisterium of the Council, the popes, and the episcopal conferences as 'source texts,' thus, making

palpable within theological reflection the spirit of catholicity and tradition. "Filipino theological reflection," comments Arevalo, "has considered this a strength, not a weakness; a source of greater assurance in discernment and decision."

Furthermore, Arevalo considers the pastoral statements of local bishops and the documents from national and regional conferences to be 'theologies' in themselves. Thus, when he speaks of the theology of "bits and pieces," he has in mind these documents and pastoral letters that the regional (FABC) and local magisterium (CBCP) have issued, and which he himself has also helped to produce. Though these documents are "a far cry from the magnificent summae of the Middle Ages... [they] are yet the substantive Filipino theological texts of our generation."

In the careful and creative crafting of these statements is located the service of the theologian in the Church. It is precisely these documents, which ultimately show what inculturation of the Church and theology ultimately means, that is, as "a task of the local church in the process of its self-realization in history." Rest in peace, faithful servant of God and the Church.

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*<sup>1</sup>Courtesy to UCA News. Father Daniel Franklin Pilario, a member of the Congregation of Mission, is a professor of St. Vincent School of Theology of Adamson University. He is also visiting professor at several other theology seminaries and a founding member and former president of the Catholic Theological Society of the Philippines.*

*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official editorial position of UCA News.*



# CONSECRATED LIFE ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY

Religious life doesn't offer a bed of roses; we too need to cross thorns and thistles.  
But the firm foundation is: "If God be for us, who can be against us? (Rom 8:31).

## World Day for Consecrated Life

In 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted a day for women and men in consecrated life. This global celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd. The World Day for Consecrated Life is celebrated on the feast which commemorates the presentation which Mary and Joseph made of Jesus in the temple "to present him to the Lord" (Lk 2:22). This Gospel scene reveals the mystery of Jesus, the One consecrated by the Father and come into the world to carry out his will faithfully (cf. Heb 10:5-7). Simeon points to Jesus as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" (Lk 2:32) and by a prophetic word foretells the supreme offering of Jesus to the Father and his final victory (Lk 2:32-35).

## Consecrated Life – A Gift

The consecrated life is a gift which the Father has given to the church by means of the Spirit so that, in faithfulness to the Gospel, the most characteristic traits of the life of his Son Jesus, the chaste, poor and obedient one (cf. Mt. 8:20; Phil. 2:8), and the unfathomable riches of his mystery (cf. Eph. 3:8), might be present in the world and might draw everyone toward the kingdom of God.

## Consecrated Person – A Servant

"To be a religious priest is to be a servant. Being a servant religious priest gives me tremendous joy and satisfaction; the joy of Jesus' accompaniment and the satisfaction of serving thousands of His lost sheep. I praise and thank Father God for His unconditional love and constant Divine

Providence showering in His ministry for the lost through this servant. He called and anointed me to redeem the lost, least and the last. Every soul behind prison walls needs to be saved. Let our consecrated life be of service to the broken world", says Fr Francis Kodiyan MCBS, cofounder and national coordinator of Prison Ministry India.

## Consecrated Life – A Life of Grace

Each consecrated man/woman has an inspirational vocation story to tell us. Volumes can be written describing God's faithfulness and presence in our lives. God who called us, God who redeemed us and the God who sanctified us have done wonders through each one of us in this broken world. None of us is perfect in ourselves. However, God has called these vulnerable, sinful

beings to serve in His vineyard. We have so many brilliant, talented persons and capable ones in the world. But why did God choose us? When I was doing my schooling, so many of my friends were brilliant and very smart too! But why did God choose me? God does not call the qualified. He qualifies the called. Together with St Paul, on this world-day for consecrated life we exclaim God's words through St. Paul, "His grace is sufficient for me" (2 Cor 12:9).

### **Consecrated Life – Ordinary to Extraordinary**

"The Lord has chosen and consecrated ordinary men and women to be His extraordinary instruments of love, compassion and tenderness to a world hungry and starving for the same. They see the face of our loving, merciful and broken body of Jesus in every human misery. Amidst all the evil that surrounds us, God's victorious, empowering majesty will overpower everything through the hands and hearts of our religious, to make the world a better place for you and me. "Thank you, dear Fathers and Sisters, for offering your lives for the love of God and for each of us! We uphold you in our hearts and prayers", marks Alzira Rayan from Our Lady of Vailankanni Parish, Yelahanka, Bangalore.

### **Consecrated Persons – Our Friends**

"My personal experience is that many anointed priests and nuns have stood as angels in times of difficulties, such as, when a loved one passes away in the family and it might take years to get over it! They stand beside you as family friends with a good listening ear and in silence provide tremendous spiritual and emotional support. They make themselves available when you need some-

one to talk to and seek that comfort! It is at that time I have understood that Christ uses these human angels on earth to ease that pain and you find a direction in your own life!" observes Anne Menezes from Dubai

### **Consecrated Life – A Journey with God**

In this way the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is an eloquent icon of the total offering of one's life for all those who are called to show forth in the Church and in the world, by means of the evangelical counsels "the characteristic features of Jesus - the chaste, poor and obedient one" (VC 1). Mary is associated with the presentation of Christ. Our Blessed Mother carried Jesus to the temple and offered to the Father and it is the same Mother who continues to offer her sons and daughters to our Heavenly Father as a pleasing offering. God to whom we have offered ourselves is journeying with us, accompanying us and holding us closer to His heart. He has blessed each of us with much more than we can deserve of the many opportunities to serve him in our life.

### **Consecrated Life – A Being and Doing**

"Then Jesus went up on the mountain and called those He wanted, and they came to Him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons" (Mark 3:13-15) and this is the core of our Consecrated Life. He called whom He wanted! How blessed to know that we are wanted by Him. He had chosen and consecrated us to be with Him and to be sent out. Our way of life centered on our God who came down to heal the sick, to preach the Good News

to the Poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, to embrace sinners and to save the lost. Our consecrated life is being with our redeemer and to do His will on earth as our Blessed Mother tells us, "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5).

### **Consecrated Life – A Thanksgiving**

Today, when I kneel before Him, I have nothing else to offer except the tears of gratitude. When God called Jeremiah he said, "I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth" (Jer 1:6). But the Creator, a faithful God assured him of His accompaniment and He would put His own words into His mouth and would make him a prophet to the nations. It's the same God who consecrated us and made these tiny beings to be heard and seen in this large world. "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" Psalm 8:4

### **Consecrated Life – A Blessing**

"Consecrated life means completely surrendering oneself to the will of God, to do what He wants us to do and He guides us on our journey. I'm grateful to Him for He has blessed me to work not only for the diocese, but for the region, country and the whole world. I'm grateful that he had consecrated me to bring relief to the rejected and to render my service for the development and growth of the Church and society", states Emeritus Bishop Peter Remigius, Kottar Diocese.

### **Consecrated Life – Joy Found in Community Living**

"I consecrated myself to God to serve Him through a simple life and to spread His message wherever I am placed. My joy is found in living in a community of



love and reconciliation”, says Sr Rose Kakanatt from Sisters of St Joseph of Lyon, Kerala.

### **Consecrated Life – A Sacrifice**

“There is a tremendous joy and challenge in being a person for others – a sense of consecratedness keeps me joyful. There is also pain and a task in being a consecrated person as we see Indian consecrated life getting highly institutionalized. Joy and pain mark my life,” shares Brother Paul Raj SG, former Principal, Vidya Deep College, Bangalore. No institutional set-up could contain Jesus; He walked miles after miles and reached out to the needy, the vulnerable and marginalized. A consecrated life is nothing, but sacrifice; to sacrifice to the Lord who sacrificed Himself on the Cross. Consecrated life is vision with a mission. It is a way of life given to missionaries with vision.

### **Consecrated Life – A Call to be Courageous Warriors**

We thank all the courageous warriors among the consecrated men and women who toiled day and night in God’s vineyard and made a difference. On this day, let us gratefully recall all our consecrated persons who have toiled yesterday; let us thank all who are toiling today and praise God for all who will be toiling tomorrow in His vineyard. It’s their Yes which made the world a better place. It’s their dedication that gave light and hopes to the ones who lived in darkness and who had lost hope in their lives. It’s their ‘Amen’ to the Redeemer that up-lifted many who had fallen in their lives. It’s their joyful service which brought joy in the face of the downtrodden and rejected. We love God wholeheartedly and that moves us to love His people, to

embrace them and lift them.

### **Count Your Blessings**

On this day, it’s good to recollect the path that we have journeyed. Is there anything that bothers us? Are we not the blessed ones? We are blessed that we need not worry about our food and clothing. How much do we appreciate our day-today blessings? Are we concerned about the silly comments that we hear on our journey? God has given a great task to carry His people on our shoulders. But what are we carrying? Are we carrying our past hurts and hateful feelings and comments? When we want to carry these painful past incidents let us remember our parents who toil in the scorching sun as farmers, fishermen, construction workers, painters, daily wage labourers, watchmen and so on. We are not the sons/daughter of great business men or millionaires. God called us from the humble backgrounds to serve humbly in His vineyard. In ancient times vocations to consecrated life were from royal families who denounced everything for the sake of God whom they found as everything. What are we denouncing today?

### **Pope Francis**

In 2021, in his Papal Homily for the 25th World Day for Consecrated Life, Pope Francis said; “Some people are masters of complaining, doctors of complaining, they are very good at complaining! No, complaining imprisons us: “the world no longer listens to us” – how often do we hear that - or “we have no more vocations, so we have to close the house”, or “these are not easy times”. The God who called us is faithful and He knows to continue what He has begun. Let us embrace all that life offers us as our Lord Jesus embraced

it. We have no time to complain and sit, the world needs us; the broken humanity needs us. We have no time to mourn over our past; we have much more to do in the present and the future.

### **Festal Blessings**

Our religious life doesn’t offer a bed of roses; we too need to cross thorns and thistles. But the firm foundation is: “If God be for us, who can be against us? (Rom 8:31). We will come across people who will appreciate us and people who will criticize us. We will encounter on our journey people who will lift us and people who will throw us down. We will come across people who may make us cry and people who will wipe our tears. And in all these, God is with us! No human being has called us to this way of life, but it is God who called us to be His own. ‘I do not know what my future holds, but I know who holds it,’ is my motto and this gives me tremendous joy in all the situations of my life. “Here I am Lord! It is I Lord! I’ve heard you calling in the night! I’ll go Lord, if you lead me, and I’ll hold your people in my heart” is the response we gave when God consecrated us and let us continue to respond as millions of consecrated men/women showed the way and journeyed the path that we are journeying today. Together with St Paul, let us proclaim “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). Let us pray for the grace of perseverance and more vocations for this life of grace! Dear parents, we request you to be generous to the Lord who blessed you! Dear children and youth, we request you to be open to the Lord who created you! Festal Blessings of the World Day of Consecration!

- Sr Lini Sheeja MSC

*Former Chief Editor, Prison Voice Magazine*

# COMPROMISING ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY ENSURES ECOLOGICAL DESTRUCTION

**Caring for nature, is a gift that no one can buy. It's made up of love that roots in our hearts and creates a livable balance between nature and humans with memories not just for a while but for a lifetime which will ensure environmental security.**

Joshimath, the gateway to famous pilgrimage sites like Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib and the international skiing destination Auli, as well as for mountain climbing expeditions, trekking, (it is from here one has to traverse to the famous trekking destinations in Uttarakhand) and several other thrilling activities for those who want to live life on the edge, is facing a major challenge due to land subsidence.

What is unfolding in Joshimath is a tragedy. But this tragedy is not due to climate change: climate change-linked extreme events may have exacerbated the situation, but the sinking of Joshimath is the Centre and State's own doing. The fact is that it was not unexpected, it was foretold.

Warnings against haphazard urbanization, large scale hydropower development and cutting of hills to widen roads were issued regularly. But time and again, these warnings were ignored. The fate of Joshimath is now sealed. Even with engineering solutions, a part of this historic city will have to be abandoned, and the rest will struggle to survive.

Land subsidence and landslides are caused by disturbances in the natural stability of a slope togeth-

er with Climate Change, Geological Condition, Water Condition, and External Vibration that can include lithology, structure, slope, land cover, seismicity and rainfall precipitation that develop when water rapidly accumulates in the ground and results in a surge of water-saturated rock, earth, and debris, accompanied by heavy rains or follow droughts, earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions.

It is important to understand that the strong push to replicate the development model of the plains – big infrastructure projects, wider roads and high rise buildings - is the reason for this model that has seriously compromised environmental security.

The domain of environmental science tells us that every place has a carrying capacity. Once this is exceeded, ecological destruction ensues.

According to experts, Joshimath city has been built on ancient landslide material — meaning, it rests on a deposit of sand and stone, not rock, which doesn't have a high load-bearing capacity. Moreover, the lack of a proper drainage system could also have contributed to the sinking of the area.

The land cannot bear the load. A two-year study by the Indian

Institute of Remote Sensing, conducted between July 2020 and March 2022, found that Joshimath and its surrounding areas have been sinking at the rate of 6.5 centimetres (2.5 inches) per year.

It is well known that the Himalayas is one of the most unstable mountain ranges and is prone to natural disasters. On top of this, global warming is profoundly impacting the geology and hydrology of the region which is prone to earthquakes, landslides and cloudbursts.

The majority of glaciers in the Himalayan region are melting as temperatures rise and climate change wreaks havoc across the world. Studies conducted by the Centre reveal that the phenomenon is being seen across nine major glaciers in the country which is melting at different rates.

Retreating Himalayan glaciers and associated melting ice along with unstable slopes are subject to triggering landslides by rainfall during the monsoon or by induced seismicity in the region. Also, the snow, ice, and rock avalanches threaten people and infrastructure downstream in mountainous areas.

The Main boundary thrust is at a distance of 10 km from



the city. Tracing to history the Himalayan foothills have witnessed many earthquakes and are seismic sensitive areas which is why the whole state of Uttarakhand comes under seismic zone IV and V as per Indian seismic zonation map.

As per report, the entire town, including the Army's helipad and the Narasimha temple, has been marked as a sensitive zone. The land subsidence was slow between April and November 2022, during which Joshimath had sunk by 8.9 cm. But between December 27, 2022 and January 8, 2023, the intensity of land subsidence increased and the town sank by 5.4 cm in these 12 days.

Several houses collapsed at Singhdhar in the Joshimath town of Uttarakhand in the midnight hours of January 2 and 3, 2023.

However, no lives were lost in these incidents. According to sources, cracks at several houses and a nearby temple started widening, to the point where they eventually collapsed.

Massive human activities like deforestation, improper land use and unplanned activities like building roads and structures without adequate grading of slopes, poorly planned alteration of drainage patterns, and disturbing old land subsidence and landslides are the contributing factors in causing land subsidence and landslides.

The satellite images show that the Joshimath-Auli road is also going to collapse due to the land subsidence. The Crown of the subsidence is located near Joshimath-Auli road at a height of 2180 m.

Tapovan Hydro-Electric Power Dam, also known as Rishi Ganga Project was completely washed off following a glacier burst in the Chamoli district, said the Indian Air Force's initial report as Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) deployed at Joshimath has undertaken rescue of affected areas. Also the Alaknanda River is being tapped for hydroelectric power and crosses the Main Central Thrust near Helang.

The local residents have organised a front against the NTPC in Joshimath, by putting up posters demanding their exit from the holy city. The locals consider the National Thermal Power Corporation's (NTPC) reckless excavations responsible for the constant threat of landslides/subsidence being faced by them.

Meanwhile, cracks have also appeared on the platform of the Auli ropeway and its operation has been stopped in view of the danger.

The 'authoritarian' – centre and state - does not care about these lives, but exploit these people and rob them of the right to life and subsistence as their concern is greed and greed. Great injustice and predation of the weak and the oppressed.

Caring for nature, is a gift that no one can buy. It's made up of love that roots in our hearts and creates a liveable balance between nature and humans with memories not just for a while but for a lifetime which will ensure environmental security.

Will the 'authoritarian' system still continue with their greed or start ensuring environmental security for those who live there? Time will tell.....

**Don Aguiar**

*President, ALL INDIA CATHOLIC UNION (AICU), Maharashtra State*

*Secretary, Bombay Catholic Sabha (BCS)*



## NIGERIA: CATHOLIC PRIEST BURNED TO DEATH, ANOTHER SERIOUSLY INJURED

Another Catholic priest was murdered in Nigeria at the beginning of the year 2023. In the early hours of January 15, Father Isaac Achi, pastor of St. Peter and Paul Parish in Kafin Koro, in the western state of Niger, was burned to death by armed men who set fire to the rectory after having failed to enter.

"The rectory was completely burned and the parish priest, the Reverend Father Isaac Achi, was killed while the assistant parish priest Father Colins Omeh was shot but is receiving medical attention," the Diocese of Minna said in a statement on Sunday. The Diocese of Minna is asking for "prayers for God's mercy" for Father Omeh.

Father Achi was the dean of the Kafin koro deanery in that diocese and president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State.

# HOW TO OVERCOME INHIBITION AND THE INFERIORITY COMPLEX AND DEVELOP CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF

**Surround yourself with a lot of positive people to have healthy self-esteem; mistakes are easily accepted when you are surrounded by people who encourage and lift you up.**



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## What is an Inferiority Complex?

An inferiority complex is about the core of concern we have about ourselves: how we compare with others; to an extent being concerned about how we measure up in this way is normal and healthy. But when comparisons consistently prevail in our thoughts, it may be symptomatic of chronic low self-esteem, which is the term psychologists use to refer to an inferiority complex. To experience being in a group but unable to say a single word because of the feeling of inferiority around others, is common. The feelings of inadequacy and insecurity, as well as the tendency to compare, are not unusual. Still, if these feelings become self-consuming to the point that you're low on self-esteem, you may have developed

an inferiority complex. The term inferiority complex, introduced by psychologist Alfred Adler in 1907, is the prevailing and intense personal feeling of inadequacy, weakness and insecurity.

## What does one feel?

- You feel your accomplishments are no match compared to others, and constantly thinking that you are not good enough is an erroneous belief that can harm your mental and social life.
- You have a negative self-image and constant frustration towards yourself and your overall well-being. You have difficulties coping because of actual or imagined physical or psychological deficiency. The term inferiority complex is called chronic low self-esteem, which is the feeling

of inferiority.

- When you have chronic low self-esteem, you experience a lack of confidence and underestimate yourself often, seeing your flaws and imperfections frequently in acceptance of criticisms, fear of being judged, habitual comparison of yourself with others, self-doubt and self-consciousness because of certain standards you impose on yourself.

## Types of Inferiority Complex

There are two types of inferiority complex one should take note of viz. Primary Inferiority and Secondary Inferiority Complex.

- **Primary Inferiority:** this type of inferiority starts in childhood when parents compare their children. Children are sensitive,

and they highly acknowledge the opinions of their parents. If a child is often scolded for being vulnerable and inadequate, they have an increased risk of growing with insecurities and broken self-esteem; this self-perception of inferiority can damage their adult social and personal relationships.

- **Secondary Inferiority:** it refers to an adult's inability to reach goals due to his/her perceived inadequacies. Adults with secondary inferiority have low self-esteem. They often struggle in social gatherings and believe they can't maintain healthy adult relationships.

### What causes an Inferiority complex?

There are many contributing factors as to why a person develops an inferiority complex. The two common factors are a person's life experiences and genetic inclination; the other factors are the history of trauma, abuse, stress, depression and anxiety a person has gone through.

Depression and the inability to meet realistic goals for oneself, can lead to self-failure, and thinking of failure can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. An important factor to consider in determining the cause of inferiority complex is also the parenting style a person was exposed to as a child. If you grew up in a home where your parents are often stressed out, you are most likely to develop fear, doubt and uncertainty.

Children from stressful homes have low self-esteem and are most likely to have difficulty building their self-confidence. External factors such as societal pressure can play a significant role in causing an inferiority complex. Besides, a person is most likely to develop an infe-

riority complex if he or she has negative social media experiences and receive harassment from peers, colleagues and romantic partners.

### STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME INFERIORITY COMPLEX:

1. **Journaling and meditation:** Journaling has been proven to be very effective in managing symptoms of inferiority complex. It is also effective in tracking your feelings and determining the root cause of the problem and this is a good start and can be beneficial when progressing to therapy. If you feel anxious because of low self-esteem, slow down and focus on your inner peace. Meditation is an excellent way to relax and direct your focus on yourself.
2. **Positive self-talk** is about time that you stop worrying about what other people will say about you and be kind to yourself every day, and don't compare yourself with anyone. Every time you wake up in the morning, start with positive thinking and give yourself words of encouragement.
3. **Be with positive people:** surround yourself with a lot of positive people to have healthy self-esteem; mistakes are easily accepted when you are surrounded by people who encourage and lift you up. Many people battle their insecurities on a daily basis; you don't have to be consumed by sadness and hopelessness. If one wants to be cured, one could acknowledge symptoms and seek help from mental health professionals.
4. **Build self-confidence:** Is there anything about you that you're not sure about? The trick is to accept yourself or take action to change completely. Do whatever it takes to make yourself feel better about yourself.
5. **Stop worrying about what other people think:** one major cause of inferiority complex is constantly thinking about what other people are thinking about us and seeking validation from them for every action of ours, and sometimes we think about their actions while sometimes we are imagining what they think. Disassociate yourself from their judgements and ultimately, it's your opinion about yourself that matters. When we feel good about ourselves, others think that too.
6. **Do not be harsh on yourself** and practice self-care and love yourself and be kind to yourself. Do not over-analyze situations and do not expect yourself to change overnight; and give yourself time to heal. If needed do seek help from a mental health professional and counselor to overcome the Inferiority Complex that you may have.

Knowing that you are not alone in possessing feelings of being inferior is surprisingly normal and expected. An inferiority complex is simply a feeling of inadequacy that you might feel based on actual or imaginary ideas that you have about yourself and others. It's just because our inner critic is habitual to be our own worst enemy and that so much of what we believe against ourselves is in our mind only and it does not match whatsoever what other people think about us and it's natural to feel like you have something to prove to other people sometimes.

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# A COUPLE OF EXTRA FREE DRINKS JUST MESSED IT

We don't need extra of every [1] thing to enjoy life. We already have 'Life' to enjoy extra of everything. Confidence in 'Life' isn't walking in a room thinking you're better than anyone.



**Don Aguiar**

*President, ALL INDIA CATHOLIC UNION (AICU), Maharashtra State Secretary, Bombay Catholic Sabha (BCS)*

**Y**ou do not sabotage your life because you don't know what you want.

You do not sabotage your life because you are incapable.

You sabotage your life when you become so used to your own familiar patterns that you can't find the strength to endure the discomfort of breaking them.

*- The Wellness Warrior*

I am thinking of how life can change in a few seconds of crazy thoughtlessness as happened recently on an Air India flight from New York to Delhi. The passenger Shankar Mishra's life, his friends, relationships, his career - all gone, destroyed in a matter of seconds!

Drinking too much too quickly on any single occasion, such as a couple of free extra drinks, can increase your risk of:

- Accidents resulting in injury, causing death in some cases
- Misjudging risky situations
- Losing self-control, like getting involved in violence, unprotected sex, peeing on somebody/anywhere in public view.

Consuming a very large amount of alcohol in a short amount of time, especially on an empty stomach, can be dangerous and sometimes even fatal.

But in most cases, drinking on an empty stomach will cause only the unpleasant side effects associated with a hangover. Eating before moderate drinking can slow down alcohol's effect on you and reduce your chances of a bad reaction to alcohol.

Alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways and can affect the way the brain looks and works. Alcohol makes it harder for the brain areas controlling balance, memory, speech, and judgment to do their jobs, resulting in a higher likelihood of injuries and other negative outcomes.

Alcohol moves from the bloodstream into the brain within 5 to 10 minutes after drinking. Alcohol can cause mood changes, difficulty with thinking and coordination, and even trouble forming memories (blackouts).

A blackout could last minutes and much longer. Although many people recover from blackouts, one episode can be fatal.

Can you imagine the plight of his family? What shame they must be going through! His wife and children? Children have to go to school and that can be a cruel, merciless place. They will probably have to move to

another state far away and hope that nobody there knows about their father.

And His parents! They will support him publicly, I am sure, but their hearts must be breaking! People will taunt them about their upbringing for the rest of their lives. Imagine his mother's condition!

He will be the butt of his friends' jokes; they will snigger and laugh at him forever! Media people are showing graphic animations of his act, as if we don't know how it's done. Who will ever forget!

And his career. A Vice President in a wonderful bank like Wells Fargo in a place like New York! People would cut off not just their arms for a job like that! He will not find a job like that anywhere, not for the foreseeable future at least, not after his arrest and police record. Bankers are very conservative.

Everything gone kaput, finished, gone up in a puff of smoke, or more, trickled down and away, just like that! It takes a life to build a life and just a few seconds to bring it all crashing down. We need to learn, learn, and learn from this. Learn to hold your drinks. And come what may, learn to hold it in. Better if he had puked.

Secrecy is a major warning sign of over drinking. If you've ever found yourself lying or covering up your alcohol intake when you're in a function or an aircraft or around friends and family, you probably know yourself that you've been drinking too much. This could be in words but also in actions.

Alcohol primarily disrupts the ability to form new long-term memories; it causes less disruption of recall of previously established long-term memories

or of the ability to keep new information active in short-term memory for a few seconds or more.

Too much of anything is the beginning of a mess. It creates chaos, confusion and clutter. Sometimes excesses bring regrets. It is a blessing for those who are level headed and a curse for those who go on an ego trip.

Don't compare. You have everything in you to succeed and go as far as you want to go. Nature does not make copies. You are an original. Be yourself. Because you are the real thing.

- *Billionaire Secrets*

He could have easily afforded 10 blue label bottles and he could have bathed at home with that, but a couple of extra free drink just messed it. Sad...

I think it's a sad story for two reasons:

1) The lady he peed on will also be mentally tormented for no reason.

2) It brings out a sick mentality prevalent amongst Indian males irrespective of their education, profession and so-called sophistication.

We can count a number of instances where senior corporate members have stooped low.

We don't need extra of everything to enjoy life. We already have 'Life' to enjoy extra of everything.

Confidence in 'Life' isn't walking in a room thinking you're better than anyone.

It's knowing you don't have to compare yourself with anyone in that room.

- There's no competition
- No one's above you
- No one's below you.

Get to a place where comparison is dead and you'll be confident not diffident.

- *Ralph Napolitano*

COMP



## **WORLD'S OLDEST PERSON, A FRENCH NUN, SISTER ANDRE RANDON DC, HAS DIED AT THE AGE OF 118**

According to the Gerontology Research Group, Randon became the world's oldest person on April 19, 2022, when Kane Tanaka of Japan died at the age of 119. Lucile Randon, known as Sister André, was born in southern France on 11 February 1904, when the first world war was still a decade away. She died in her sleep at her nursing home in the southern city of Toulon in France on Tuesday, 17 January 2023. A born survivor, she lived through the Spanish flu pandemic in 1918 and two World Wars. She converted to Catholicism when she was 19 years old and became a nun eight years later. In her younger years, Sister Andre worked as a teacher and a governess and spent much of the Second World War looking after children. She served young children and the elderly at a French hospital until she became a nun at the age of 40. She joined the Daughters of Charity - founded by St. Vincent de Paul — in 1944. She took the name Sister Andre in honor of her deceased brother. Seventy-six years later, Sister Andre moved to Toulon, in southern France, where she resided in the Sainte Catherine Labouré retirement home. It was here that she passed away. For her 115th birthday in 2019, Sister Andre received a card and a blessed rosary from Pope Francis, which she used every day. According to the Gerontology Research Group, the world's oldest person is now Maria Branyas Morera, age 115, a resident of Spain. ■

## **TOTUM AMORIS EST: THE NEW APOSTOLIC LETTER OF POPE FRANCIS**

On the 400th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis de Sales, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Letter entitled "Totum amoris est" ('Everything Pertains to Love') in which the pope encapsulates the spiritual legacy left to us by Saint Francis de Sales. He was born in the castle of Sales, Savoy, on Aug. 21, 1567, and died in Lyon on Dec.

28, 1622. The title comes from the preface of the Doctor of Divine Love's book "Treatise on the Love of God," in which he composed, "In Holy Church, everything pertains to love, lives in love, is done for love and comes from love."

In the letter, the Pontiff lauds St. Francis de Sales as an unparalleled interpreter of the signs of his times and an "extraordinary director of souls." The Holy Father highlights the great vocation of this French saint, who asked himself, "in every situation in life where the greatest love is to be found." Pope Francis calls specific attention to the saint's Treatise on the Love of God, citing, in particular, one passage: "At the very thought of God, one immediately feels a certain delightful emotion of the heart, which testifies that God is God of the human heart." ■

## **FR. CATALINO G AREVALO SJ (1925-2023), 'FATHER OF ASIAN THEOLOGY,' PASSES AWAY**

Filipino Jesuit theologian and Father of Asian Theology Fr. Catalino G Arevalo SJ passed away on Jan. 18, 2023, he was 97. Father Arevalo entered the Jesuit Order in 1941 and was ordained priest in 1954. After his ordination, he studied Dogmatic Theology at the Gregorian Pontifical University in Rome as the first doctoral student of the esteemed ecclesiologist Father Francis Sullivan. Father Arevalo taught at the San Jose Seminary in Manila until 1965, where he mentored the prefect of the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, and many other priests. Pope John Paul II appointed Father Arevalo as the first Asian member of the prestigious Pontifical International Theological Commission, the advisory body of the Pope on matters of faith and theology. The Jesuit priest was actively involved in the foundation and development of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) since its beginning in 1970 in Manila. He was also the theological peritus (expert) of the Federation and chaired the body's "Theological Advisory Commission" (TAC) from its beginning in 1985 up to 1995. Fr. Arevalo was the principal author of the final document of the first FABC Plenary Assembly, "Evangelization in Modern Day Asia," which remains "the most influential articulation ... of the local Churches of Asia" in 1974 in Taipei. The late Filipino Cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila named Father Arevalo "Dean of all Filipino Theologians." For distinguished service to the Church, Father Arevalo received the Vatican's "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (For Church and Pope)" in 1997. ■



## 5,621 CHRISTIANS WERE KILLED FOR THEIR FAITH IN 2022

The World Watch List is an annual report prepared and published by the World Watch Research Team of Open Doors. It ranks the 50 countries where it is most challenging to profess and practice the Christian faith. The World Watch list was started by the ministry Open Doors back in 1992, and ever since, North Korea has been in the number one spot for the hardest place to live as a Christian. In 2022 North Korea took second place as Afghanistan moved into the first spot after the Taliban took over the government. However, for 2023 North Korea is back in the top spot regarding the extreme persecution of Christians, and Afghanistan has moved all the way to number nine. The report of the 2023 version tracks the period from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022, and is compiled from grassroots reports by more than 4,000 Open Doors workers across more than 60 countries. The list went up on January 17 on the Open Doors website. The top ten countries that experience the most persecution for Christians are: 1) North Korea, 2) Somalia, 3) Yemen, 4) Eritrea, 5) Libya, 6) Nigeria, 7) Pakistan, 8) Iran, 9) Afghanistan, and 10) Sudan. India comes in at number 11 and is also under the red category, which means extreme levels of persecution. According to Open Doors, 5,621 people were killed for their faith in 2022. 90% of these were from Nigeria alone. Today, more than 360 million Christians face persecution for their faith, with 312 million facing extreme persecution. On the 2022 list, three Latin American countries were ranked in the top 50. On the 2023 list, there are now four: Nicaragua is ranked No. 50 in 2023, the first time the country has appeared within the top 50. It joins Colombia (22), Cuba (27), and Mexico (38). ■

## AMERICANS GATHERED TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE LIFE

Tens of thousands of Americans attended the 50th-annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Friday, January 20, 2023, to challenge abortion and celebrate the beauty of life, beginning at conception. The March for Life is an annual rally and march against the practice and legality of abortion, held in Washington, D.C., either on or around the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, which le-

galized abortion in all 50 states of the USA. The March for Life is an inspiring, peaceful, vibrant, and joy-filled rally of women, men, young people, and children across the USA. Every year, tens of thousands of pro-lifers converge on the National Mall and march on Capitol Hill to uphold the dignity of human life. It is the largest annual human rights demonstration in the world and is a significant gathering of the anti-abortion movement in the United States; it is organized by the March for Life Education and Defense Fund. This march is not just a protest but a gathering to celebrate life. The participants in the march advocated the overturning of Roe v. Wade, which happened at the end of the case Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization on June 24, 2022. ■

## THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2023

This year's the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is celebrated from 18 to 25 January 2023, with the theme, "Do good; seek justice" (Is 1:17). The theme, taken from the first chapter of the Book of Isaiah, reflects his concern for the oppressed who suffer from injustice and inequality fed by the hypocrisy that leads to disunity. He teaches that God requires righteousness and justice from all of us to create the peace and unity that God desires. The theme was selected by the Minnesota Council of Churches, USA, in the aftermath of the extrajudicial killing of George Floyd and the trial of the police officer responsible for his death. These events brought anguish and time for the Christian communities to contemplate ways in which they may be complicit in racial injustice. Christian unity is needed as a source of reconciliation and unity. Resources for the Week were jointly prepared and published by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul and therefore have a symbolic significance. In the southern hemisphere, where January is a vacation time, churches often find other days to celebrate the Week of Prayer, for example, around Pentecost. It was suggested by the Faith and Order movement in 1926, which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the Church. ■

# HIGH RANGE PUBLIC SCHOOL



(An Institution run by MCBS Fathers)

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3<sup>rd</sup>

DECIMAL CELEBRATION

## Aspire'23

the foot prints to follow

We the Management, Principal, Staff, PTA and Students of High Range Public School, Oonnukal cordially solicit your esteemed presence with your family on the occasion of 3<sup>rd</sup> Decimal Celebration on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 (Wednesday) at 05.30 p.m. in the School Campus.

*Very Rev. Dr. Joseph Kaipayil MCBS,*  
(Provincial Superior, Param Prasad Province, Ernakulam)  
will be the Chief Guest of the function,

*Sri. Appu Jose (Cini Actor & Mimicry Artist)*  
(Comedy Circus / Mazhavil Manorama Fame)  
has consented to be the Guest of Honour and  
*Miss. Jilu Mariet Thomas*

(Influencer, MFPA Foot Artist & Designer)  
as our Special Guest.

*Rev. Dr. Thomas Potkanamazhy*  
(Vicar, Little Flower Forane Church, Oonnukal)  
will felicitate the function.

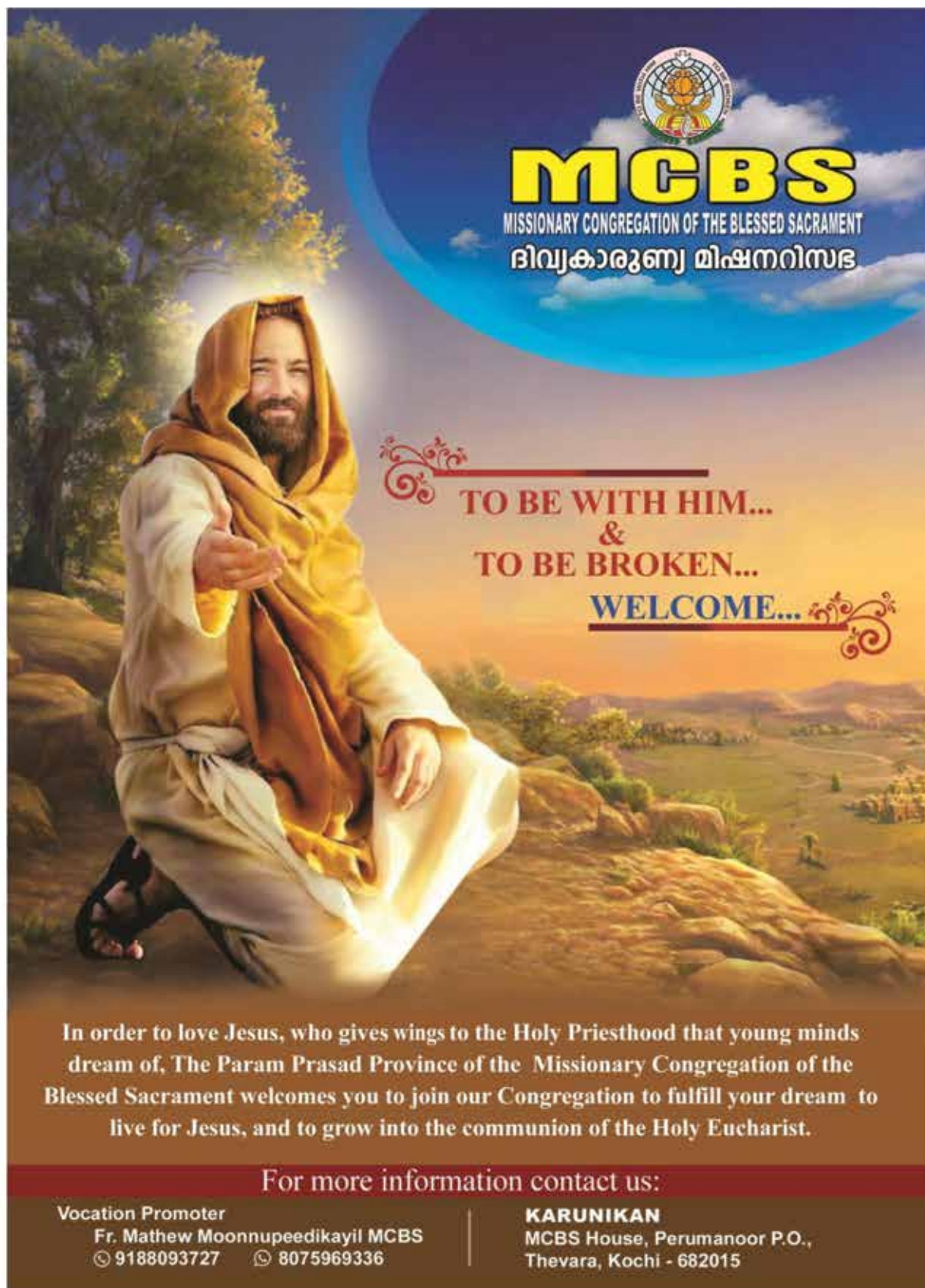
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TO BE WITH HIM...  
&  
TO BE BROKEN...  
**WELCOME...**

In order to love Jesus, who gives wings to the Holy Priesthood that young minds dream of, The Param Prasad Province of the Missionary Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament welcomes you to join our Congregation to fulfill your dream to live for Jesus, and to grow into the communion of the Holy Eucharist.

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