

FR. AGNEL

ASHRAM NEWS

October 2023



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A man is
but a product
of his thoughts,
what he thinks
he becomes.

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CONTENTS

Editorial	3
Gandhiji and the Beatitudes	5
Facing Life Confidently!	8
Mary – The Cause of Our Joy	10
Joy of Giving	12
Agnel Happenings	13
International Day of Older Persons	17
The Holy Rosary: A Strong Weapon	18
Fortunate One!	19
St. Francis of Assisi: The Patron of Ecology and Man of Integration	20
Just for Fun	21
Fr. Agnel's Blessings	24
Out of Their Bounty	25
Bob's Banter	26

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VEN. FR. AGNELO'S 96TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Monday, 20th November 2023

PROGRAMME**SPECIAL NOVENA SERVICES | 11th to 19th November 2023****Every day**

Morning : 7.00 a.m. & 9.30 a.m.: Holy Mass and Novena Prayer in English.

Evening : 6.00 p.m. : Holy Mass and Novena Prayer in English.

N.B.

On Sunday, 12th and 19th November, Masses and Novena Services will be held as on normal Sundays.

On Sunday, 12th and 19th November, Novena Services will be in Gujarati at 3.00 p.m.

20th November (Monday) : 96th Death Anniversary of Venerable Fr. Agnelo

Morning : Mass followed by Novena Prayers at 7.00 a.m. & 9.30 a.m.

Evening : A Solemn Concelebrated Mass will be held at 6.00 p.m. in the Ashram Compound followed by Novena Prayers.



Most Rev. Henry D'Souza,
Auxiliary Bishop of Bellary, will be the Main Celebrant on 20th November 2023.

Thousands of devotees will participate in this Annual Novena and celebration. Over one lakh of favours, some of them truly miraculous such as cure of cancer, T.B., Paralysis etc. have been received through the powerful intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnelo.

Favours obtained and petitions to be placed at the Shrine of Ven. Fr. Agnelo may be sent to the following address:

Rev. Fr. Superior

FR. AGNEL ASHRAM

Bandstand, Bandra (West),

Mumbai - 400 050, India.

Bus No. 211 : Special Bus Service to Ply from Bandra Railway Station to Fr. Agnel Ashram Gate.



THE POWER OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's greatest contribution to the development of humankind is that he demonstrated the power of an Idea whose time had come. The great Greek Philosopher, Plato, had first seeded the theory that the IDEA is the key to everything. Unfortunately, in the world at large, what is easy to accept and does not require a serious mental exercise, achieves far greater footprint than the world's best ideas. As a result, Plato's 'idea' ended up among the those who write books, the so-called motivational books who have solutions for all the world's ills, which may sometimes work like 'jugadd' and most often do not work at all, or those 'soups' books and rightly so called. These pulp writers turned Plato's fundamental theory of the 'idea' into something they best love to do, romanticize it, by identifying anything that cannot be touched, felt or seen, as 'platonic', despatching it, to the baser level of human psyche, i.e. romance, or something you see as desirable but belongs closer to the realm of pleasure.

In 1617, Rene Descartes, the French mathematician and philosopher, once again brought the 'idea' to the fore. 'Cogito, ergo sum' (latin), i.e. I think therefore I am. Although his connotation was not primarily directed towards the 'idea' as the overwhelming reality, he wanted to state, that if one is able to think, he surely knows he exists. But you can't miss the point that he makes, that the overwhelming reality in any period of human history, can be identified from the fact of that society having been able to 'ideate', i.e. able to rise above the ordinary, think critically. The general environment in the education institutions, especially of ecclesiastical nature is shallowness, the discourse is generally at the lowest level. That is a clear sign of ageing, becoming irrelevant, obsolete and above all, useless.

Ideation, thinking critically, yearning to innovate is the air without which passionate people cannot breathe and rather get suffocated. Ideation and sophistication are not the same thing. Mahatma Gandhi was absolutely down to earth, stayed grounded but his ideas were revolutionary, challenging, required both commitment and action, and most importantly, created passionate individuals. Organizations that do not ideate, are shallow, clueless and rudderless, prone to getting lost in bickering of all sizes and shapes and leading to sycophancy. Look at leadership all over the world, it is pathetic, and if one were to rank, ecclesiastical institutions would take prime places.

Plato's philosophy projected a world that would be guided, by human aspirations who seek higher, nobler, because according to him, that is what the human mind is designed to do. He discussed about the cravings of the baser instincts, but always insisted the power of the 'idea' cannot be subjected to the cravings of human instinct. Plato was a pure breed philosopher, like Socrates, and not an anthropologist, who did not pay much attention to the human baser instincts. Indian philosophy too, led by its doyen, Adi Sankaracharya, who can by any means be considered among the best, saw the dichotomy and decided that because the spirit and the flesh cannot be reconciled, created the non-dual (A-dvaita) world view, where the base is almost non-existent, because its existence has to be reduced to insignificance, or better still, an illusion. The others took that hint to create the layering of the 'non spirit matter' into its own hierarchy of sattva, rajas, tamas, which is nothing else, but the reality of a human who is not capable to give the spirit the supremacy, that it deserves, and as a result, gets lost in its internal struggles,

and therefore karma becomes indispensable.

Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. were able to design another model which proved that the 'idea' is a far more powerful weapon than the weapons of war. Lots of people perceive the power of ahimsa, as a non-resistance program, and the Dandi salt march normally becomes its symbol. The power of non-violence, or in other words, the power of personal conviction or group convictions, survives because its power source is inexhaustible. The war in Ukraine may well end, because they are exhausted or they have exhausted their weapons.

A battle fought with the power of ideas, does not depend, on weapons or circumstances external to the individual or group. The apparent end of a true ideological battle is only apparent because ideas will not die, the people who fought may have succumbed but the ideas do not succumb with them. IDEAS need conducive environment to thrive. This environment requires an existential situation where the spirit prevails over matter even in the ordinary life of the individuals who harbour such ideas. They live lives of embraced deprivation, which is not the castigation of one's material needs, but is an environment where the spirit holds the upper hand not only in its realm of ideas, but also in the material realm.

Human organizations both secular and religious will be successful in the measure of their ability to let the spirit prevail. The idea of 'satvik' food in India is one such indication and in the western world 'sacrifice' (tyag) is the norm that they chose to keep the baser instincts under control so that the spirit could live free. Monastic life and later religious life were such.

There is no mistaking about the fact that the 'world belongs to the brave', which can be paraphrased as 'the lighter you are, the higher you fly.' Passionate people work for a cause that cannot be compensated by material rewards, because the fuel that drives passion is the 'IDEA.'

Gandhi's stubborn resistance which is akin to ahimsa, is also symbolized by the amazing life of service of Mother Teresa. She was undefeated and

indefatigable in her belief that service of the needy is the highest form of resistance against greed and indifference. For each one of us, there is a way, only if we choose to take it.

Jose Alarico Carvalho
(jalarc22@gmail.com)

GANDHIJI AND THE BEATITUDES

-Leon Bent

Introduction

There is a soul to soul relation between Gandhi and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. As a Sanatani Hindu, his eclectic mind was open to assimilate the message of Jesus in the Sermon, and to make it as his own. In modern times, much more than many Christians, Gandhi drew the attention of the world to the noble message of the Sermon on the Mount. He reiterated its relevance for the peaceful living of humanity. Moreover, he has practically shown its application, especially its teaching on non-violence to the public affairs of life. This article is an attempt to see Gandhi's views on the Sermon, and his unrelenting effort to bring its worthiness to modern life.

Basically Sanatanians are from Sanathana Hindu dharma, which is Hinduism. Some practitioners and scholars refer Hindu dharma as Sanātana Dharma. "The eternal tradition", or the "eternal way", beyond human history, which is the oldest Indian religion. All these people follow the Gita, Vedas, Puranas, Ramayan, Mahabharata.

Gandhi's Acquaintance with the Bible

Gandhi had the chance to read the Bible during his stay in London through his Christian contacts. He says about this acquaintance with the Bible that: "Even when I was 18, I came in touch with good Christians in London...who placed the Bible in my hand." Gandhi in his autobiography very specifically mentions about "...a good Christian from Manchester," who was a vegetarian and happened to meet in a hotel (whose name has not been revealed by Gandhi). He gave Gandhi the first copy of the Bible; that might have happened probably in the year 1888. Gandhi promised to that man that he would read the Bible.

However, when Gandhi started reading the first part of the Bible, namely the Old Testament, it bored Gandhi, as it sent him to sleep. However, he read it just for the sake of reading it as he says: "I could not...take much interest in the Old Testament, which I had certainly read, if only to fulfil a promise I had made to a friend whom I happened to meet in a hotel." But the second part of the Bible, the New Testament and very particularly the Sermon on the Mount, part of the St. Mathew's Gospel attracted him, which he described very elaborately in his autobiography. He says: "But the New Testament produced a different impression, especially the Sermon on the Mount which went straight to my heart."

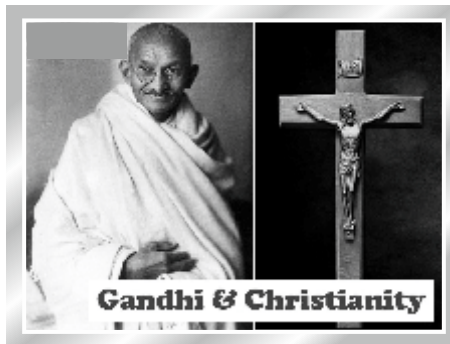
These differences of feelings felt by Gandhi while reading the Old Testament and New Testament clearly denotes the Indian mind's approach to Old Testament and New Testament. The experience of reading the Old Testament is generally disliked by Indians, as the experience of Gandhi shows. Therefore, the Old Testament is unwelcome and ambiguous in Indian context, while the New Testament is warmly welcomed and received wholeheartedly. Gandhi himself states about this difference between the Old and the New Testaments, that: "Between the Old and the New there is a fundamental difference. Whilst the Old [have] some very deep truths, I am unable to pay it the same honours I pay to the New Testament." Probably, the presence of frequent wars and bloodshed in the pages of the Old Testament and its justification of the thought of vengeance and retaliation might have brought such a strong dislike for the Old Testament in the mind of Gandhi. Hence, the Old Testament brought repulsion and dislike in Gandhi, while the New Testament and its Sermon on the Mount part enthused him. About which he says: "it delighted me beyond measure" and "gave me comfort and boundless joy."

As a result, Gandhi revered the Bible as a sacred book and approached it like a devout Christian.

He said: "I consider it as part of my scriptures." Further on many occasions, Gandhi found consolation and derived inspiration and strength from the Bible, particularly from the New Testament. Thus, his prayerful study of the New Testament, which he started from London, went on later in South Africa and throughout his life. He acquired a good

knowledge of the New Testament.

Often he read passages from the Gospels. Mathew's Gospel had a particular appeal to him, as it contained Christ's sayings in the Sermon on the Mount, orderly and systematically (Chapters 5-7). However, as Gandhi earlier distinguished the Sermon from the Old Testament and Mosaic Law, later he also distinguished it from the Letters of Paul in the New Testament. He thus said: "I draw a great distinction between the Sermon on the Mount and the Letters of Paul. They are a graft on Christ's teachings, his own gloss apart from Christ's own experience." Hence, for Gandhi, the Sermon alone contained the message of Jesus and he was, therefore, very selective in his admiration



and assimilation of the teachings of the Bible, to the extent of calling him as a "Sermon-on-the-Mount Christian," with his known partiality for the Sermon.

The Sermon on the Mount

Shamal Bhatt was a medieval Gujarati narrative poet, and he played a great role in initiating Gandhi towards the Sermon. Bhatt's noble mind and imagination and very particularly, his pictorial description of returning tenfold goodness to whatever is done to us, through a didactic stanza had really attracted Gandhi's childhood mind. In fact, Gandhi learned from this poem that, the real beauty consists in doing "acts of mercy," instead of spreading evil. About which he states: "A Gujarati didactic stanza...gripped my mind and heart. Its precept-return good for evil-became my guiding principle. It became such a passion with me that I began numerous experiments in it." Gandhi quotes those wonderful lines of this stanza in his autobiography,

*"For a bowl of water give a goodly meal;
For a kindly greeting bow thou down with zeal;
For a simple penny pay thou back with gold;
If thy life be rescued, life do not withhold.
Thus the words and actions of the wise regard;
Every little service ten fold they reward.
But the truly noble know all men as one,
And return with gladness good for evil done."*

The influence of the ethical teachings of this didactic stanza during his childhood, actually prepared him to feel attracted to the Sermon on the Mount, later, in London, because Shamal Bhatt's poem had close resemblance to the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. In other words, the Sern St. Mathew's Gospel acted as a potent stimulus in reviving Gandhi's mind to the ethical ideas he learned during his early childhood.

Gandhi compared the teaching of the Sermon - "whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" - with Shamal Bhatt's immortal lines, - "for a bowl of water, give a goodly meal" - which had been inculcated upon him from his early childhood. Gandhi thus said: "...the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount echoed something I had learnt in childhood and something which seemed to be part of my

being..." Because both, the Sermon and Shamal Bhatt's stanza narrates the theme of returning good for evil. This common theme of the Sermon and Bhatt's stanza, had a key role in moulding Gandhi's philosophic and religious thought, and was instrumental in revolutionising his whole life.

Sermon on the Mount and the Philosophy of Satyagraha



Gandhi's philosophy of *Satyagraha* has been influenced by the Sermon on the Mount, as the concept of *Satyagraha* appeared to become a non-violent path for truth, in line with the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus and his teachings were thus, an important source for Gandhi's philosophy of *Satyagraha*. For example, he says: "It was the New Testament which really awakened me

to the Tightness and value of passive resistance." He, therefore, saw the New Testament as a book of peace, as it exhorts us to "...look forward to an age when no swords would be needed and the material used for making them could be diverted to make other useful things." He thus declared: "I can discover no justification in the New Testament for wars." Finally, while in South Africa, the revelation of passive resistance came to him after reading the Sermon on the Mount in 1893.

Gandhi hence considered Jesus Christ as the 'sower of the seed' of non-violent philosophy. He calls Christ as a "Heroic satyagrahi;" as Christ represented the principle of non-violence, which is the purest form of soul force. Jesus overcame evil with good, hatred by love. Jesus preferred gentleness, forgiveness and love and not vengeance and hatred. This example of non-violent Jesus inspired Gandhi as he says: "... the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal." In fact, he found in the message of 'resist not evil', the ethic of non-violence, the power of soul-force, and the infinite possibilities of universal love. Gandhi was thus actually reinforcing the concept of non-violence or soul-force through his *Satyagraha* campaigns.

He thus says:

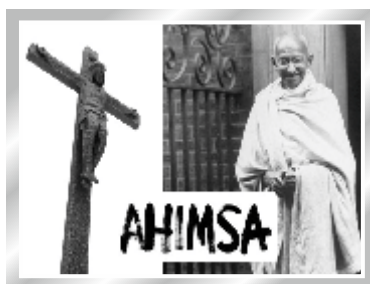
When I read in the Sermon on the Mount, such passages as 'Resist not him that is evil, but whosoever slaps you on the right cheek turn to

him the other also,' and 'love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you that, he may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.' I was simply overjoyed, and found my own opinion confirmed where I least expected it.

As a result, Gandhi decided to apply Christ's attitude of overcoming evil with good as a principle to public affairs. The result was revolutionary, as Gandhi was able to lead the world's largest non-violent movement, in relation to India's freedom struggle against the brute weapons of the British.

Gandhi's Message to Christians

While explaining the relevance of the Sermon on the Mount to the Christians of Europe, Gandhi said: 'To try to explain Jesus' teachings to the



followers of Jesus is like carrying Ganga water to Varanasi. But although I am myself not a Christian, as a humble student of the Bible, who approaches it

with faith and reverence, I wish respectfully to place before you the essence of the Sermon on the Mount. Hence, for Gandhi, "...the Sermon on the Mount was the whole of Christianity..." But he discovered that the so-called Christians, have given up the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount on non-violence. So "...much of what passes as Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount." Gandhi said this, as he distinguished between the life of Christians in the West, with their multiplicity of wants and material comforts, on the one hand; and the essential teaching of the Sermon on the other. Therefore, Gandhi plainly told Christians that, "Become worthy of the message that, is imbedded in the Sermon on the Mount."

However, he observed that to live their lives in strict accordance with the Sermon on the Mount, there is much to give up and much to remodel immediately. Thus, in order to drink deep of the fountains in the Sermon on the Mount, they have to take sack-cloth and ashes. Nevertheless, if the Christians of Europe could translate their lives to the simplicity of the message of Jesus, it would give Gandhi such a greater pleasure, as he was looking forward to such an ideal life from Christians, which is encoded in the Sermon.

Gandhi, therefore, very much emphasized Jesus' teaching in Matt. 7:21. It is not he who says 'Lord, Lord' that is a Christian, but 'He that doeth the will of the Father' that, is a true Christian. Hence, for

Gandhi, Christians should not be worried about organizations, forms of ministry, doctrines, etc., but simply cling to the message of the Sermon on the Mount, and live life as described therein, than merely speaking it or preaching it. Because the real imperceptible life meant greater for Gandhi, than the overemphasis given to the visible pulpit and public preaching. So Gandhi very particularly used the analogy of rose in relation to the life enjoined in the Sermon on the Mount. He says: "A rose does not need to preach. It simply spreads its fragrance. The fragrance is its own sermon." But the Gospel that Jesus preached is more subtle and fragrant than the gospel of the rose. If the rose needs no agent, much less does the gospel of Christ need any agent. Thus, the aroma of Christianity is subtler to that of the rose and should, therefore, be imparted in an even quieter and more imperceptible manner, if possible. So the aroma of the life in accordance with the message of Sermon is subtler and greater than the fragrance of a rose. In fact, Gandhi expected such a greatly transformed mature life in Christians.

Conclusion

Although Gandhi did not identify himself with orthodox Christianity, the message of the Bible, especially the New Testament and the Sermon on the Mount, was a great source of his life and his philosophy of *Satyagraha* and non-violent resistance. He saw the essence of the message of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and held it of greater importance, than anything in the Bible and Christianity. It was actually the Sermon that, endeared Jesus to him, and through the Sermon, he considered Jesus as a great teacher of humanity, as his teachings in the Sermon got a moral import and value to the whole world. He was able to see the Indian tradition of *ahimsa* present in the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon and found a meeting ground, between the Sermon and the Gita. However, his approach and interpretation of the Sermon was different from the traditional interpretation given to it by the Christian theologians. He found the practicality of the Sermon in real life contexts, and exhorted Christians to live the life enjoined in the Sermon on the Mount.



Leon Bent has just finished writing a Book on "Quintessentially Matthew: The Beatitudes, The Kingdom of God & the Great Commission." Just a few finishing touches are left, before it is sent for Printing.

FACING LIFE CONFIDENTLY!

-Fr. Fio Mascarenhas SJ

In these weeks of October/November, when over a billion of our co-citizens celebrate the gift of “light” and “victory over Evil” (Dussehra/Diwali), let us look briefly at St Paul’s experience of “the Light of life” and of “victory over Evil,” in order to ourselves face life confidently.

There is no early Christian who faced life more confidently than St. Paul! Jesus’ gift of peace, joy, and courage in every circumstance was Paul’s outstanding blessing. And the source of his confidence was not his own talents or achievements, but the personal and life-transforming encounter he had with the Risen Lord Jesus.

This “Jesus encounter” was not just a one-off event (on the road to Damascus), but it was renewed often, probably daily, in his active life. Though reticent to write about them, he did hint once about his numerous mystical experiences: “I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord...” (2Cor.12:1-6).

It was Paul’s vivid faith in the continual saving presence of the Risen Lord Jesus that enabled him to face life confidently. He was the first to use the now-familiar word “grace” to express this special New Testament blessing: **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!”** (2Cor.13:13).

Paul uses this term “grace” to mean the new way of salvation begun by Jesus Christ, as opposed to the old economy of merit which was offered by the Law. The initial gratuity of election marks the whole of Christian existence. He writes: *“At the present time, there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace”* (Rom.11:5, 6). Salvation is the gift of God and not the reward due to work done (Rom.4:4). Where sin proliferated, *grace* abounds more than ever (Rom.5:15-21), opening up the inexhaustible wealth of divine generosity (Eph.1:7, 2:7).

For St. Paul, a primary and principle effect of NT “grace” is that we are made children of God, able to address God as personal Father: *“You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but*

the spirit of sonship. When we cry ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...” (Rom.8:15-17).

The reason for Paul’s supreme confidence in facing the uncertainties and difficulties of life is that the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” had brought him, in an incomparable way, “the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.” These three connected realities remained constantly with him, even when in his human frailty he did not fully live up to them. *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death”* (Rom.8:1-2). Paul expressed his inner confidence over and over again in his Letters.

Here is one sterling example: **“What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?**

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom.8:31-39).

Another most inspiring text which expresses Paul’s attitude of total serenity and confidence is: **“It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”** (Gal.2:20). He was absolutely sure that the saving death and resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of every human reality, hence his inner security at all times. **“All I want is to know Jesus and the**



St. Paul

power of his resurrection, and to share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own...forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”(3:10-14).

So it was not just human self-confidence, but faith in Jesus that enabled Paul to cope with all earthly trials, as he confessed so eloquently: *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies”* (2Cor.4:7-11). Paul’s personality was so infused with the presence and action of the Risen Lord Jesus that no trials could quench the flame of his Spirit-inspired faith.

We too can receive a similar gift and be strengthened in our Christian character! We too can face life confidently like Paul, because we too have been chosen and called, like Paul, to become “co-heirs with Christ,” with God’s Spirit indwelling our inner selves. A life of daily prayer, *nourished by a true familiarity with the*

Scriptures, and culminating in the reception and daily putting into practice of the Eucharist, will be the means by which we will grow in confidence.

Mother Mary, and the saints, in similar fashion, faced life confidently. For example, St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, had such deep faith that he once confided, “Should the Pope perchance abolish the Society of Jesus, I would need just 15 minutes before the Blessed Sacrament to come again to perfect inner peace!” We too can grow in this “*grace of Jesus*” and face the challenging circumstances of our own lives **with new confidence, joy and courage.**

So pray often this insightful prayer of the Church (Sunday Mass, Week 15):

“Father, Let the light of your truth guide us to your kingdom through a world filled with lights contrary to your own. CHRISTIAN IS THE NAME AND THE GOSPEL WE GLORY IN. May your love make us what you have called us to be, Amen!”



Fr. Fiorello Mascarenhas SJ, DMin lives at The Retreat House, Bandra, and can be contacted on frfiomas@gmail.com

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You can join the Ashram Family by becoming a member of Agnel Co-operators and enjoy the fruits of a Special Sunday Mass offered at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra, for all the members. You will also enjoy the fruits of all the prayers and good works of the Agnel Ashram Fathers and entire Agnel Ashram Family.

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MARY – THE CAUSE OF OUR JOY

-Fr. Joel Pinto

What is this “Joy”? Who is this “Joy”?

This Joy is Jesus. Mary is the Cause of this Joy; Jesus. She said 'Yes' and because of her 'Yes', Jesus came into this world through her. And hence, we received Jesus, our ultimate Joy and she is the Cause of this Joy to us.

We are called to imitate Mother Mary and like her be the Cause of Joy. We are called to be a Cause of Joy first to **GOD** and **one who is a Cause of Joy to God automatically will be a Cause of Joy to others.** The question is how?

1. Give God the **PRIORITY**:

- When we give God the priority in our lives, we become the Cause of Joy to God.
- Does God want us to give Him the priority?
 - In the **10 Commandments**, the 1st three Commandments are about God. It indicates that He is and should be the First.
 - Even when Jesus gave the **New Commandment**, the First Commandment is about God. It says to love God with all our heart, mind and strength. This again indicates that God should be our first priority.
- How best can we give God the priority?
 - By Praying!!!
 - It pleases God when we spend time with Him.
 - The best way to build intimate relationship with God is through Personal Prayer.
 - Constantly God reminds us through the Scriptures to spend time in Prayer with Him.
 - When we make efforts to Pray, we give God the Priority. And, when we give God the Priority, it pleases God and we become the Cause of Joy to Him.
 - Example:

A Priest was doing well in his ministry, till one day, everything was in a mess. The people, whom he worked for, were now against him. He was so stressed and frustrated that he was planning to commit suicide. One day, a priest suggested to him to do a retreat. During the retreat, he felt God telling him, “Where were you? I have been waiting for you for too long.”

He realized then that he was doing good work, but had no personal relationship with God. He never spent time in prayer. For him, work was prayer. Now, it had dawned upon him that he was wrong and that God was calling him for an intimate relationship with Him through a life of Personal Prayer.

2. Do **God's Will**:

- When we surrender to God's Will, we become the Cause of Joy to God.
- Does God want us to do His Will?
 - In **Mathew 12:50**, Jesus says, “Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”
- How do we know what is God's Will for us?
- Just read the Scripture every day. It certainly speaks about God's Will for each one of us.
- Example:

A Priest friend was doing his retreat just before his Ordination. During the retreat, he felt God telling him firmly to leave Priesthood. He was upset and started fighting with God. He told God, “Ask anything and I shall give it to you, but do not ask or snatch away my priesthood from me.” This thought kept haunting him till he said to the Lord, “Lord, I surrender. Let your will be done.” He testifies that at that very moment peace came over him and he felt God telling him, “This is what I want. Surrender to my will.” He realized that Priesthood had become more important to him than God and God was teaching and revealing to him His Will that he should learn to surrender. Learn to say, “God, let your will be done.”

3. Keep **Faith**:

- Does God want us to have a strong Faith?
 - Time and again in the Scriptures, it is said “**Do not fear**”. In other words, it simply means have Faith.
 - It is constantly seen in the Gospel, especially when Jesus healed, that a **strong Faith made Jesus happy**.
 - In Mathew 13:58, we read Jesus couldn't perform any miracle in His home town, because they lacked Faith.
 - Remember Jesus saying in Mathew 17:20 that if we only have **faith as small as a mustard seed**, then we

could tell the mountain to move and the mountain would obey.

- Example:

A Bird on the Branch was singing joyfully. Suddenly, the bird saw a snake, right below, keeping a watch on her move. With fear, the bird froze, didn't move an inch and after few hours, standing at one place and due to exhaustion, fell unconscious straight into the mouth of the snake.



- No Faith leads to fear. Fear kills.

- And, God can never be happy to see that we are spiritually dead.

- A strong faith is a Cause of great Joy to God.

4. Pick up our Cross:

- Does God want us to pick up our Cross?

- In **Mathew 16:24**, Jesus says, "If you want to follow me, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me."

- We all want to follow Jesus. We all want to be with Him in Paradise. But, we can't follow where He is, if we do not carry our Cross.

- The only way to heaven is narrow, challenging and troublesome and it is the Cross.

- Cross indicates Suffering. Is suffering good? And the answer is 'Yes'.

- It makes us realize that we are weak and we cannot manage.

- It humbles us.

- We start depending on God.

- Once we depend on God, God works in us and His power is manifested.

- As a result, we witness God through the power manifested through us.

- This suffering and experience of God helps us to understand and assist others.

- Ultimately, we become better Christians!!!

- Example:

A mother lost her son and was very upset with God. A Priest encouraged her to go for a retreat. Hesitantly, she went for the retreat. During the retreat, she saw a vision of Jesus coming to her with her son. And, in that vision, she heard her son speak, "Mother, why are you crying? Why are you upset with God? Can't you see I am with Him and happy being with Him." At that moment, she cried out to God for forgiveness. She said, "God forgive me for being upset with You. Today, You gave my son Heaven, that I as mother would not have been able to earn for my son."

- Today, she praises God. She assists and consoles those parents who have lost their child at a very early age.

- When we pick up our Cross with Hope and Trust in God, we become a Cause of Joy to God.

5. Forgive:

- Does God want us to Forgive?

- Jesus says in **Mathew 6:14-15** that only if we forgive the sins of others, then will our sins will be forgiven.

- Another example is the **Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Mathew 18: 23-35)**.

- How do we Forgive?

- The best way to forgive is by starting to pray for the enemies and then asking for the grace to forgive.

- Remember in **Mathew 5:44**, Jesus commands us to pray for our enemies.

- Example:

In a particular parish, people were participating in the Night Vigil, when a miscreant entered the Church, walked up to the Altar and disrupted the service. A police complaint was made and the culprit was caught. The Senior Police Inspector asked the Priest, as to what he should do with this young boy who had caused great hurt to the community by disturbing a prayer service. The Priest asked the Senior Police Inspector to warn him and let him free. The Senior Police Inspector did as told, but came back to the

Priest and said that this happens only in Christianity.

- If the Police Inspector could be happy with the gesture of forgiveness and made this comment, **how much more will God be happy when we, like Jesus, learn to say, "Forgive them Father for they know not what they are doing."**

6. Serve Others:

- Does God want us to Serve?
 - Jesus reminds us that He came not to be served but to serve. (**Mathew 20:28**).So also we should do the same.
 - Jesus teaches us in **Mathew 25:40** that what we do to the least of our brothers, we do it unto Him.
 - And, in **Luke 6:38**, Jesus says, "For the measure you give will be the measure you receive back."
- To serve or to give of ourselves, we need not be rich. We just need to have a giving heart.

● Example:

The Cow and the Pig had a conversation one day. The pig seemed upset and said to the cow, "Why is it that people revere you more than me? You and I give of ourselves completely. Even then, people remember and talk about you more." To this, the Cow thought for a while and then replied, "That's because, you give of yourself completely only after you have died. While, I give of myself, even when I'm still alive."

- When we give of ourselves, while we are alive, we become a great Cause of Joy to others and especially to God.

May we like Mary our Mother be a **great Cause of Joy to God** and people around us.



Fr. Joel Pinto is a Priest for the Archdiocese of Bombay for 10 years and active in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR).



There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of GIVING

Catherine & David Fobler, Canada

We have sent a thanksgiving donation of Rs. 10,000 for prayers answered. We are most grateful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for the favours received.

Shirly Pereira, Virar (West),

Palghar, Maharashtra

I wish to donate an amount of Rs.15,000 to Fr. Agnel Ashram and the Balbhavan Orphanage, via NEFT Bank Transfer. This is a small amount from myself and my family, for taking care of the boys in the Ashram.

Paul Aloysius D'Silva/Sunita D'Silva, Bangalore, Karnataka

I have transferred a donation amount of Rs. 50,000 through NEFT Bank Transfer, towards the education and maintenance of the boys at the Balbhavan Orphanage.

Millie Fernandes, I. C. Colony,

Borivali (West), Mumbai

I visited Fr. Agnel Ashram and am pleased to donate an amount of Rs.15,000. This amount is towards the annual sponsorship of one boy of the

Balbhavan Orphanage. I am extremely pleased with the good work that Fr. Agnel Ashram does, to look after, educate, as well as train young boys.

Meena Rozahio/Rita Dias/Jane/Sydney Dunbar, Canada

We are more than happy to provide a small donation of Rs. 14,000 from our resources to Fr. Agnel Ashram. Our best wishes, and continue to keep up the good work that the Ashram and the Balbhavan Orphanage have been doing for the past so many years.

Catherine Jose, Thrissur, Kerala

As an ex-Saudi nurse, I have sent a small offering of a cheque of Rs. 20,000 to Fr. Agnel Ashram. I have received so many favours through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. Kindly offer Holy High Mass and Novena for our family. The balance amount is for the orphan children under your care.

Annie D'Souza, Kalina, Mumbai

We are donating a cheque of Rs. 10,000 for the upkeep, maintenance, education and training of the boys in the Balbhavan Orphanage and for Fr. Agnel Ashram.

National Service Scheme (NSS) unit of Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering help in smooth flow of devotees at Bandra Fair

The National Service Scheme (NSS) unit of Fr. Conceicao Rodrigues College of Engineering, Bandra, Mumbai, has been working with the spirit of service, ever since its inception. Balancing between the rigours of professional studies, projects and development of technical skill sets, CRCE-NSS members have always followed their passion to contribute their best to the service of society and moulding the younger generation with the right values and practices.

During the Bandra Fair celebration, the CRCE student volunteers assisted the Mumbai Police in crowd management and the smooth flow of devotees, from 10th to 17th September, 2023, at Mount Mary Church, Bandra.

Among the range of activities taken up by the CRCE-NSS chapter, from developmental programs for our Agnel Ashram kids to two blood

donation camps every year, awareness drives on socially relevant issues, clean up drives, tree planting and assistance in relief work during natural calamities. The CRCE-NSS unit has adopted the village, Tandulwadi in Palghar district, for 5 years. Every year, a 7-day rural camp each is held with one development activity, for the benefit of the adopted village, interaction with villagers and guiding sessions for children and youth.

The National Service Scheme is an Indian-sponsored public service program, conducted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Popularly known as NSS, it was launched in Gandhiji's centenary year in 1969.

The enthusiasm of the CRCE-NSS chapter to work for socially relevant causes and their 'You' before 'Me' attitude makes us proud that they hold the vision of our Founding Fathers high.



**NSS UNIT
OF
CRCE**



Eating and Celebrating Together: Food and Festivities at Fr. Agnel School, New Delhi

A delightful event unfolded at **Fr. Agnel School, New Delhi** for the enthusiastic students of classes 1 to 5, where they embarked on a cultural and culinary journey, celebrating India's diverse festivals.

Classes 1 and 2 shared the festive-food of Janmashtami and Ganesh Chaturthi, with teachers sharing stories around the festivals. The children brought a variety of food items like *mithai*, *puri aloo*, and other specialties of the festival and shared it together, as a big family. Class 3 children learnt to bake an instant Oreo cake. Classes 4 and 5 had an 'Eating Together' activity where the young talents sang and danced to vibrant folk songs, skilfully played traditional musical instruments, and truly immersed themselves in the essence of each festival while showcasing the culinary treasures of India's diverse cultures.



Food and Festivities at Fr. Agnel School, New Delhi.

Talk on 'Emotional Engineering' at Fr. Agnel School, New Delhi

Speaking on the topic 'Emotional Engineering,' **Dr. Ramesh Prasad**, from **Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya**, impressed on the role of value based education in creating a better world. This simple yet profound life lesson by Dr. Prasad, on being mindful and enjoying the 'golden silence' was surely a gentle reminder for all teachers to take out a little time, pause, recharge and rejuvenate.



Dr. Ramesh Prasad, from Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya, spoke on 'Emotional Engineering.' Also seen in the picture is Fr. Roy D'Sa, Principal, Fr. Agnel School, New Delhi, along with faculty members.

Agnel Talent Spectrum at Fr. Agnel School, Noida

Agnel Talent Spectrum, an inter-school extravaganza was hosted by Fr. Agnel School, Noida on 9th, 10th and 11th August 2023. With participation spanning across 20 schools, this event was a celebration of youth skill and prowess.

The essence of the event, encapsulated within the theme "Earth Matters," manifested through diverse competitions over three days, resonated with creativity and commitment to our planet.

Fr. Agnel School, Noida emerged as the undisputed champions, followed by Somerville, Noida in a close second position, and Fr. Agnel School, Vaishali, in the third place.



Agnel Talent Spectrum at Fr. Agnel School, Noida.



Group Western Singing at Agnel Talent Spectrum.

TEDx at Fr. Agnel School, Noida

Fr. Agnel School, Noida organized the first edition of TEDx on the 25th of August, 2023. The inaugural TEDx event marked a significant milestone in the school's academic journey, sparking intellectual curiosity and creativity like



Inspiring TEDx talk by Harjeet Singh.

never before. Under the theme of "Horizons of change," this event brought together an inspiring line-up of speakers from diverse backgrounds, spread across numerous lines of work. The stage became a platform for sharing innovative ideas, fostering a culture of open-mindedness and encouraging personal growth.

The event had engaging presentations from Pankaj Chawla, Shriti K. Tyagi, and Souvik Bhattacharjya. The event reached its pinnacle with inspiring talks, delivered by Harjeet Singh, Rev. Fr. Jose Alarico Carvalho and Smriti R. Sharma.

The success of this inaugural edition was a testament to the dedication and vision of the organising committee, under the guidance of the teachers in-charge and the enthusiastic participants. It set a precedent for future TEDx events, ensuring that the school community continues to explore, innovate, and push the boundaries of knowledge.

Annual Prize Distribution Ceremony of Fr. Agnel School, Vaishali

The Annual Prize Distribution Ceremony was held on 12th August, 2023 in the School Auditorium (The Cube). **Fr. Sebastian L Raj SJ** (The executive director of Indian Social Institute, Delhi) was the Chief Guest.

The ceremony was to felicitate the students from classes VI to XII, for their outstanding achievements during the academic session of 2022-23. The students displayed their creative prowess through dance and musical performances. The theatrical adaptation of the novel, '**The Little Prince**' was staged to emphasise on the importance of '**Joie de Vivre**' or

the '**Joy of Little Things**,' to make the students realise the importance of celebrating the little things in life.

Besides the other awards in academics and co-curricular activities; two prestigious awards were added, namely, **Fr. Bento Golden Jubilee Award** and the **Dr. Jose Inacio and Maria Olimpia Award** which is instituted in fond memory of the Director Fr. J.A. Carvalho's beloved parents. Both these awards were given to students who struggled against the odds to attain what they aimed for and for students who demonstrated an outstanding sense of purpose, compassion and courage.



Annual Prize Distribution of Fr. Agnel School, Vaishali.



Cultural programme presented by the students of Fr. Agnel School, Vaishali.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

-Tony Menezes

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." - Abraham Lincoln

The International Day of Older Persons, observed annually on 1st October, is a monumental occasion dedicated to honouring the wisdom, experience and contributions of senior citizens towards the betterment of society.

ORIGIN: On 14th December, 1990, the United Nations General Assembly designated 1st October, as the International Day of Older Persons.

The past and present objective of the declaration has been to increase global knowledge, awareness and generate commitments among all stakeholders to strengthen the protection of the human rights of current and future generations of elderly persons around the world; to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the 21st century and promote the development of a society for all ages.

This day serves as a vital reminder for us all to cherish and respect the elderly and recognise their invaluable contribution to the world and to make all efforts to ensure their comfort and well-being.

Ageing is an inevitable part of life and as people grow older, they accumulate a wealth of knowledge and experience that is immeasurable.

The International Day of Elderly Persons, therefore, provides an opportunity for us to embrace and honour the elderly by appreciating their achievements and understanding the challenges they face. It provides us an opportunity to create an inclusive and supportive environment for all our Senior Citizens and ensure a dignified and active role within the community.

This day serves as an important reminder for us to cherish and honour the elderly, to recognize their invaluable role, and to strive for their well-being.

One of the main goals of this day is to raise awareness about the issues affecting the elderly. It provides a platform for governments, organizations, and individuals to advocate for the rights of older people, particularly in relation to healthcare, social support, and age discrimination. By addressing these concerns, we can work towards creating age-friendly societies, thus enabling them to live fulfilling lives and continue making significant contributions.

The International Day of Elderly Persons serves as a reminder that age does not define a person's worth or potential.

Their wisdom can provide valuable guidance to younger generations and help shape a better future. It is crucial that we create opportunities for intergenerational dialogue, allowing different age groups to learn from one another and foster mutual respect and understanding.

Importantly, this day calls for us to re-evaluate our treatment of older individuals within society. Ageism and discrimination against the elderly remain prevalent in various forms. By actively challenging ageist attitudes and promoting respect for all age groups, we can ensure that older individuals are valued and appreciated as active members of society, free from prejudice and stigmatisation.

Furthermore, the International Day of the Elderly Persons emphasizes the significance of providing adequate healthcare, support, and resources to older individuals. Ageing often brings with it various health challenges, and it is vital to prioritize geriatric care and research to improve the quality of life for older persons. Society should invest in programs that enable senior citizens to lead healthy and independent lives, ensuring access to healthcare services, nutritious food, safe living conditions, and opportunities for physical and mental well-being.

Ultimately, celebrating the International Day of Elderly Persons is an opportunity to honour the unique contributions that older individuals have made and continue to make in our communities. It is a day to cherish the lessons learned from their life experiences, to learn from their resilience and strength, and to embrace the diversity that each generation brings.

According to the Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections for India and States 2011 - 2036, there are approximately 138 million elderly persons in India 2021 (67 million males and 71 million females) and is further expected to increase by around 56 million elderly persons in 2031.

In conclusion, the International Day of Elderly Persons serves as a powerful reminder to celebrate and honour the elderly individuals in our lives and communities with respect they deserve.



Tony Menezes is a writer, aspiring poet, hospitality management professional and animal lover.

THE HOLY ROSARY: A STRONG WEAPON

-Tancia Pires

No soldier will go unarmed to the battlefield. No one will leave their weapons behind and go to war, to conquer and emerge victorious. When life is such a big battleground, where each one of us has to fight the battle over evil, temptations, sins, etc. to sustain in this cruel world, we need a weapon that can make us victorious. What is your weapon in the battlefield of life?

Did God send us unarmed, to conquer this tempting world and make it a better place? Definitely not. We have been filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and an inherent strength, with strong willpower thriving within us. However, to deepen our faith and strengthen our inherent powers, we are also given external weapons, and one such weapon is the Holy Rosary!

The Holy Rosary is not just a string of beads, which is picked up and used to count an unconscious chant. It is a source of our strength, an aid to reach out to God. It is woven, with beautifully structured prayers and contemplations, aimed at recalling Jesus' works of mercy and the important milestones of His life. We are called to pray through the intercession of His beloved Mother whom He gave us as our own, during the last moments of His life, hanging on the cross.

Mother Mary, has a very highly adorned place of respect among the Roman Catholics and this place is of great theological reverence. She is called the 'Theotokos' meaning 'God-bearer' or Mother of God. And the word 'Rosary' has been derived from the words 'rose' or 'rosarium' meaning, 'garland or garden of roses' This symbolism is a tribute to the spiritual connect between the Virgin Mary and flowers, particularly roses.

By praying the Holy Rosary, we do not worship Mary, but we Worship one God and we **Honour** Mary, as a mother, just like Jesus did. We say, "Hail Mary, full of grace..." the words used by angel Gabriel when he greeted her, at the Annunciation. We recite the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Fatima Prayer, and give Glory to the Triune God. Such a beautiful amalgamation of prayer,

truth, faith, and adoration. Bringing together so many wonderful aspects of the Catholic faith.

As of now, we have the 20 mysteries, divided into 4 sets - the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and the Luminous Mysteries. Each mystery is a snapshot in the life of Jesus and Mary and provides an anchor to meditate on while one prays a decade of the Rosary. Each mystery, each moment in their lives, holds incredible insights for our own lives today. It reminds us of the important events that can strengthen our faith and give us the courage to take on the world with might and power. It recalls God's Love and sacrifice for us. If we ponder over each mystery and prayer, instead of just chanting it as a boring chain of compulsory prayers while being lost in the world of worries, work, fantasies, etc., the Rosary has a profound meaning.



This age-old tradition handed over to us by our ancestors is believed to have originated from the monks and hermits, is a powerful tool that has evolved with time, and got its current form and shape through the contributions of various saints, apparitions, and Catholic leaders. Let us continue to pray the Rosary with deep faith, through the

intercession of Mary our heavenly mother. We can reach out to Jesus through Mary more easily and be filled with joy, peace, clarity, and contentment which comes through praying the Rosary with our heart, soul, and mind. Let us not lose the essence of this beautiful prayer, due to the ever-increasing hustle of our lives, but use it as a weapon to deepen our divine connection and soar higher with God's grace. Let us hand it down to our future generations and keep the flame of faith burning bright.

Mary, Queen of the Holy Rosary, Pray for Us!



Tancia Pires from Goa is currently pursuing Masters in Medical Imaging technology, a branch of Radiology. She is passionate about writing, acting and singing.

FORTUNATE ONE!

-Severina Peres

In 1869, a daughter was born into a loving and well-respected family in western Sudan, in a village of the Daju tribe. Josephine Bakhita lived a happy and a relatively prosperous and carefree existence as she grew up with her three brothers and three sisters, saying that as a child she did not know suffering. At age 5, one of her sisters was abducted by slave traders. Then onwards, the family faced suffering and fear.

When Josephine was eight years old, she herself was abducted and taken as a slave, made to walk barefoot hundreds of miles, during which time she was bought and sold three times in the market as a slave to different masters. For the next 12 years, she was sold more than 12 times to masters who tormented her terribly. This small girl went through slavery, terrible tortures, pain and flogging. The trauma she faced made her forget her original name. Her captor sarcastically gave her the name "Bakhita" which means "fortunate", claiming that he would bring her good luck. Then she was bought by a rich man who was good to her but his son tortured, lashed, kicked and beat her that she could barely move for more than a month, and she often was bound firmly with chains to prevent her escape. She missed her mother and family, without doing any evil, this innocent girl was going through terrible suffering.

Next she was sold to a General who was notorious for his cruelty that not a single day passed without her being wounded, as soon as one wound would heal, they would inflict another. She was tortured by scarification with a total of 114 scars, wounds were inflicted on her body with a sharp razor, salt applied on them to make the scars permanent to identify the person as property. Throughout, she held on to the Presence of God, whom she experienced as the One hidden in her, accompanying her, consoling and strengthening her. Thereafter, she was sold to an Italian Vice Consul who treated her well, despite her being his slave. Through his kindness, she arrived in Italy and was given to another family where she served as a Nanny. When the family returned back to Sudan, they entrusted Bakhita and their youngest daughter to the care of the Canossian sisters in Venice. It was here with the loving sisters that Bakhita was introduced to Jesus Christ, her true Master, whom she discovered as the God who was with her from childhood.

Her freedom from slavery came about when the Italian court ruled in favour of Bakhita, declaring her free. For the first time in her life, she was free and she chose to remain with the sisters. She was given the baptismal name, Josephine Margaret

Fortunata, thus at the age of twenty one, this fortunate young girl was flooded with God's Grace, and her formerly abused life was transformed. She became a nun, in her convent she welcomed guests as the door keeper and served as a cook. The people around knew her for her beautiful and warm smile and kindness. She was gentle and charismatic and often referred to as Little Brown Sister or Black Mother. During World War II, the people of Schio regarded her as their protector. Although bombs fell on their village, not one citizen died. She died on 8th February, 1947 and canonized in the year 2000 by Pope St John Paul II. Many accounts of her life are recounted in her biography. Saint Josephine was more than fortunate; she was greatly blessed by God. She is the patron saint of Sudan, for victims of slavery and trafficked persons.

11th October is declared a day of annual observance worldwide as **International Day of the Girl Child** since 2012 by the United Nations. Its focus is to support more opportunities for girls, to give them access to education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care, protection from discrimination, violence and forced child marriage. We read about many efforts by organisations and individuals worldwide in breaking the cycle of gender inequality to give more opportunities for girls, to promote and protect the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and to involve them in decision making, as a step towards their empowerment. The United Nations has taken up Gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, as one of the Sustainable Development Goals. In our country, *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* initiative is popular. Now it's time again for Government officials, policy makers and stakeholders and for us as individuals **to introspect and review our efforts to raise awareness of different sensitive issues faced by girls and to eliminate them.** It's life giving, if we take courage to Walk the Talk, to give up silence and indifference when we come across situations of Gender inequality. Helen Keller was asked, "What is the greatest calamity?" She answered, "To have eyes and not see." Every tiny effort is laudable, the ten most important two letter words are, "**If it is to be, it is up to me,**" in our homes, community and society.



Severina Peres has a considerable experience in the banking sector and enjoys writing short articles based on Encyclicals and Church Documents. She is also interested in assisting senior citizens.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI: THE PATRON OF ECOLOGY AND MAN OF INTEGRATION

-Fr. Allam Sagar Manoj Kumar

The Catholic Church is home to saints. We love saints because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful; patient when it was difficult to be patient; and because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still; and kept silent when they wanted to talk; and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable. Indeed, all the saints followed Christ and we really wish to imitate them as they imitated Christ. Among the saints, if anyone lived a Christ-like life literally, it was St. Francis of Assisi.

His goal in life was to live out the Gospel with these three passages in mind. They are; Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mt. 19:21). Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt. 16:24). He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics" (Lk. 9:3).

Saint Francis of Assisi lived in the 13th century. As a young man, he was very fond of adventure. For the sake of adventure and fame, he joined the army and fought against his country's enemies. Serious illness brought the young Francis to see the emptiness of his life of fun and frolic as the leader of Assisi's youth. Prayer, lengthy and difficult, led him to a self-emptying like that of Christ, and was climaxed with the embrace he gave a leper he met on the road. It was an act that symbolized his complete obedience to what he had heard in prayer: "Francis! Everything you have loved and desired in the flesh, it is your duty to despise and hate, if you wish to know my will. And when you have begun this, all that now seems sweet and lovely to you will become intolerable and bitter, but all that you used to avoid will turn itself to great sweetness and exceeding joy." He loved Jesus profoundly and he wanted to imitate him completely. In fact, he renounced his rich

inheritance publicly. He removed the garments he was wearing and returned them to his father. Henceforth, he sought Jesus, and only Jesus.

Indeed, St. Francis of Assisi loved nature precisely because it was another manifestation of the beauty of God. Here, Francis of Assisi offers fresh hopes and renewed thinking about nature. He had an excellent and breathtaking fascination for nature. In other words, he deepened his ineffable love for God and nature. Besides, Francis' remarkable admiration and tremendous love of nature offered him golden opportunities to revive his drooping spirit and to renew his spiritual strength. Of all the sufferings that Francis had endured, the stigma was perhaps the most



St. Francis of Assisi

excruciating. In those moments of intolerable pain, the poor little man of Assisi said, "For his praise, I wish to compose a new hymn about the nature which we daily use, without which we cannot live, and with which the human race greatly offends its creator." In other words, we should love nature and we should not spoil the beautiful nature, because it

is an open book, whose author is God. Here God wants not only the humanity, but also the entire creation to be saved.

St. Francis of Assisi found the true treasure in God and did great penance that he might be totally disciplined for the will of God. His poverty had a sister, humility, by which he meant total dependence on the good God. But all this was, as it were, preliminary to the heart of his spirituality: living the Gospel life, summed up in the charity of Jesus and perfectly expressed in the Eucharist.



Fr. Allam Sagar Manoj Kumar is from the Diocese of Guntur. He has authored two books on *Important Feast Days in the Liturgical year* and contributed *Articles to various National and Local magazines*. He is also available for talks and retreats: allamgnt2020@gmail.com

-Christine D'Sylva

The month of October is a hot month, for the rains have generally ceased. 2nd October is the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation.

This month has many feast days of popular saints. For kids, the Diwali vacations begin during this month, generally after their semester exams. So October is a happy month for an enjoyable vacation.

Let's begin...

Quiz



Feasts of saints in the month of October.

Test your saintly knowledge with this quiz.

1. Feast day of St. Faustina.
2. Feast day of St. Therese of Lieseux.
3. Feast day of Guardian Angels.
4. Feast day of St. Crispin.

Smile Please



1. Why was Cinderella so bad at soccer?
Answer: Because she kept running away from the ball.
2. Evening news is when they begin with Good Evening and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.
3. Cute line for guys - Can I take a picture of you, so Santa knows what I want for Christmas?
Cute line for girls - Are you the sun? Because my whole world revolves around you.
4. Four partners of a business went to a club for dinner.

However, suddenly one of them exclaimed. "My goodness, I forgot to shut the safe!"

One of the others smiled, "Why worry? All four of us are here."

5. A very pretty young lady entered a very crowded bus. A young man seated got up and she said, "Very kind of you but I really prefer to stand."

The young man said, "Yes, but..."

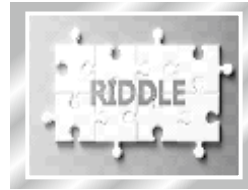
"No, I really prefer to stand."

"Yes, but I just..."

"Please trust me, I enjoy standing."

The young man finally said exasperatedly, "Look, miss, I just want to get off this bus. So let me pass!"

Riddles



1. How does an ocean say hi?
2. What do you call a guy who is really loud?
3. What is a room with no walls?
4. A plane crashed in the jungle. Every single person died. Who survived?

Brain Teasers



1. What five letters become shorter when you add two letters to it?
2. A boy is 2 years old and his brother is half as old as him. When the first boy is 100 years old, how old will his brother be?
3. What single digit appears most frequently between the numbers 1 and 1000?
4. Which will weigh more - a 16 ounce bag of feathers or one pound of solid gold?
5. What can you place between the numbers 8 and 9, so that the outcome is less than 9 but greater than 8?

Honesty is the best policy



A farmer needed a water source for his farm, so he purchased a well from his neighbour. However, the neighbour was cunning.

The next day, the farmer came to draw water from the well. The neighbour refused to let him draw any water. The farmer asked why. The neighbour replied, "I only sold you the well, not the water."

Distraught, the farmer went to the emperor to ask for Justice.

The emperor called Birbal who was his wisest courtier.

Birbal proceeded to ask the neighbour, "Why don't you let the farmer take water from your well? You sold the well to the farmer, did you not?"

The neighbour replied, "Well, I did sell the well but not the water within, the farmer has no right to draw water from the well."

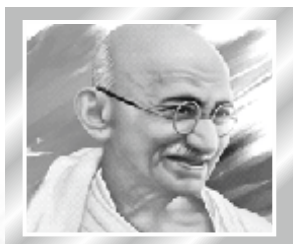
Birbal said, "Look, since you sold the well to the farmer, you have no right to keep water in the well. Either you pay rent to the farmer or you take out all the water from the well."

The neighbour realising his cunning scheme had failed, felt defeated and humiliated. He then apologised and went home.

Cheating will not take us very far for quickly we pay for our dishonesty at some point in our lives.

Gandhi – The Father of Our Nation

True Facts



In 1883, 13-year-old Gandhi tied the knot with 14-year-old, Kasturba Kapadia, in an arranged marriage. He fathered his first child at the age of sixteen but the baby lived only for a few days. However, the

couple had four more children who survived to adulthood. He then took a vow of celibacy for a lifetime, after the birth of his children.

Gandhi was friends with Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy, who was the author of *War and Peace*. His writings about non-violent resistance made a huge impact on Gandhi and he sought Tolstoy's guidance and advice. It is generally thought that Tolstoy's final letter to Gandhi was the last thing he ever wrote.

Although Gandhi was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize five times, he never won.

He never played football professionally but he loved football.

What is the Good Word?



1. Complete the similes.

As slow as a ...

As bold as ...

2. A famous poem written by William Wordsworth

that begins - I wandered lonely as a cloud...

3. The author of the book, *Gone with the Wind*.

4. One of the members of the music group, The Beatles, who wrote the song *Imagine*.

5. The fastest fish in the world that can swim 110 kms per hour.

St. Faustina



St. Faustina, whose feast day we celebrate on October 5, was a Polish nun and was canonized a saint by Pope John Paul II in 2000. She is the first saint of the New Millennium.

Her real name was Helena. She is responsible for giving us the image of Jesus of Divine Mercy. She died of tuberculosis at the young age of 33. The diary of St. Faustina is available in various languages. She is known as the Apostle of Divine Mercy.

The Problem



A great Zen master was in charge of teaching young disciples of the monastery.

One day, the guardian of the monastery died and had to be replaced. The teacher gathered all his

disciples and had to choose a new guardian.

He told them he would present them with a problem and whoever solves it would be the new guardian.

He brought a bench to the centre of the room and placed a huge and beautiful porcelain vase on top with a beautiful red rose. He told them this was the problem. The disciples looked bewildered and they kept on staring at the rare designs of the vase and the freshness of the rose. All were paralysed. Suddenly one student walked to the porcelain vase in determination, removed it from the bench and placed it on the floor. The master told him that he was the new guardian.

He explained that however fascinating or rare the problems are, they must be solved, not leave us paralysed with anxiety.

We learn from this story of the dangers of being stuck in the contemplation of a problem. Instead, we must face the problem and take steps to correct and solve it. We must refrain from overly ruminating and feeling upset. The weight of unresolved problems is heavier than the consequences of it. We must not postpone solving it but face it headlong and try to solve it.

Addictions like drugs, alcohol, pornography, etc.

often develop because we do not confront our problems and attempt to solve them with courage and prayer.

That's all for this month. Take care and see you next month...

Answers

Quiz

1. 5th October. 2. 1st October. 3. 2nd October.

4. 25th October.

Riddles

1. It waves. 2. Mike. 3. A mushroom. 4. Married couples.

Brain Teasers

1. Shorter

2. 99

3. 1

4. Both weigh the same – each is one pound.

5. 8.9 - a decimal point in between.

What's the Good Word?

1. Sloth, brass.

2. Daffodils.

3. Margaret Mitchell.

4. Sailfish.



Christine is an author of over 30 books available on Amazon worldwide in paperback and Kindle. She also enjoys playing the piano and has a YouTube cooking channel Christine D'Sylva's fusion kitchen.

READER'S FEEDBACK

We have increased the number of pages of *Fr. Agnel Ashram News*, from 20 to 28, to bring you more interesting articles. We would love to hear from you. Share your views at agnelashramnews@gmail.com

This magazine is available online.
Visit us at www.agnelashram.org



FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

THANKSGIVING FOR SECURING A GOOD JOB

VASAI: While I was struggling to find a job, I prayed to Ven. Fr. Agnel. I made a vow that if I get a good job, I would donate half of my salary in thanksgiving. I did get a good job and made the promised love offering to Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-F. I. Gomes

THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED

MALAD (WEST): I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for blessing me in every way. I have come to the Ashram and made a love offering.

-S. Maheshwari

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

VASAI: We have been blessed with many favours through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. An offering has been made to the Ashram.

-S. D'Silva

THANKSGIVING TO VEN. FR. AGNEL

MAHIM: I am very much thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for helping me at all times. I have come to the Ashram and made an offering.

-A. D'Costa

THANKSGIVING FOR ANSWERING PRAYERS

KOLHAPUR: My prayers have been answered. I have received many favours, through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. A thanksgiving offering has been made at the Ashram.

-R. D'Sa

BLESSINGS ON THE FAMILY

VASAI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, our family has been blessed abundantly. With a grateful heart, I have come to the Ashram and made a love offering in thanksgiving.

-P. Pereira & Family

THANKSGIVING FOR FAVOURS RECEIVED

BHANDUP: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have received many favours. With a grateful heart, I have made a love offering to Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-H. D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

DAHISAR: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed our family in many ways. We are indeed grateful for the favours received and have made a thanksgiving offering to the Ashram.

-L. Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

VASAI: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have been blessed on my birthday with good health. A thanksgiving offering has been sent to the Ashram.

-K. Alphonso

THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED

UTTAN: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have received many favours. A love offering has been given at Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra.

-S. Fernandes

THANKSGIVING FOR BEING BLESSED

GHATKOPAR: Through the kind intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel, I have received several favours. A thanksgiving offering has been given to the Ashram. The Venerable always intercedes for his devotees.

-M. D'Souza

THANKSGIVING FOR GOOD HEALTH

THANE: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed us immensely. We are indeed grateful for all the favours received and have made a thanksgiving offering at the Ashram.

-M. Lobo

THANKSGIVING FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED

WORLI: I am thankful to Ven. Fr. Agnel for all the blessings received. Looking at the faith of other devotees of Ven. Fr. Agnel, my faith has also been strengthened. With a grateful heart, I have come to the Ashram and made a love offering.

-G. Gomes

THANKSGIVING FOR BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

GOREGAON: Ven. Fr. Agnel has blessed me in many ways. I always look up to him for his kind intercession with Lord Jesus. A thanksgiving offering has been given to the Ashram.

-D. D'Silva

OUT OF THEIR BOUNTY

F. Gomes	Vasai	15000	V. Varghese	Mumbai	3000	Melvyn	Thane	1250
Melini	Mumbai	20000	A. Macwan	Gujarat	2500	M. Peter	Thane	1200
S. Khot	Mumbai	15000	A. Thomas	Kerala	2500	S. Shrivastava	Pune	1125
Joyce	Mumbai	13000	C. Anthony	Maharashtra	2500	Y. Nadar	Mumbai	1100
Allen/Natasha	Mumbai	11000	Kinnali/Mayank	Palghar	2500	M. Mistry	Nashik	1002
M. Shah	Gujarat	11000	L. Machado	Vasai	2500	F. Rebello	Gujarat	1001
A. Anthony	Mumbai	10000	P. Collins	Mumbai	2500	M. Chesson	Mumbai	1001
A. Varkey	Karnataka	10000	Rajesh	Gujarat	2500	S. Patel	Mumbai	1001
Anagha/Snenalata	Mumbai	10000	S. Chavan	Mumbai	2500	A. Bores	Mumbai	1000
Annie	Mumbai	10000	S. Menezes	Thane	2500	A. Devassy	Thane	1000
J. D'Sa	Mumbai	10000	Silvia	Mumbai	2500	A. Dias	Mumbai	1000
Jessica	Mumbai	10000	S. Sebastian	Mumbai	2400	A. Joseph	Kerala	1000
K. Mistry	Mumbai	10000	A. Abraham	Mumbai	2000	A. Lal	Navi Mumbai	1000
M. D'Silva	Mumbai	10000	A. Coutinho	Vasai	2000	A. Menezes	Vasai	1000
P. Joseph	Kerala	10000	A. Elavia	Mumbai	2000	A. Pereira	Vasai	1000
P. Mehta	Mumbai	10000	A. John	Mumbai	2000	A. Raj	Mumbai	1000
S. Robert	Mumbai	10000	A. Olakkengil	Mumbai	2000	A. Santhappan	Tamil Nadu	1000
Swatara Boats	Thane	10000	A. Pinto	Mumbai	2000	A. Shaju	Kerala	1000
Ghanshyam	Mumbai	9000	Anthony	Vasai	2000	A. Vaity	Thane	1000
Wilfred	Mumbai	8000	Anu/Ethan	Mumbai	2000	Armaity	Mumbai	1000
S. Srinath	Singapore	6001	C. Engles	Punjab	2000	B. Dutt	Kolkata	1000
C. Noeline	Andhra Pradesh	6000	C. Kanchan/Kacie	Mumbai	2000	C. Gracoas	Mumbai	1000
J. Dionatius	Kerala	6000	C. Rishon	Tamil Nadu	2000	C. Vaz	Vasai	1000
Philomena	Mumbai	6000	C. Sabo	Mumbai	2000	Caroline	Thane	1000
A. Gomes	Vasai	5000	Carmeline	Mumbai	2000	Cedric	Mumbai	1000
A. Lopes	Vasai	5000	Cyril	Mumbai	2000	Clifford	Mumbai	1000
A. Saldhana	Mumbai	5000	D. D'Costa	Mumbai	2000	D. Fobler	Navi Mumbai	1000
A. Thoppil	Kerala	5000	D. Lopes	Thane	2000	D. Patel	Gujarat	1000
Agnelio Engg.	Mumbai	5000	E. Braganza	Mumbai	2000	Darab Found.	Mumbai	1000
Ashley	Mumbai	5000	E. Jose	Kerala	2000	Delphine	Thane	1000
Brizal	Vasai	5000	E. Margaret	Kerala	2000	Dharmesh Chedda	Thane	1000
C. Dukhande	Mumbai	5000	E. Pereira	Thane	2000	Donald	Thane	1000
C. Moras	Karnataka	5000	E. Sebastian	Kerala	2000	E. Macwan	Gujarat	1000
D. Desai	Mumbai	5000	F. Soares	Mumbai	2000	F. Saldanha	Mumbai	1000
D. Gonsalves	Vasai	5000	G. Baisane	Mumbai	2000	Felix	Mumbai	1000
D. Pinto	Mumbai	5000	G. Lewis	Thane	2000	Francis	Mumbai	1000
G. Lobo	Mumbai	5000	H. Gonsalves	Kerala	2000	G. Pereira	Vasai	1000
G. Varghese	Kerala	5000	H. Kenny	Mumbai	2000	God Mary Boat	Mumbai	1000
J. Albuquerque	Mumbai	5000	H. Mascarenhas	Mumbai	2000	Godfrey	Mumbai	1000
J. Jacob	Thane	5000	Irudayaraj M.	Tamil Nadu	2000	H. Bandhai	Gujarat	1000
J. Puthur	Kerala	5000	J. Crasto	Mumbai	2000	H. Bhate	Navi Mumbai	1000
J. Swamy	Nashik	5000	J. Joseph	Vasai	2000	H. Gala	Thane	1000
Jessy	Kerala	5000	J. Sajimon	Navi Mumbai	2000	H. Gupta	Mumbai	1000
Jordan	Mumbai	5000	Jayalekshmi M.	Kerala	2000	H. Pereira	Mumbai	1000
K. Engineer	Mumbai	5000	K. Shah	Mumbai	2000	J. Gonsalves	Mumbai	1000
K. Lakhiani	USA	5000	L. Shailesh	Mumbai	2000	J. Khote	Mumbai	1000
L. Dias	Mumbai	5000	L. Soares	Mumbai	2000	J. Mascarenhas	Mumbai	1000
L. Lobo	Karnataka	5000	M. John	Thane	2000	J. Mendes	Mumbai	1000
Leslie	Thane	5000	M. Thomas	Kerala	2000	J. Saldanha	Mumbai	1000
Lynette	Mumbai	5000	Monsila	Mumbai	2000	John	Thane	1000
M. Dantas	Palghar	5000	Nathan	Mumbai	2000	M. Antony	Kerala	1000
M. John	Kerala	5000	O. Noronha	Thane	2000	M. D'Cunha	Vasai	1000
M. Nanda	Mumbai	5000	P. Collins	Mumbai	2000	M. D'Souza	Pune	1000
M. Sheth	Mumbai	5000	P. Hendricks	Tamil Nadu	2000	M. Mathai	Kerala	1000
Martha	Mumbai	5000	P. Lalit	Mumbai	2000	M. Montero	Mumbai	1000
Neval	Vasai	5000	P. Michael	Kerala	2000	M. Pawar	Gujarat	1000
O. Pereira	Vasai	5000	Peter	Mumbai	2000	Maggie	Thane	1000
P. Kuriakoe	Kerala	5000	R. Abraham	Kerala	2000	Melvin	Thane	1000
P. Pinto	Karnataka	5000	R. Chirayth	Thane	2000	N. Irani	Mumbai	1000
P. Rebello	Vasai	5000	R. Francis	Kerala	2000	N. Kanga	Mumbai	1000
R. Prasad	Thane	5000	R. Pujari	Navi Mumbai	2000	N. Nelson	Mumbai	1000
R. Shah	Gujarat	5000	R. Rumao	Vasai	2000	N. Shastry	Thane	1000
Ronald	Oman	5000	R. Valentine	Mumbai	2000	Namo Maria Boat	Palghar	1000
Roshny	Karnataka	5000	Ruksana	Vasai	2000	P. Almeida	Vasai	1000
S. Fernando	Navi Mumbai	5000	S. Fernandes	Thane	2000	P. D'Mello	Virar	1000
S. Kalivda	Mumbai	5000	S. Hetya	Vasai	2000	P. Mody	Mumbai	1000
S. Quadras	Thane	5000	S. Sebastian	Kerala	2000	R. Gadi	Mumbai	1000
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5000	S. Selvappan	Tamil Nadu	2000	R. Gohil	Gujarat	1000
V. Mascarenhas	Goa	5000	S. Silveira	Thane	2000	R. Johnson	Kerala	1000
V. Pijwala	Gujarat	5000	S. Thomas	Kerala	2000	R. Lopes	Vasai	1000
W. Crasta	Mumbai	5000	S. Tribhuvan	Pune	2000	R. Macwan	Gujarat	1000
S. D'Souza	Mumbai	4750	V. Bhavnani	Mumbai	2000	R. Modi	Gujarat	1000
C. Alvares	Mumbai	4000	A. Honavar	Mumbai	1500	R. Ravikummar	Thane	1000
M. Lam	Mumbai	4000	A. Jadhav	Kerala	1500	R. Vaz	Mumbai	1000
Felcy	Mumbai	3500	A. Kuttikadan	Thane	1500	S. Gumjya	Vasai	1000
C. Miranda	Vasai	3000	C. Rodrigues	Mumbai	1500	S. Koreth	Gujarat	1000
C. Veigas	Mumbai	3000	D. Aranha	Mumbai	1500	S. Parmar	Gujarat	1000
F. Thekketh	Kerala	3000	E. Shinde	Mumbai	1500	S. Philip	Kerala	1000
Fittech Ind.	Mumbai	3000	H. Dubash	Mumbai	1500	S. Sales	Tamil Nadu	1000
G. Kelawalla	Mumbai	3000	K. Goradia	Mumbai	1500	S. Stephen	Tamil Nadu	1000
Godwin	Mumbai	3000	Leon	Vasai	1500	S. Rangoonwala	Mumbai	1000
J. Gilder	Mumbai	3000	Marian	Mumbai	1500	Solphin	Vasai	1000
J. Gomes	Palghar	3000	Mona	Mumbai	1500	T. D'Souza	Mumbai	1000
J. Patel	Mumbai	3000	N. Manmoawqai	Africa	1500	T. Quinny	Mumbai	1000
J. Varghese	Karnataka	3000	S. Merchant	Mumbai	1500	T. Zawale	Mumbai	1000
P. Tiwari	Mumbai	3000	S. Vaz	Vasai	1500	V. Solanki	Daman & Diu	1000
R. Pinto	Mumbai	3000	D. Mavis	Navi Mumbai	1250	W. D'Souza	Mumbai	1000
S. Venkataramanan	Mumbai	3000	Lakshmi/Mini	Kerala	1250	W. Lopes	Palghar	1000
Techno Prod.	Chennai	3000				Z. Mistry	Mumbai	1000

Bob's Banter

by Robert Clements

Your Second Serve..!

So often in life, we cry out for a second chance! It may be mistakes we made at work, in our marriage, or even in the study course we've chosen, or the field of work we finally are in, "If only we get a second chance," we cry out, sometimes bitterly.

Most often, we do get that second chance, and maybe a third and fourth and even a fifth chance blowing each one up and getting back to that place of despair.

I'm going to go to a fig tree, but this one mentioned in a parable by Jesus to the crowd following him: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. ⁷ So he said to the man who

So, there you are, living a life that is not useful to others, and there comes your Creator to see how useful His creation, that's you, has been to others of His creation and finds you living a very selfish life. "Cut it down! Why should he use up the soil!" says your Creator.

"No not yet," begs the Man who died on the cross for you, "Give him a second chance!"

Are you living that second chance? Doing exactly what you did previously in your first chance?

Something I loved watching in my college days was watching the Amritraj brothers who were my seniors in college, playing tennis. They took risks with their first serve, but with the second serve



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took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'

⁸ "Sir," the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

Study those verses carefully, now put yourself in place of the fig tree. Do you realise that you are here on earth to bear fruit? Fruit that can be had by others, I mean you've never heard of a tree that eats its own fruit, have you? In case that's what you are doing!

they were careful. I would watch Vijay Amritraj, or his brother Anand give the most ferocious first serve which quite often terrified their opponent but if that serve went wild or hit the nets, their second serve was careful, deliberate and went with a sense of purpose.

If today you are living your second chance, and being given the opportunity of a second serve, then use it well, because God your referee waits to see how well you serve..!

Robert Clements is a newspaper columnist, whose column has graced over 80 newspapers and on certain days has a readership of over 6 million. He can be contacted at bobsbanter@gmail.com

FR. AGNEL
FUN FAIR



BANDRA FAIR AT FR. AGNEL ASHRAM, MUMBAI

The **Babhavan boys** of Fr. Agnel Ashram, Bandra, put up stalls in the garden area of the Ashram. Families and children from all over Mumbai enjoyed the **Fun Fair**, held from **10th to 17th September, 2023**. There were numerous games and delectable cuisine, for one and all. A new attraction was the **stall with potted plants**.

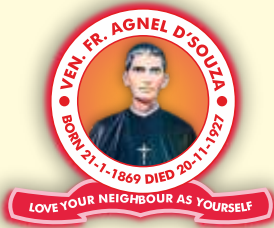
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**Patroness of The Society of
The Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier
Lead us to your Son, the light of the world, we pray.**



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