



NEW LEAF

Sprouting Thoughts of Jamshedpur Scholastics

IN THE FOOT STEPS OF JESUS



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Message from Fr Provincial



Message

“Let thy speech be short, comprehending much in a few words.” These words from the Book of Apocrypha highlight an important dimension of communication, through speech and writings. While a message can be communicated in but a few words, we must remember that the art of communication involves capturing people’s imagination and leave an indelible impression in their minds and hearts. It is not only the intellectual side of human life that is sought to be appealed to but also the affective side. As William Butler Yeats has put it, “think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.” These thoughts are in consonance with intellectual formation as an important component of religious life, something which our former General Fr. Peter Hans Kolvanbach had rightly emphasized. The purpose of studies in the Society is apostolic” (NC 81). Studies are aimed at helping Jesuits grow in their capacity to fulfil the mission of the Society of Jesus today: the service of faith, the promotion of justice, dialogue with cultures and religions. In other words, religious formation is multi-dimensional. Following the footsteps Jesus, who possessed the wisdom from his Father, was always sensitive to the needs of people and was constantly in communion with his Father. As his followers we need to equip ourselves for his mission through the synergy of spiritual, affective and intellectual formation.

I am happy to know that our young Scholastics have taken this positive step of integrating their formation with reflection on our life and mission through their writings. I am sure that this process of reflection will enlighten us with regard to the true meaning of our call and give necessary motivation and orientation. The discerning spirit will give clarity on our mission and help us to make right and wise choices in the context of our time.

George Fernandes, SJ
Provincial

Message from Fr Pcf



New leaf-2018 “In The Footsteps of Jesus” is the result of the hard work and creative thinking of our young men in formation. Conceived in the last Summer program of the Scholastics in Jamshedpur, the idea took the shape of this magazine, because the Scholastics felt the need for expressing their deepest aspirations that make them true religious. Our Scholastics surprise us by producing such a beautiful magazine with profound thoughts that they cherish in their heart. I appreciate this endeavor and wish that more of such work may come to light in the future. More than ever today we need to convince ourselves the need for the life we have chosen. The more we look at our religious life the greater we realize the beauty of the call God has given us. These pages of reflection of our men is a proof to it. What gives meaning to religious life is walking closely in the footsteps of Jesus. Distractions are many today to deviate from the footsteps of the Lord. The one who fixes his eyes on the Lord and the Lord alone will prove the greatness of it as he/she progresses in life.

Glancing through these pages, I realize the great depth and creativity of our men in formation today. Hidden from them and from others there are treasures waiting to be discovered. Initiatives of this sorts are means to discover the hidden in our formees. I can see the future of the Society safe in the hands of these nascent authors.

This new initiative of New leaf-2018 “In The Footsteps of Jesus” Unfolds imaginations, and gives life to thoughts and aspirations of our Scholastics. It unleashes a wide spectrum of creative skills for formiees to prepare themselves for future mission. I congratulate the entire editorial team for their hard work and dedication that has resulted in the publication of this Magazine, New leaf-2018 “In The Footsteps of Jesus”.

Fr Joseph Kalathoor SJ
PCF

From the Editor's Desk

Trust The Magic of Beginnings!

Jesuit formation has been always an integrated formation, where scholastics are trained to face their achievements and aspirations, strengths and limitations, dreams and struggles, hopes and despair within different realms of the spiritual, emotional and intellectual. It trains them to dream what others dare to dream. It teaches them not to be content with being a social activist but a social revolutionist, not to be content with being just an educationalist but “edu-creation-a-list”, and, at last, it exhorts them not to be content ever with the minimum but keep aiming for the MAGIS. We feel a strong pull to become the game changers for the future. In other words, we would like our formation of the human in each scholastic to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. That determination should be like a “fire in our belly” – so strongly would we want this transformation from within. Yes, ‘to walk in the footsteps of Jesus,’ is the theme of our new magazine, ‘New Leaf’.

Pope Francis keeps reminding us that “the journey in consecrated life is following the footsteps of Jesus.” Following in Jesus’ footsteps is always a constant challenge, but with Jesus as the center of our lives, the difficulties are faced in a different way. By following Jesus we will find joy. Dear Readers, that is the joy we want to share with in this magazine.

Hence with a deep sense of joy and gratitude, we are launching this magazine as an annual. The aim of the magazine is very simple- firstly, to delve into our own creative selves and, secondly, to share the experiences of our consecrated lives.

The “New Leaf” expresses the feelings and thoughts of the scholastics of Jamshedpur Province. It is an expression of those determined and vibrant young brothers willing to dream the impossible dream and to face the challenges on the road less traveled by. It is our initial attempt to touch lives and to offer a spark of hope with our life witness in following whole heartedly the Call of the Eternal King. We have given shape to some of our experiences as we witness the everyday misery of people who are abandoned, oppressed, and unloved without the semblance of any dignity. It challenges us to see the face of Christ in them and to develop a sense of responsibility as consecrated persons reaching out to offer a helping hand to alleviate their misery and state of hopelessness in our small ways. Some of us have shared our thoughts on contemporary religious life and the history of Christianity, especially in Chotanagpur. We welcome your frank reactions to this first edition of Leaf so that we may see how we can address burning issues against the background of our formation.

I would like to express my gratitude to the many who have made it possible and will make this ‘New Leaf’ possible in the years to come. Though it is the work of many, I would like to name a few who have given their unstinting support. First and foremost, our sincere thanks goes out to Fr. George Fernandes, our Provincial and K.M. Joseph, our Province Coordinator for Formation. Without their support and encouragement, this magazine would not have seen the light of day. Secondly, I express my gratitude to all our proof readers who patiently went through the articles and guided the ‘not-so-accomplished writers’ to do their best. Thirdly, my heart-felt thanks goes out to all those who did not need a second invitation to write for this magazine. A warm pat on the back for the members of the Editorial Team for collating all the articles and giving it a final shape. We count on your unstinting support and your invaluable ideas that will make this magazine for the scholastics, of the scholastics, and by the scholastics. With immense faith in God and digging deep into our hidden potential, we march ahead in the words of Robert Frost,

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.



Pravin Jose is doing his regency at HLC, Bhubaneswar.

NEW LEAF-2018**Jamshedpur Jesuits***A walk Down The Memory Lane....*

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The Society of Jesus is a world wide order of Catholic priests and brothers (the Jesuits) founded by St Ignatius of Loyola a little over 500 years ago. Within India, the Society is divided into 18 Provinces and into half a dozen Regions (dependent on the Province). Jamshedpur Province is spread across two of the 29 States in India – Jharkhand and Orissa.

By a decree of the General of the Jesuits, Very Reverend Father John Baptist Janssens, dated February 2, 1947, the new Jamshedpur Mission was created, carved from parts of Ranchi and Calcutta Missions. The geographical area covered by this second American Mission included the civil districts of Manbhum and Singhbhum, and the old states of Kharswan and Saraikela.

The Mission was named after the principal city of the region, Jamshedpur, and was entrusted to the concern of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus in the United States. This was to be a mission very different from the already existing (since 1921) American Mission in Patna. The Missionaries to Jamshedpur landed in a new and free India born at midnight on August 15, 1947.

There are 233 priests, brothers and scholastics (men in studies) in Jamshedpur out of a total 4004 working in India and Sri Lanka. Our men work in a wide variety of ministries: elementary, secondary and higher educational institutions, parishes, retreat houses, social services, seminaries, Jesuit Refugee Camps and more.



“Love is shown more in deeds than in words.” - St. Ignatius of Loyola

THE ROLE OF TOMORROW'S PRIESTS



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What does it mean to be a priest in today's context? Does it mean to update oneself with the latest gadgets and technologies? What should one do to be more effective in his priestly life today? How can a priest live his priesthood in the midst of so many scandals and stories of abuse? Is priesthood relevant at all today? The responses to the above questions would tell us about the understanding one has about priesthood in the Catholic Church today. In this short article I would like to focus on the dimensions we need to focus as priests.

Being a Priest

At the outset, it is worth to note the difference between the role of a priest and being a priest. The identity of a priest does not come from what he does or what he has. I cannot define my identity from what I am doing. I am doing it because of what I am. If I try to define my identity by what I am doing, then I just play a role. Priesthood is not a role to be played but a vocation to be lived. The Priesthood is not a profession but a vocation. The identity of a priest comes from what he is and not from what he has or what he does. We see that after ordination several priests work very actively for the first few years and then lose their motivation. This is simply activism. This leads them to frustration and disappointments. Therefore, what is important is to realize that to be, to live authentically as a priest and so fulfil the demands of his priestly ministry is fundamental to his vocation. The Priesthood, as a sacrament, derives its strength from one's deep personal knowledge and love of Christ the High Priest. Needless to add that we cannot live the tomorrow without living meaningfully the moments of today and without drawing inspiration from yesterday. Unless and until a priest is able to draw his strength from this fountain, he will not be in a position to give to others what he has not. Therefore, it is obvious that those who are preparing to become future priests must learn to integrate their studies with whatever it might take them to grow in their spiritual life and be interiorly free of everything contrary to the demands of their call. So much so, when the time comes, they will be full of

the Spirit of Jesus and be ready and willing to enter upon and fulfil their pastoral obligations with a free and joyful heart.

Jesuit Priesthood

Surely there are beautiful theological explanations about priesthood. But what does one say about Jesuit priesthood? Is it any different from that of the diocesan or religious clergy? Fr Adolfo Nicolas, former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, says that we cannot define Jesuit priesthood with just one unique definition because Jesuit priests are expected to, and do, exercise their priestly ministry in varied cultural contexts and diverse situations. Hence there is no one single way of living the Jesuit priesthood. Each Jesuit lives out his priestly vocation in his given context. Our mission is to establish the kingdom of God on earth; but how one fulfils this mission is left to the judicious judgment of the person who will always have to take the ground realities under consideration and act accordingly.

"Reformed priests". Even during Ignatius' time, there were scandals among the clergy; even the Popes were no exception. However, the companions of Ignatius lived poor and were humble as Christ, solid and profound in their reflection, and were open to the universal mission. The Jesuits were the first ones to make use of the radio and printing press for the spreading of the Gospel and the service of the Church. The challenges in our world today are similar to the challenges of the time of Ignatius. We too are called to bring counter cultural value, to be men at the frontier, to take up the tasks which others do not take up and to go to places where the needs are greater. In short, we are called to be rooted in our own charism.

The Present Reality

The present reality is complex with the fastest growing technology and the ever-growing shallowness of heart. Life is made faster and easier. We are more connected to the rest of the world in so many ways but are also disconnected with reality. As St Ignatius tells us in the Spiritual Exercises, sometimes the evil comes to us in all its glamour to drive our attention away from the goal of life. Hence, we need to be alert and watchful. The challenge for us as priests is to be more and more interiorly free as it is mentioned in the Principle and Foundation [Spiritual Exercises #23]. We need to be very careful of the subtlety of the numerous distractions that would take us away

from our mission. Drawing inspiration from our own charism, I feel a Jesuit priest needs to continue to grow in the following characteristics:

1. The awareness of being deeply loved by God

The awareness of being deeply loved by God will help the Jesuit to be a free person. One need not put on a mask; one need not imitate others; one need not please others. However, one needs to be oneself as God has created him with all his strengths and weaknesses. This will give the person interior freedom and grace. This will nourish his life daily and he will be able to face the challenges of daily life with great interior joy and freedom. Once a person has the experience of being loved deeply by God, then he doesn't need to seek the approval of others. One can be happy in success and in failure. A constant reminder to oneself that no one can give what he does not have will encourage the Jesuit priest to meet Christ and be possessed by him so that he will in turn be able to communicate the love of Christ to others.

2. To be men of discernment

The present day reality has the capacity to confuse us with all its technological glamour and this can make us shallow in our thoughts and reflections. Sometimes we can be misguided to become like some NGOs whose goal is only profit making under the appearance of service to the people. Hence, it is only with the spirit of discernment we can recognize the signs of the times and know what God is trying to communicate to us.

3. To be men of depth and creativity

Creativity comes only when we have depth. For example, a professor can teach creatively only if he knows his subject; else, he will be monotonous and boring. This means that our creativity should spring from our profound reflection. This can be achieved only if we are in touch with our heart. The place where God meets man is his heart. Hence, Ignatius always stressed the need to pay attention and to cherish feelings (*sentir y gustar*). Being aware of the interior movements we can be aware of where God is leading us. Hence, there is the necessity to be men of depth and reflection in whatever we do by search-

ing for the magis in all our endeavours.

4. To be like Jesus

A group of priests once asked Pope Francis, "Which style should we follow to be effective in the world today?" His response was, "Follow the style of Jesus, who was a man on the streets, always with the people. He was listening to them, teaching them, healing them and loving them". Jesus had his time of communion with His Father and this relation continued in his ministry.

5. To be aware that God is already labouring

In the Spiritual Exercises #236 we contemplate how God is labouring in the world. God's presence is not only in the beauty of His perfect creation but also in the imperfections of human suffering and pain. Whenever we see corruption, poverty, sickness, injustice we must be aware that God is still labouring, is still at work.

In our ministries we may come across persons who are hard to deal with or a student who is finding it difficult to study. In such moments we need to remember that God is still labouring and is trying to bring to perfection in all things. We join

God and labour with him in bringing

the world to perfection and gradually establish the Kingdom of God on earth. Quite often we try to take pride in the works we do in our apostolate. However, we must be aware that before we do anything, God is already present and labouring with creation and people and drawing them to Himself with great love.

The world has changed, is changing and will change in future. However, the basic human nature will not be at peace unless it relates in some way with the Divine. Man is a relational being and is related to the Trinitarian relationship in God. Hence, human heart will never be at peace without encountering God in some way. Herein comes the priest whose purpose is to mediate between God and the humans. And this is no easy job. The priest must try to live a life of sacrifice, a life of love. Only love can free a person from all bondages which have taken modern man prisoner. Yes, today's humanity – as a matter of fact - humanity at all times – needs only love. The best example of love and sacrifice is God himself who became man in Jesus for our sake. A Jesuit is called to labour with this God who is Love and establish His Kingdom of Love on earth.



‘The power of the priest, is the power of the divine person; for the transubstantiation of the bread requires as much power as the creation of the world.’ - St. Bernardine of Siena

Ups and Downs of Today's Religious



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As the saying goes, "Life has got its two sides", times of joy and times of pain. The irony is that they are not mutually exclusive, although at times the presence of one does seem to exclude the other. But the fact is that our life is a composite of both, and it is the combination of joy and pain that makes life richer and happier—rich in experience and happiness for worthwhile sufferings undergone in one's time and space. There is no way one can escape from these realities of life, even in the case of religious life. For a moment, let us recall the prayer of Jesus as John records in his Gospel: "I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world" [John 17:15-16] I must add that ups and downs in life are not peculiar only to the religious for these are issues that everyone experiences in life. Why, even the first disciples of Jesus faced similar or perhaps even greater challenges to walk in the footsteps of their Master. So too we face ups and downs, interior and exterior challenges, in our lives as religious today.

Looking at this topic from a slightly different angle, let us consider the aspects of religious life that make it worth living as well as those aspects that make it difficult and sometimes even more frustrating so as to move a person to leave religious life altogether. Surely, this topic is far too huge for a brief study and so let us try to be selective in addressing the different ups and downs of religious life today.

There are way too many challenges for a religious today than it was some ten or twenty years ago. Due to the culture of fast food, quick and fast communication, shallow relationships, use and throw culture, and addiction to modern technology, our religious life has been affected in different ways. Today, we are restless to sit down quietly and pray. We get frustrated with silent meditation. In the name of privacy, we hardly speak to people sitting next to us but are busy chatting on phones with persons who are miles away. We have come up with music as a substitute for the Divine Office, readings from the Bible, spiritual conversations, etc. I do not say that we should be

sticklers of age-old practices or that we should be totally against modern technology. What I want to emphasize is that we have lost that solitude, silence, integration, balance, and deeply formative spiritual conversations within and outside our religious communities. Simply put, among the many challenges of religious life today, I would consider "perseverance in one's vocation and commitment to the assigned ministry" as the overall challenge to religious life today. When young men see how we are slow or simply fail to meet these challenges head on, the younger generation do not get attracted to religious life.

Today, more than ever, it requires seriousness in one's vocation, commitment, strong will, courage, perseverance and real effort to keep going. Above all these, one needs God's help and complete trust in God. We often say that our families are shrinking, the number of nuclear families are increasing day by day, and so vocations to religious and priestly life are decreasing. But that is not the whole truth. We have failed to make meaning in the sight of young people today. Again, I say this issue is more prevalent among Indian religious and priests. The zeal and fervour that prevailed during one's early stage of formation, especially the novitiate, seem to have faded over the years. Consequently, the formators too have a tough time in helping those being formed.

One way to resolve and face this challenge is to go back to the roots of spirituality, to know the vision and mission of one's congregation and to adapt strategies for the formation of today. This applies not only to people in formation but to all members of one's congregation who have to live and work as one family. This is not to say that the religious are good for nothing and that religious life is itself meaningless. There are numerous aspects of religious life that one can be highly proud of.

Speaking as and for the Jesuits, I might add that we are one of the topmost educators in the world. We create great minds backed by magnanimous hearts. In fact, this is part of almost all that we do in our ministry in the Church. As charity workers, we bring hope and new life to the people we serve. In spite of this, there is a strong feeling that we have not made sufficient impact on the lives of people we serve throughout the world. And where does the problem lie? We might put it as lack of rootedness and focus. To be more frank, the challenge of the choice between consecrated life and seemingly attractive

and colourful life of the world in married or unmarried state is what every religious of the younger generation face. To some extent the famous saying is true in this context: "The grass is always greener on the other side." As the years roll by, one begins to see religious lifeless and less convincing, less attractive against the colourful world that we see around us today. More than this, many have considered opinion that what they expect of religious life today is not met. Religious life looks alien, abnormal, and unconvincing for the youth. And this is where the phrase "to become a religious is going against the current" or "going against the grain" seems to be very convincing for them. And, Jesuits, as well as the youth they would like to recruit are no exception.

Yet another challenge seems to be community life. The youth seem to feel that to live in a community is to give up one's self for others.

Sometimes that means a lot of sacrifice on one's part. At times the young are tempted to take the path of least resistance which might mean not engaging with other members of the community. Therefore, it becomes imperative that we need to recapture the idea of encountering the divine among

our "friends in the Lord." Drawing inspiration from the words of President John F. Kennedy, every religious should ask himself/herself this question: "What can I contribute to the richness of my community?" This not only sounds appropriate but is the right question to ask, meaning that one should ask himself/herself what he/she can do for the community rather than asking what the community can do for him/her.

Further, there is a tendency that the communal character of religious life is gradually weakening or disappearing due to individualism. This is becoming more and more visible in religious congregations oriented towards apostolic purposes such as that of the Jesuits. Sometimes the emphasis of the apostolate in these congregations seems to diminish the strength of the religious community. A religious community can collapse because of an irregular apostolic schedule, which can also interfere with the spiritual life of the individual. This means that there is danger of breakdown of community life which will lead to the decrease of personal spirituality. Hence, the necessity to maintain a regular community life which, together with a deep prayer life, will sustain the religious through the ups and downs of his personal life and

mission.

Yet another tendency among a number of religious is to say "Work is worship and so we can find God best in working for others". As such, they do not subscribe to the age-old devotional acts of piety or ritual invocations. This kind of downsizing the importance of proven religious practices is nothing but an easy way to excuse oneself from committing oneself to a disciplined way of life. Those who subscribe to this view are only pushing themselves to extreme individualism; they seem to forget that unless and until they have imbibed and practised the very fundamentals of religious life, their workaholic life will lose its substance in course of time and they will thus lose their identity as religious.

It cannot be over emphasized that more than ever the most important thing in our religious life is our personal relationship with God. We

unite ourselves with God through prayer. When we neglect our personal prayer, we become weaker and weaker in resisting the temptations of our life, our earlier enthusiasm in our vocation begins to vanish gradually. Sooner or later, we begin drifting away from our God-given vocation and might even throw it all, un-

less by some miraculous intervention of God, we wake up and revitalise our life.

Lack of fraternal care in religious communities is another major challenge the religious have to face. Often enough we call ourselves men or women for and with others, but we fail to practise it in our own communities. As a result, when one does not get proper care from within the community, one tends to find it outside the community. This often happens with the religious who are in formation. Today, many young religious feel that they are not properly understood by their formators, superiors or companions, that their voices are choked by the powers-that-be and that they are often judged and even punished by hearsay reports. It is necessary, therefore, that we create a community which cares, loves, understands, and admonishes only to help the person to reorient his/her life in the proper direction.

Consecrated life does not seek praise and human regard (in Hindi-Neki kar dariyaa mein daal). The religious keep doing what they are expected to do expecting nothing in return except the reward of the Kingdom of God in the next life. On the other hand, the moment they start looking for name and fame, they will divert themselves from what they are



supposed to do and look for what they are not supposed to. If they are faithful to their religious commitment, they will experience the joy of continuing to work untiringly for the kingdom of God, which itself is enough reward for their labours.

While talking about religious life in India, one cannot but refer to the unfriendly and not so conducive environment for religious freedom guaranteed in the Constitutions of the country. To some extent, India is becoming an unfriendly place for religious minorities in so many ways. The Government and some pro-Hindu organizations keep a close watch on the activities of minority religions, more particularly, the activities of the religious. The powers-that-be seem to delight in persecuting the minorities with the numbers and money power behind them. Worse still, they have created a bogey as though Christians are busy converting Hindus to Christianity under the pretext of engaging themselves in social service especially to the poor and the downtrodden. But this is not true and the perpetrators know this. And, in spite of the efforts Christians make to help the poor come out of the shackles of the money-lenders and high caste people, the poor people are very much afraid to go against their oppressors. If anything, a good number will not mind being subservient to the latter rather than fighting for their rights as the Christian leaders teach them. It is also true that there are places and situations where one cannot openly profess one's religion as Christianity because one's life is always on the line. Apart from all this, we need to stress the fact that Christian service to the poor has indeed had a setback because of the scandals that have plagued the Church in the recent past. Mention must be made of child abuse, misuse and abuse of money, priests and religious abandoning their religious vocation and the like, that have happened locally and internationally. As a result, it is hard to remove the negative views of people held about Christianity in general and, about its leaders, in particular. Obviously this is yet another stumbling block for the religious in their service to their brethren.

Yet, another challenge for religious life is the confusion about what is authentic religious life. This issue is not only with non-religious people but it is also a burning issue among religious. There are times and instances when our words and lifestyle do not match synchronize. Our religious life does not go side by side with the words and language we use. There are obvious signs and reasons which really make one wonder as to what is authentic religious life. We religious are becoming institutionalized day by day.

We are neglecting and forgetting the very purpose of opting for religious life which is to give oneself for the good of others, especially the ones who need our help and support. We are often targeted as money-minded people because our religious life is failing to set an exemplary life, especially for the people to whom we minister. Therefore, we find it difficult to live our religious life genuinely. We fail to see meaning in this way of life and quit religious life itself. This happens precisely because we are not committed to our vocation and so lack perseverance and focus. Our apostolic life needs to reflect manifest what we preach. We are not expected to live an ambiguous life as religious, meaning there should not be any distinction between what we preach and what we practise because the younger generation needs role models to look upon to form themselves and imitate. Today, we fall short in this aspect of our religious life. We need a religious community capable of sharing their ideal life with youth, allowing themselves to be challenged by their demands for authenticity, ready to walk by their side. I would say this is the need of the hour and we need to seriously invest time and energy to give it serious consideration.

Inevitably, given the image of religious life in certain countries, vocations have dropped immensely. The media today depict religious as discontented with the demands of their vows, as radicals and even revolutionaries, and, as finally, breaking through the shackles of an outmoded Church-controlled concept of community and religious life. The departure from religious life of so many often after years in a community, has projected the image of uncertainty and insecurity which no amount of vocation-promotion can neutralize. Both men's and women's institutes report a startling contrast between the numbers entering in many, especially rich and wealthy countries and those entering in Africa and Asia and other parts of the world.

Abuse of authority and power is another challenge in religious life. Since religious are supposed to be docile to those in authority in their institutes, inevitably this has led to an abuse of the trust placed in them on the part of those who had imbibed more or less the secularized ideology. As a consequence of the abuse of their authority, whether designed or through neglect, administrators in secular institutes deprive their members the freedom to live out their vowed commitment. This includes not only the suppression of formal directives, say, from the Congregation for Religious, but the constant re-interpretation of the Church's teaching in numerous Conferences, mono-

graphs, and counter-directives from administrators. Today, no religious congregation is untouched by politics, not the kind of politics by which states and countries are run. We are drifting away from the rich traditions of “dialogue” in religious congregations. Today we have monologue instead of dialogue to run the institutions and provinces in many religious congregations.

It seems that no crisis of the present magnitude can be resolved without supernatural means. These means can be synthesized under the general term “spiritual formation.” It is meant to refer, again, not only to the religious but to bishops, priests and the laity, whose spiritual condition of the soul has great bearing on their relationship to persons consecrated to a life of the Counsels. The Institute on Religious Life is, therefore, also called to foster growth in the spirit, mainly through prayer and sacrifice, of religious themselves and of those who have an influence on religious life. However, the spiritual formation here foreseen has a larger focus as well. It assumes that since the root of the problems in religious life is in the spiritual order, the remedy or solution must be in the same order.

Hence the transcendent importance of encouraging the faithful including religious to pray, make reparation, participate in the Eucharistic liturgy, and entreat God for the graces He wants to give to religious and for their apostolates. The means available to arouse the faithful to a deep concern for religious life in many

countries are manifold. Not the least is the need for the people to know just how serious the crisis is and to impress upon them the importance of preserving religious life for the present and future welfare of the Church. Looking to that future in religious institutes, guidelines should be made available for the saner choice of candidates to the postulancy and novitiate, for the deeper faith-commitment through the training of young religious, and for the on-going, lifelong formation of religious men and women in the practice of prayer, the love of the Cross, and the service of others while maintaining a close relationship with God.

Finally, I would like to say something on a topic which I think is the biggest and most important of all in my understanding of religious life and its challenges. This topic is the problem of self-formation. We joined religious life because we were inspired by or were introduced to it by someone. That is, someone

ignited a small spark in us about religious life; later we made that spark into a fire that we kept burning in our hearts and then decided to dedicate our lives as religious for the rest of our entire life. But slowly and gradually, that fire begins to cool down and begins to fade away. We blame others, blame our superiors and formators, for our failures in forming ourselves. The ups and downs come and go in our lives because they are integral parts of human life. The fact is that the challenges aforementioned start affecting our lives when we are the least prepared to face them. We then begin to put the blame on others, especially our formators, instead of looking within ourselves and see if we are to blame for our inability to face the challenges. One may not be too far wrong in saying that we spend a lot of our energy in blaming others for our unpreparedness to face challenges rather than making serious efforts to meet the challenges head on.

This leads me to make a strong point that we need to form ourselves well. There is no one who can form us unless we form ourselves. Because each one is the master of oneself and so each one is responsible



for one's life. Each religious congregation has different structures meant for different stages of formation; but they can only be a means of one's self-formation, nothing more. I would even say that unless we take charge of our life with the help of formators and colleagues, we will

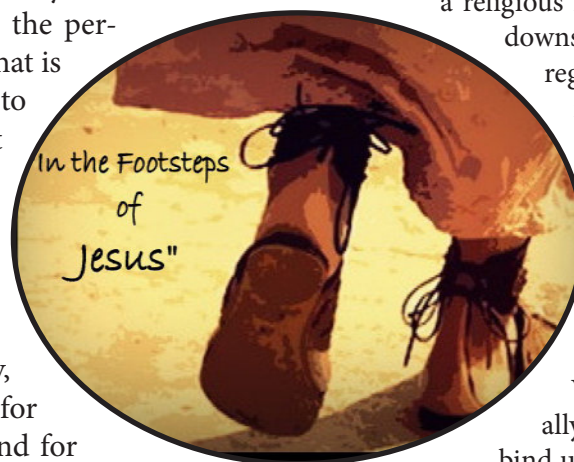
always be complaining and blaming others for our failures. Hence it cannot be sufficiently stressed that one has to form oneself in religious life.

Now, at this juncture, it looks that I am focusing more on the negatives (“the down”) and neglecting the positive side (“the ups”) of religious life. And so far, I have done so and, in doing so, I'm not pretending to be someone else. I am trying to be the real me as far as possible. I am no better than anyone. Yes, it is the nature of humans that they see first the dark side of anything and everything.

I have already said in this article that as religious we can be the proudest people in the world as there are countless reasons for being proud. We render our services to the people of the world in so many ways which I say no one else in the world would dare to do except us religious. So, we need to be proud and happy about our religious life; as people living a consecrated life, we deserve to be happy. There are

countless blessings in religious life of which so many times we are unaware. The obvious one is "living in a community." Living in a community is one of the most beautiful aspects of religious life. It is the community, it may be anywhere, which shapes and nurtures us daily. For instance, we are provided with the best education and the best formation possible. We have a place to go, to any part of the world since we are spread all over. The Three Vows – Poverty, Chastity and Obedience - that we profess are the three sentinels which not only protect us but free us in doing more for the greater good of the people of God. By the grace of God, we religious are able to live a life of celibacy which is unthinkable and an impossible thing for the world especially today. And, if and when a religious person falls sick, the person is immediately given the care that is needed like getting him admitted to the hospital and availing of the best medical facilities available which even the richest family will think twice before taking such steps to give for its family members. Therefore, we should be proud of our religious life. As a community, we live together, pray together, care for one another and work hand in hand for the good of all not only for humankind but for the entire creation

Next, we should be proud of the ministries we are called to take up in the Church. The countless number of ministries that we take up in every corner of our world - working with the least to the elitist without discrimination, simply giving ourselves, pouring our love without any heed for ourselves and our needs. So, we as religious are making the impossible possible which we need to be happy about. Thus, without going into the details of what we do and taking credit for everything, I would like to say that a religious life is a life that brings out the good in ourselves and of those we administer. We religious dare to be agents of peace in a world of hate and jealousy. We, with our own limitations, try to be the light for which the world is in most need. We try to love where love seems no more to exist, in the world and in the hearts of many. The works of mercy and so many ministries of the Church that we are part of, make us feel it is great to be religious. Even when



we are understood wrongly or when our actions are misinterpreted, we do not stop loving others. How great and gracious religious can be ! As religious we attempt to walk in the footsteps of our Master and Leader Jesus who taught us – "love your God and love your neighbour." We teach the world "love" because more than ever the world needs it today. So, a religious life is great and great are the ones who are part of this life.

It's been more than a decade that I have lived my life in the Society of Jesus. It's a joy to be a Jesuit. I personally have cherished my vowed life and have plunged myself into it. There have been ups and downs in my life too as religious, but they have been very formative and educative in some way or the other. I've never regretted being a religious in my life. In a way, ups and downs in life make us strong with regard to the spiritual, academic, and communitarian aspects of religious life. They ultimately make one ready to face bigger challenges that might come in the way of one's ministerial life as religious. I will not go into details about the Three Vows that the religious generally profess. They, in fact, do not bind us in life as I have already said

but free us spiritually, physically and psychologically so that we, as religious, give our whole life to the people of God. The vows free us to commit ourselves to others, free us to give our time, energy and full mind and heart to the works of mercy, and dedicate our lives fully in harmony and peace to build God's Kingdom.

Thus, the ups and downs are all momentary. They will come and go; we cannot escape from them but must face them. In facing these challenges, both internal and external, we gain much for our lives and become stronger. Let us do our best and leave the rest unto Him who has called us to this way of life. Mother Teresa has rightly said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." Let us give ourselves without counting the cost; on the way, we will wound ourselves but let's not pay heed to ours but others' wounds and care for them and give ourselves up selflessly without expecting anything in return. To conclude with the words of St Paul who writes to the people of Corinth "And so we have no eyes for things that are visible, but only for things that are invisible; for visible things last only for a time, and the invisible things are eternal" [2 Cor 4:18]. So, let go and let God in.

"From silly devotions and sour-faced saints, good Lord, deliver us!" - Saint Teresa of Avila

The Painless Cross of Jesus



Jubin Nath is a first year Philosopher at Satya Nilayam, Chennai.

The world around us is a fast moving world with people seeming to be in a rat race to make quick money the fastest way possible and looking for ways and means to be happy always. Quite a few of them are grateful to the education they could get because it has helped them to find well-paying jobs. At the same time there are also people who are on the lookout for better placement in life. Just look at the past twelve months. Mobile networking has taken us Indians to a different way of life. People seem to be giving much of their time to JIO Network than to God. Sometimes we humans do not rationalize out things before we do anything. It is because we easily fall a prey to worldly attractions and hardly ever realize that what we have done could be wrong!

Yes, this could very well be said of us religious as well. Even at the time of demonetization in our country, we religious do not seem to have experienced its painful aftermath. We continued to have our three meals every day whereas lay people had to wait for hours in long queues

to collect the 2000 Rupees from their own savings to provide some meals for their family. The irony is that often times quite a few of us religious pride ourselves as though we were second to none in our communities. But, if we look at the reality of today, the world outside us is far better and behaves extraordinarily different in many ways. We are like a frog in a well. It is time that we look back at our heritage as religious and ask ourselves where we are at the present moment. If we wish to be true followers of Jesus, we must attempt to become and do what He has taught us to do, namely, to devote our lives by showing extra concern for the poor and the downtrodden. Frankly, can we say that we are taking serious steps to imi-

tate the example of our Master in this regard? The facts cannot be brushed under the carpet. We can no more say that we care for the poor when we do not put into action what we say we are doing. Yes, in our ministry, the poor and the downtrodden do not get the due care and attention they got while our Master was walking the streets of Palestine.

When we look at any MNC (Multi-National Company), we notice that it always has a long-term goal and, accordingly, it sources means and ways to achieve it. In particular, it selects capable and enthusiastic young managers who will devote all their attention to help it reach its goal. When one compares this with what our religious orders and congregations are doing, one cannot but wonder if they have long term goals and, if yes, what strategies are they adopting to achieve them? For instance, what are our short term and long term goals to counter the fast-growing Hindutva movement? If the current ruling party of our country forces the religious to hand over all our educational institutions to the government, are they ready with strategies to fight for their Constitutional Rights? Here is a big challenge to all religious, chiefly the ones that

have just opened their innings. But where are these “new kids on the block” Unfortunately, we have more senior religious than young ones in our order. The sad part is that even our young men do not seem to keep themselves updated on the ongoing realities like churches being attacked in Delhi, UP, Bihar, etc., Sisters

being asked to report to the police station when taking their candidates to their respective places, priests being threatened by thugs in the mission stations. Here, let us ask ourselves if we are ready to face similar ordeals today or in the days to come? If we are really convinced that we will follow our Master wherever He goes or wherever he sends us to, we should sit together to plan our strategies to meet these challenges ahead. We need also be aware that we cannot do it alone. We need to elicit the cooperation of like-minded people not only to care for the poor and the needy in society but also to counter the influence of money and power being used by right-wing religious and political parties to coerce these powerless sections of society to switch their loyalties through nefarious machinations.



“God takes us to the foot of a tree on which a naked and bloodied man hangs and says, “This is love.” -Joshua Harris

Love and Peace in Christianity

Article



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In the Gospel Jesus says “I give you a new commandment: love one another; just as I have loved you, you also must love one another” (John 13: 34). This is one of the important teachings given by Jesus for all time to come. We know that love is the essential dimension of human life. Without love human life is always on the side of despair and anguish. The

virtue of love always unites and promotes harmony among people. Love is the foremost requisite for all because it is the impetus of for the kindness, humility, meekness, pa-

tience and forgiveness to which we are called (See Col. 3: 12-13). Love can and must be expressed through words and deeds. When we talk about loving another, it just means we accept the person as he/ she is. There could be and there are people who show kindness or patience outwardly to others while inwardly nurturing thoughts of hate. One reason for this could be the difficulty we experience in matching outwardly what is hidden inside of us about people and things, something which only God can see. According to John Chrysostom, “Whatever good thing it is that you mention, if love be absent, it is nothing, it melts away.” Emmanuel Levinas, a French Philosopher, talks about the concept of the “face of the other”. For him, the other means the other person or someone else. Further he says that we encounter just one person at a time, face to face. By “face” he means the human face of the other, a living person. Swami Vivekananda says, “Relationships are more important than life, but it is important for those relationships to have life in them.”

As Christians we may say that we love and care for the other. However, in practice, more often than not, we ignore the basic concepts of Jesus’ teachings.

And the reason? The evil attitudes within us - pride, jealousy and hatred and the like - become obstacles for us to grow in the love of God. Again, we do not dare to express our real love for others in word and deed. Quite often we pull a mask over our faces and pretend that we practise the teachings of our Lord. I may venture to add that the attitude of selfishness hinders us from loving others as we should. Perhaps we allow ourselves to become victims of self-glory rather than seeking the greater glory of God. Love and peace as taught by Jesus and more or less practised by Christians, still have a greater value for humanity. If only all Christians try to be as selfless

as possible in their relationships with others and show the same in their words and deeds, humanity will be quite different than what it is today! Yes, the selfless sacrifice of their



Master will spread everywhere like wild fire!!

Without love, human life is like a branch without root. In Christianity, Christ is the central element of life. He is central in our life because we belong to him. Our identity is rooted in him. The values and teachings of Jesus do inspire us in such a way as to help us to persevere in moments of desolation. More, they goad each one of us to do something for Christ. St Ignatius asked himself these three basic questions in his life when he encountered Jesus in moments of desolation: What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do Christ? The question “What am I doing for Christ?” is an important question for our self-examination. One must concentrate on the present because this is the reality which we live by every day. The genuine follower of Jesus should practise the values and teachings of Jesus here and now. The future is always uncertain for us. The values and teachings of Jesus are always challenging us with great expectation that we will produce the desired results.

When we talk about love in Christianity, it is not a mere saying; rather it is the ethical and practical aspect of each one of us. Love and peace go together

hand in hand. The love and peace of Christ are the real treasures of Christian life. In the Gospel Jesus says “You must love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12:31). Every Christian should inculcate this attitude in his/her heart. One may ask who one’s neighbour is. Often enough we consider a person our neighbour according to our personal likes and preferences. Our tendency is to categorize our neighbours according to their status. On the contrary, our attitude towards others should be free from prejudices so that we can accept others for who they are and not for what they can give us. And it is our bounden duty to love all people as our neighbours because Christ

has loved them first and has give us an example “so that you may copy what I have done to you” (John 13:15). To repeat, Jesus commands his followers to love everyone, even their enemies,



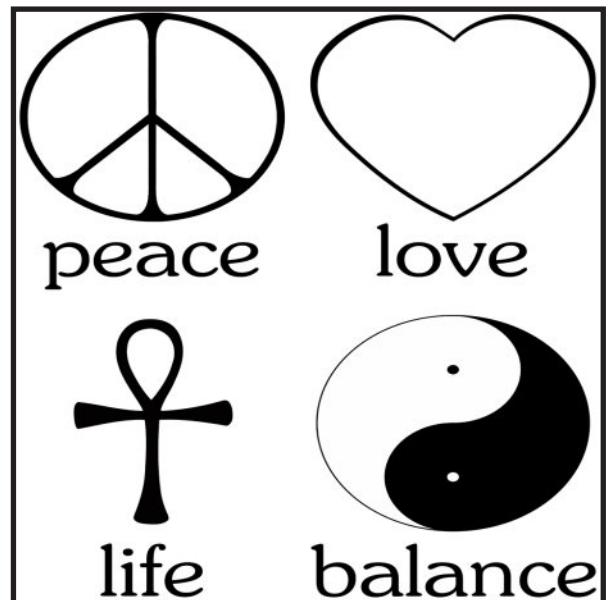
even the most intolerable of persons. One’s ability to love everyone in the world, even enemies, comes only as a result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who brings “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control”(Gal 5:22). Any Christian who is consistently growing in Christ will have the ability to love other people genuinely and have an honest concern for their total well-being. The following statements are a paraphrase of the description of the impersonal love found in 1 Corinthians 13: Love is slow to lose patience. It does not demonstrate irritations or reflect anger or have a quick temper. It fully accepts the character of the one loved. Love has good manners. It has respect for others which results in a set of Christ-centered standards. It knows what is proper and when to express it. Love does not pursue anything to selfish advantage. It does not have a primary concern for personal appetites or for social status. However, it shows concern for the needs of the one loved and the families and friends involved.

The word “peace” in the Bible, refers to a mental attitude of tranquility based on a relationship with God

in the Christian Way of Life. Our relationship must be rooted in the hands of God who is the source of life. It is a word which describes the result of a person’s correct response to God’s grace. The Bible uses “peace” in two ways. There is personal peace with God which comes when a person accepts Jesus Christ whom He sent as Savior. Then there is the peace of God which is available on a daily basis as the believer participates in the Christian way of life according to the Plan of God. Peace with God is never available apart from grace. The Cross of Christ is the important point of grace and is the source of genuine peace. Jesus Christ is our eternal Peace. In

our lifetime, we can experience peace on a daily basis. When the believer responds to faith to grace, God provides many blessings which can result in a great inner happiness.

In the Christian Way of life, peace comes through fellowship with God and the daily Eucharist, prayer, meditation and examination of conscience. Peace or tranquility precedes the enjoyment of prosperity.



“God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.” - C.S. Lewis

The Jesuit Scholastics of Today

Article



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The Society of Jesus has made a great impact on the world by imparting its values and charism while responding to the call of God being rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Jesuit formation is an integrated formation which is on-going. Scholastics are the backbone of the Society. Scholastics of today are much more advanced than their predecessors because they are taught to integrate the affective, spiritual, intellectual, social and communitarian dimensions. These dimensions help scholastics to centre their life in Christ, who is 'the true leader' [Sp. Ex. 143].

Scholastics are in the school of learning. 'They are in the process of being and becoming'.

Vocation is a precious gift to each and every scholastic. It is a God-given gift to cherish and live up to God's expectation.

The journey of a scholastic today is not easy as people think.

It breaks through the socio-cultural identity of the young man and gives him a new identity when he becomes a member of the Society. It does not mean that he denounces the native culture rather he finds meaning in and through it. His vocation becomes meaningful when he finds meaning in both these aspects. Vocation is not the end product but it is an on-going process of purification. No one is perfect. No one joins the Society with absolutely pure motives. There is a subtle attempt to make things happen. Having joined the Society, a scholastic adapts himself to the Jesuit culture. His intentions apparently are purified to a certain extent. He realizes the call within and outside. Every scholastic, and for that matter, every member of the Society, is inspired by the Spiritual Exercises to discipline himself in spiritual matters. His spirituality lies in finding God in everything. Discernment plays a vital role in the life of a scholastic. Scholastics are enabled to dis-

cern their vocation each and every step of their lives. "Discernment, a precious gift of Ignatius, is integral to the personal and corporate apostolic life of every Jesuit. It begins in contemplation of God at work in our world and allows us to draw more fruit in joining our efforts to God's design" [GC 36, Decree 2, no 4]. Discernment calls for an inner disposition with inner freedom. This interior movement makes a scholastic more open trusting in the Providence of God. Pope Francis also urges Jesuits to be men of compassion and discernment for which prayer remains the primary source.

Today's scholastics are much more advanced in learning things, be it music, dance, literary activities, etc. They are men for all seasons. They are surrounded by modern culture. They learn things very fast. They are given ample opportunities to develop their talents and personality. They



are exposed to a new world of

learning with modern facilities. This is to prepare them to become effective and affective priests who will deal with people of different faiths and cultures. The Society of Jesus is not a homogeneous group; but it consists

of variety of groups and people who

share a common culture inspired by the Spiritual Exercises. Jesuit formation teaches its members to be men for others and so make a difference wherever they are placed.

Another quality of a scholastic is his organizing skill. His learning does not remain within himself but radiates through his life style wherever he goes. Scholastics belong to the same generation as the youth. Their youthfulness inspires the young towards a better and happy living. Moreover, today's youth are in search of persons who are trustworthy. When they interact with scholastics, the youth find them very approachable and understanding and trustworthy. Moreover, with their spirit of youthfulness, Scholastics bring a lot of joy and happiness to their own Jesuit community by journeying with the old and young members of the Society as "friends in the Lord."

Today's Scholastics are living in a culture of consumer-

ism where the value of the world is different from what they have been taught in their early years of formation. Media has a great impact on the lifestyle of people. Media decides what to eat and drink, what to wear and whom to meet. In this modern phenomenon scholastics struggle to integrate these realities into their lives. They go through the levels of changes in life – intellectual, emotional change, behavioural and spiritual. They go through a transformative period realizing and discerning the will of God in this vast changing world. This demands that their formators take special care of them, listen to the joys and struggles the latter face

and so accompany them in their journey of formation. The formators will, by their own example, inspire their younger brethren who are the future of the Society of Jesus to grow in freedom with responsibility. It may be added that, given such an inspiration, Scholastics will have the resilience to adapt themselves to the changing realities of the time, reality, not really by going against it but by finding meaning in it to follow Christ their Master.

“For those who love, nothing is too difficult, especially when it is done for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.” - St. Ignatius of Loyola

THE JOY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE



Arun Prasath is doing his first year College studies at St Xavier's college, Ahmedabad.

“You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last.” [John 15:16] By the very act of His choice I am His – not just for myself, but for a mission, for a purpose. He has chosen me to bear fruit, fruit that will last.

Now, what is RELIGIOUS LIFE? And what is JOY? RELIGIOUS LIFE

is a life consecrated to God or a life chosen to be consecrated to God. JOY is a gift, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. To experience this gift of joy as a religious, I must be sure of one thing: once God has called me, he will never leave me orphaned. He will see to it that, through his assistance, I will fulfil whatever are his plans for me.

I must always remember that God has created all his children to be ‘HAPPY’. Such being the case, those who are chosen to serve Him as religious should consider it a special privilege to be happy in being with God alone.



I would like to compare religious life with nature and love. Religious life is not just a flower which will eventually fade even when placed before an altar, but a flower that blooms bright, spreading the aroma of Christ. Religious life is not even a light hidden under a bushel, but a lamp lit and placed on a hilltop so that it spreads light all around that so led people to praise God for such a light.

In religious life I do not give up my will, love and wealth but rather I possess God and I live for him and serve him alone. I would like to add that the

true meaning of religious life is found in sacrificing sacrifice my life to

God at all times and under any circumstance. In this, I take

Christ as my model who humbled Himself and sacrificed Himself for all humankind. As a Religious,

I must strive to attain that attitude of Christ. Therefore, my religious life

should be joyful and oriented to God-centeredness so that I may bear fruit, fruit

that would last. I must shine like the light of Jesus in whose presence

darkness will fade away. With humility and sacrifice, I should try to march with God. Consequently, as a religious, I will lead a joyful life in the midst of the people with God.

“Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”- Mother Teresa

Joy in Being a Religious



Jobin Sebastian is doing his college studies at St Xavier's college, Bangalore.

In our college there is a Jesus Youth Prayer Group. They are always glad to invite a lot of religious people to their programs. This always surprised me very much. So I asked them why did they want religious people even for very small gatherings. Most of them replied that they enjoyed the presence of the religious in their group because there was special joy when religious were with them. This answer surprised me even more. There on onwards, I started to think over why the youth had such a feeling towards the religious. I would like to think that the reason might be that the religious live joyfully, something which we may not see everywhere outside of religious life. I venture to suggest three reasons why a religious lives joyfully.

1. Prayer Life:

One of the bases of religious life is prayer. In my life I have seen many times people asking the religious to pray for them in general or for some special needs in particular. I recall that even as a child I used to ask religious sisters to pray for me. I do not think I will be far wrong if I were to say that people in general believe that God will surely answer the prayers of the religious. And this is not because that the religious try to get some personal advantage by praying to God either for themselves or for others. Surely not. Prayer is the very breath of their life. For a religious, prayer is not only a conversation with God but also the energy s/he draws from his/her personal contact with God in order to fulfil his/her mission with real joy and enthusiasm. Prayer is also a time for religious to come together and spend time with God. There is need to emphasize that the prayers of the religious are not limited to one or two

specific ways but spread over many different ways. However, every religious makes sure that the Eucharist remains the very centre of his/her life.

2. Community Life:

Every religious community can be said to resemble the first Christian community whose members "lived together and owned everything in common" [Acts 2:44] and "no one claimed for his own use anything that he had" [Acts 4:32]. As a result "None of their members was ever in want" [Acts 4:34]. Similarly today consecrated people live together as a family and practise a life of sharing. They do not possess anything as their own. It must be pointed out here that a religious community is not a place where all have similar likes and dislikes because everyone is different from the other in different ways with his/her own

likes and dislikes. However, this difference is not to cause any division among them. For they learn to accept and make use of the differences to fulfil their mission in better ways. So much so, they are able to live as joyfully as the first Christian community.



3. The Experience of the Call of God:

Religious life is following Christ through the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience Hard to believe, but it's true that each consecrated person has renounced the three sources of enjoyment that the world offers – wealth, marriage and a free life style. And this will not be possible for the consecrated person without a deep and personal experience of the call of God. This experience is a daily process. Just as the Lord Jesus their Master did things as the Spirit moved Him and so was able to fulfil the mission of the Father joyfully, so too, the religious live their lives as the Spirit moves them and are led by the same Spirit to fulfil the demands of their mission as joyfully as is humanly possible.

*"Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of the others" -
Pope John Paul II*

The Joy of the Vowed



Swethan is doing his Junioriate at Gyano-day, Patna.

Joy is of different types. Each person experiences joy differently. A sportsperson experiences joy when s/he wins the game. A mother who is going to give birth experiences labour pain but the moment the child is born, she forgets her pain and begins to experience joy beyond words can describe. In the same way in vowed life. We also experience certain amount of pain, desolation and suffering but then we also begin to feel joy and consolation. This is the beauty of vowed life. Once someone said correctly, "Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God."

"Our vocation, dear brothers and sisters, has led us to religious profession, whereby we have been consecrated to God through the ministry of the Church, and have been at the same time incorporated into our religious family. Hence, the Church thinks of us, above all, as persons who are consecrated: consecrated to God in Jesus Christ as His exclusive possession." (John Paul II)

In Baptism we reject evil and we are imbued with God's divine life. In the same way, through religious consecration, we forsake all, even that which is good, for the sake of God. By our vows, we become an act of worship, a gift, a sacrificial offering to Him. Vows are nothing but offering of ourselves and living for God alone. Pope Francis urges every religious to be a man and woman of joy through which we transmit the joy of the Gospel to the world.

Falling in love and staying in love with God is vowed life. A lover loves to be and wants to stay with the beloved always. This brings the lover an interior joy. Likewise, as lovers, we love to be with our beloved God and we experience interior peace and joy within our hearts.

Every love story has a beginning. Our love story too begins in the novitiate. It is the school of the heart; a meeting point of two hearts: God and the religious.



The Novitiate is like the womb of a mother in which a child is being formed. In this "school of heart" we learn to love our beloved and we are curious to know about our beloved God more and more. When the two hearts of the lover and the beloved come together, there is joy. This joy is bound by the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. This joy is complete when we do and are like our beloved Christ. We want to be exactly like our beloved - to be poor as our beloved was poor, to be chaste as our beloved Christ was chaste, to be obedient as our beloved was obedient all through his life. The values of our beloved become ours and in this we take delight and nurture our happiness.

If we want to be men and women of joy, we need to be persons of prayer. It is in communion with God we will be happy and joyful. The day the communion or contact with God is cut off, we lose the joy of our vowed life. Prayer is a powerful weapon to be in touch with God. We experience consolation in prayer. This consolation is joy radiated by God in our hearts. That is why Mother Teresa put it succinctly, "If you spend one hour in front of the Blessed Sacrament, it should lead you to reach out to the poor." Yes, the joy

we experience in prayer ought to be shared with others. "Finding God is everything and everything in God" is another way of expressing the joy of our vowed life. I personally feel that finding God in everything is not self-orientation but other-orientation. When I was in Kolkata for my hospital experiment, I deeply felt the call to do something for the needy. I knew God was calling me to reach out to them. It was not easy but difficult and challenging. The patients over there were filled with festering wounds and the wounds were giving off a foul odour. When I began to attend to their needs, I started to find joy in my heart, I realized that God was present in them. I felt that I was touching the wounds of Christ. This act of mine filled me with joy. I realized that my vowed life is an expression of joy to embrace the whole of humanity as my family. In this way I found God in all and I found joy and meaning in my vowed life.

To conclude, the joy of our vowed life is an expression of love for God. Let us live out to the full the joy of vowed life for God and for His creation.

"Teach us to give and not to count the cost." - Saint Ignatius

Painful Joy

Article



Vital Dung Dung is doing his Junioriate at Vidyanyketan, Trivandram, Kerala.

“Did you see where Michael Jacob’s father is?” asked Anne, my wife, in a melancholic mood to her neighbours. Further, she added with a distressed heart “I believe, wherever he may be in any corner of a distant island, he should be safe and sound. That is enough for me.” Then she continued saying, “I will see him return home in the evening of my life.” It was a day towards the end of November. The weather was not steady. Sometimes there was a heavy downpour, whereas at other times there was bright sun. In this state of uncertainty, I was greatly worried about my daughter Sue’s marriage that was drawing near. I did not have any money to manage the wedding. I was confused whether to go for fishing or not because of the sudden change of weather. “If I don’t go, who would take care of my family,” I thought to myself.

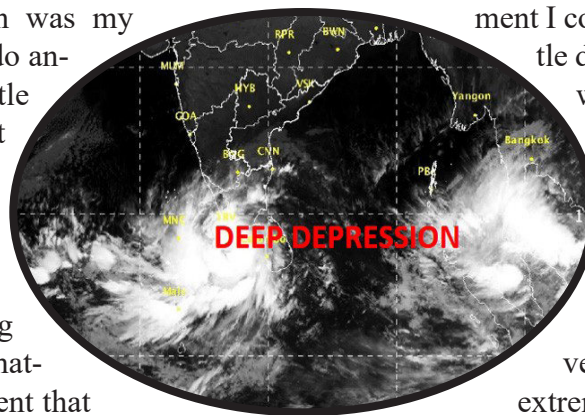
For me, a matter of concern was my pregnant wife who could not do anything alone by herself. My little son, John, was only four, not yet ready for schooling. He only played with other kids of his age. Only my little daughter, Sue, used to manage the household chores like cooking and house cleaning. These matters of concern made it so urgent that I decided to go for fishing. If I did not go, I would not have enough money. The time would not be far when I would have no money even to take care of my family because my occupation was merely ‘fishing’. So, before I could go off fishing, I said ‘bye’ to my family. My little daughter, Sue, took hold of my hands and said, “Papa...papa.... When will you come back?” My lovely wife came to me with a heart of cheer, kissed me and said, “Have a great catch of fish.” Thus, I left for the sea with my fellow fishermen. I was with Antonio, one of my close friends, on a small boat. We moved toward the very deep sea. We were not sure how far we had come from the seashore. I was terribly afraid whether we had crossed the Indo-Sri Lankan border line. I was afraid of being shot dead by the Sri Lankan Army.

However, I mustered courage and prayed to God that nothing should happen to me. Then I asked Antonio to cast the net into the sea. Today, fortune really favoured me. The sky was clear and the sun was bright. The words of my wife turned into a blessing. All of us had a rich catch of fish. Our boats were almost sinking. We were shouting for joy and enjoying the catch. Thomas, from the other boat, shouted at the top of his voice, “Today is the best day in my life.” No sooner did he utter these words than we saw a huge wave like a three-storey building in front of our eyes, approaching with a roaring sound. I was desperate and frightened that my end was near. Within seconds, we were struck hard by the gigantic wave. The sky became dark and there was a heavy downpour. I could see the light of my neighbour’s boat slowly fading away. The powerful wave broke our boat into pieces. I was screaming for help. But there was no one to listen to it. I was badly hit by a piece of plank. I was nearly dead, gulping the salty sea water. Everyone kept crying for help till he breathed his last. Now I could see the dead bodies of my companions floating around me. That very moment

I could recall the words of my little daughter, “Papa...papa...when will you come back?”

But I did not give up; I struggled as much I could. But it was not possible because we were far away from the seashore. For three days, I kept on swimming. I was very close to the seashore and extremely exhausted. It was not

possible for me to move any further. I reviewed my life of fifty years. I began to confess my sins and wrong doings and surrendered myself into the hands of God. The last thought in my mind was, ‘What will be the future of my family?’ My lovely wife flashed in my mind saying, “Have a great catch of fish.” My little daughter was saying, “Papa ... papa...when will you come back?” My eyes were filled with tears and trickled down my cheeks. I could not control myself. I was trying to come up to the surface. I could not hold on to anything; all I could “catch” was only water. My legs were frozen and paralyzed, I felt almost completely suffocated. As I was about to breathe my last, I felt as if I was in the mouth of a whale, and it was true. Then I was dead to the world. I could not remember anything



that happened to me after that moment. Days and months rolled by. The sky was clear. The weather was fine; the waves were crashing on to the beach. Some trees were found dead. Then a rescue team found me lying on the seashore. I came to my senses only when a drop of water fell into my eyes. It was the tears of my lovely wife, Anne. And, when I opened my eyes, I

found myself encircled by many doctors, nurses, my family and friends. Now I saw my little son, John, had grown tall. There was another little son who was playing with my fingers. I saw that my daughter, Sue, was not yet married. However, my return to life from the brink of death brought great joy to my family.

"All the greatest pains become sweet for whoever looks at Jesus Christ on the Cross."-St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi

Education as Ethics to the Present Children



Akhilesh Kumar is doing his first year Philosophy at JDV, Pune.

What is education according to the present generation? What does education mean for modern society? Does ethics have any role to play? Questions like these arise in my mind when I think of education in terms of ethics. We are living in a society of consumerism, of selfishness, of greed and pleasure, seeking after power and ambition and so on. It is high time for us to reflect over our education system and the values we provide for our children to make for themselves a better future.

Margaret Mead said, "Children must be taught how to think not what to think." Present-day children have somehow absorbed certain negative values like stealing things, cheating in exams, anti-social behaviour; they have also learnt how to disobey teachers, elders and how to abuse others, no matter who they are. It is a pity that they have not been taught how to think differently. Their thinking seems to be limited to obtaining good marks in the examinations, never mind the mode of getting them. Times were when children were taught ethical stories in their primary schools and elders insisted on their practising them consistently. Now, those moral dimensions have become just curriculum formalities. Social media has a lot of influence on the behaviour of present-day children. It may be that children know



the difference between right and wrong of a particular action but they cannot take a proper decision, thanks to the prompting of mass media to choose the easy way out, irrespective of the consequences.

"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all," says Aristotle. It is here where the present-day education fails. It educates the minds but not the hearts, preference being given to merit not to values. It must also be added that it is always a tough time for the teachers to teach ethics to the children; it is like feeding medicine to the dead. I would say that educating children without giving them ethical values is akin to producing robots. So much so, the children of today are not aware of themselves or others. For them, morality is like being in a cage.

According to some psychologists 90 percent of children show no interest in ethics. The reason could be that their parents do not spend time with them. Thankfully, the remaining 10 percent are brought up in families where moral values are given more importance; and this turns them to become good persons. It is unfortunate that even a number of teachers too say that moral science is not a subject to teach in class. No wonder students too have the same attitude for the subject.

Ratan Tata at a lecture in London mentioned, "Don't educate your children to be rich, educate them to be happy..." Happiness comes only when we are self-satisfied by doing right things. In conclusion, we need to ask ourselves if we are teaching our children to have a proper self-esteem. Are we making them superhuman

who have a different set of moral values than others who might base their lives on values? Remember, a child always carries the values that it learns in his home and from his family. Therefore, it is impera-

tive that we spend time with our children and provide them not only with material needs but try to inculcate in them some ethical values which will keep them in good standing till their death.

*"The aim of education is the knowledge, not of facts, but of values."
-William S. Burroughs*

Adivasi and CNT/SPT Acts

"CNT/SPT ACTS are our armours earned by our ancestors, don't let anyone touch."

Article



Budhan Singh Sinku is a first year Philosopher at Satya Nilayam, Chennai.

All of us know the ongoing struggles of the Adivasis down the years. We all know how they are being looted and suppressed. We also know how they are being trapped by politicians and civil servants. The words, 'Maoist' and 'Adivasi' seem to have become synonymous. Hundreds of Adivasi brothers and sisters are languishing in jail for years as victims of false cases. There have been number of incidents where Adivasis are being shot dead in the disguise of police encounters against Maoists to get promotion and selfish gain. All the above are not something new to us. So, we are aware of these facts. The only question one needs to ask oneself is, "AM I AFFECTED?" and HOW DO THESE AFFECT THE WAY I LIVE AND MINISTER IN CHOTANAGPUR? The voice of these poor and suffering Adivasis is not being heard. Am I ready to be a voice for these voiceless? They do not hunger for power politics or big jobs and wealthy life. They are demanding their basic right to live with dignity and not deprive them of their very essence of being.

One of the most essential aspects of the life of the Adivasis is their land. For an Adivasi, land is not just a property or wealth for living but it is their part of being. Life of an Adivasi is attached with land like fish with water. Toady this basic aspect of their life is

at stake. Government of Jharkhand is trying to snatch away their land by amending the laws of CNT/SPT Acts. Let us see what exactly has happened with the CNT/SPT Acts over the years as well in the recent days and what could be the consequences.

Jharkhand's land protection laws- Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act 1908 and Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Act 1949 were amended by the government of Jharkhand on November 23rd 2016. The Jharkhand assembly had amidst vociferous protests by the Opposition Parties, passed without discussion the amending bill to these two land Acts, Acts which were formulated to protect the land rights of the tribal and indigenous people. The opposition has alleged that the government of Raghubar Das, a non-tribal chief minister, amended the two laws to make it easier for "crony industrialists" to acquire land in restricted tribal areas. Land right activists protested against the amendments. Even

His Excellency Telephore Cardinal Toppo joined the protests and met Draupadi Murmu, the Governor requesting her not to approve the amendments.

This is not the first time that the CNT/SPT Acts have been amended. CNT Act alone has been amended more than 25 times already.

CNT/SPT Acts are not just a mere piece of paper for the Adivasis but it is a legal document written with bloods of the martyrs. History has enough evidence to prove that the Adivasis from Kol Revolt (1831-1832), revolt of Santhal Pargana and many other unwritten historical movements led by Tilka Manjhi, Birsa Munda and many others have laid down their lives to protect their lands. Their rebellion forced the



British colonial government to formulate tenancy laws to protect adivasi lands and rights.

The Jharkhand government has amended three sections and abolished one sub-section of the Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act, while one section of Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Act has been amended. Section 21 bars tribal land uses other than agriculture, construction of ponds, well and brick making. It has been amended empowering government to make rules for non-agriculture use of the agriculture land. For non-agriculture use of the land, a tax has to be paid that would be decided by the revenue officers. Section 49 (1) has been amended to empower government to transfer tribal land for social welfare projects like hospital, schools, anganwadis (day care centers) and linear projects like pipelines, roads, etc. The cost of the transferred land shall not be

less than the compensation fixed under the federal Land Acquisition Act. Section 49 (2) has been added to ensure that transferred tribal land shall be used only for the purpose mentioned during the time of transfer of land. If there is any change in the purpose or nature of the project, the land should be returned to the landowner. It also sets a deadline of five years for completion of the project. If the project is not completed within five years then the land would be returned to its lawful owner and land compensation money won't be returned.

Compensation is like a fishing bait which attracts the poor adivasis. It is just to allure poor and illiterate Adivasis which is not going to help them in the long run. There are enough instances of land requisitions such as Heavy Engineering Corporation, Bokaro Steel Plant, MayurakshiJalashayPariyojana, DamodarGhatiPariyojana etc. which show that adivasis displaced in the name of development have neither got jobs nor compensation, and even if those who got jobs their third or fourth generation has become daily laborer, rickshaw-puller etc. Tribals are mainly farmers, not businessmen therefore compensation for land is not going to save them.

It is being said that if the project is not completed within five years then the land would be returned to its lawful owner and land compensation money will not be returned. Thousands acres of land



which was taken for HEC, Tata Company and Bokaro Steel Limited are just kept unused for more than 60 years and not returned back to its lawful owners. Will any company return the land after acquiring them? These are all tricks to trap people to loot their lands.

It is not mere displacement but the vanishing and the genocide of adivasis in the name of development that is going on. After the amendment in the CNT/SPT Acts, global investors Summit was organized in Ranchi, in which 210 MOUs signed. These MOUs need lakhs of acres of land. It means a large number of people will be displaced. Till now already around 65 lacs of people have been displaced in Jharkhand and have not been given rehabilitation yet. Are we going to allow this to happen anymore and become strangers in our own land?

Livelihood will be in danger after the amendment. There is only 18% of agricultural land in Jharkhand and 91% tribals live in villages and their lives mostly depend on agricultural, forest produce, animal husbandry etc. Their livelihood will be in danger after the amendment in the CNT/SPT Acts because a large amount of agricultural land will be taken away by companies. If agricultural land is used for industries and factories, will the adivasis eat iron and steel?

Adivasi identity and existence will be in danger. Land is not a mere property for the Adivasis but it is their legacy, identity, culture, heritage, existence and being. If they are evicted from their land, that is the end of adivasis. Land for Adivasis inherited and borrowed property. Tribals do not earn land but they inherit from their ancestors and borrow from their children. So, therefore whatever land they have is not only of their own but also it belongs to their ancestors as well as their children. They firmly believe that land is a gift of God to their ancestors which is being passed on from generation to generation. They also believe that the souls of their ancestors reside in their land in the villages. They would never like to hurt the souls of their beloved ancestors by selling off their lands.

Religious faith and sentiments of Adivasis is taken for granted. Already thousands of worship (joharsthal, deshali) places have been depleted in

Jharkhand in the name of development. Again it is going to happen. Even though in Orissa Mining Corporation vs. Ministry of Environment & forest and others the Supreme Court has declared that Gram Sabha has a role to play in safeguarding the customary and religious rights of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers. The constitution in Art 25 and 26 gives religious freedom to Adivasis. Having all these constitutional rights why should anyone allow others to interfere in these areas?

These amendments will affect the demography of the state. Jharkhand state is formed as a tribal state because it has a tribal majority. But due to industrialization their population is decreasing continuously. In the coming days when establishment of factories take place adivasis will be displaced and their population according to census will decrease further.

Political power will decline. There are 28 seats in Vidhan Sabha and 4 seats in Lok Sabha reserved for the tribals of Jharkhand. But in the coming days the number of seats reserved may also reduce if the population of tribals decreases and their political power will decline and they will not have decision making power in politics anymore.

Jobs will be taken away by outsiders. By the investment in the state, lakhs of people are likely to get jobs. It is an indication that many outsiders will be coming to the state. According to the Sthayee Niti even all those who came from outside Jharkhand, will be declared locals (sthayi). Therefore, it is very likely that outsiders will get more jobs than the locals.

Violation of the right to freedom of speech and expression is also the result of such unjust amendment. Right to freedom of speech and expression is our fundamental right but all those who are raising voice against the amendments in CNT/SPT Acts are being considered as anti- developmental, anti- tribal and anti- government, anti-national in order to suppress their voice.

Loot of natural resources is continuing. In Jharkhand itself we have more than 40% of minerals of country. Since 1925 mining has been going on. Every year minerals costing around 15000 crore is going out. Still Around 40% people of Jharkhand are living in below poverty line.



Effects on the environment are going to be worse. Forests in Jharkhand are already reduced to 29% due to a vast amount of industrialization which is already a bit less than a normal ecological balance. Despite this, agricultural development is being neglected and more focus is being given to industrial development. For industries not only forests get cleared but also all the wastes which come out from factories are being drained into rivers. For Adivasis, rivers are also sacred which they would never like to be polluted. But unfortunately due to industrialization pollution is increasing in the state. Thus, it is not just a question of a piece of land but it is a question of right to exit and right to live.

As people of God, as religious we need to ask ourselves this question, am I affected by these events? We need to check how far our solidarity with these people is. Our being indifferent, our silence means our siding with the oppressors. It will be good check to see where one stands with regard to one's option for the poor and the suffering. Many missionaries have contributed to Adivasi upliftment in many different ways such as education, health, socio- legal support, cultural development etc. Many religious men and women have even faced martyrdom. We acknowledge their contribution. They are the heroes and role models from whom we get inspired. Even today there are many of our brothers and sisters fighting tirelessly. Now it is our turn; let us begin.

For Adivasi brothers and sisters, it is never too late, let's come to our senses and become aware what is happening to us. Let us rise and raise our voice and against all the forces trying to suppress us. Let's not allow anyone to part us from our communion with our land, nature, rivers, ancestors, our fellow beings and our ultimate (God). We must never forget that our ancestors lived with utmost dignity, identity and unity. We need to keep up the same legacy. It is our duty and responsibility. If we don't protect their legacy it will be the uttermost disrespect to our ancestors and shame to us. We will also not be answerable to our future generations. So, what are we waiting for?

"You can no longer see or identify yourself solely as a member of a tribe, but as a citizen of a nation of one people working toward a common purpose." - Idowu Koyenikan

Today's Youth



Samir Indwar is doing his third year College studies at St xavier's college, Ahmedabad.

Youth is a word which describes a stage of life between childhood and mature adulthood. This stage is most probably like a pointer of a weighing scale which stands in the middle before weighing. The weighing scale's pointer is very much associated with the youth of today because their lives get shaped according to their qualities.

The stage of youth is very vulnerable; they can be easily moved to the positive aspect of life or to the negative. The youth stand between two stages of life, where they are neither children nor grown up adults. This is a period where they are expected to take a forward movement as the world pre-

sents to them a choice to make -

to be drawn by the digital

values or to be drawn

by the moral values.

They are the spark

of the future who

have vigorous zeal

and strong desire to

do great things. The future

in front of them beckons them to

come out of their cocoon and try to fly in the sky.

They see the world with a wider vision and feel it.

Their childhood has been spent in understanding

the family to some extent. They will be spending

this period of their life in trying to figure out what

the world is going to offer them. Their lives become

more enthusiastic, energetic and even romantic

when they come to this stage. Soon they will spend

time in searching for a partner and, once they get

the partner, they will need to take more time to un-

derstand what they mean to each other. In this they

will try to be on their own rather than being guided

by the experience of elders. Often enough they act

before they reflect and plan. Action becomes more

important than words.

Most of today's youth are like sheep without a shep-

herd. And so they do not know which way to go. The

pity is that they do not want to be guided by others

except themselves. The fact is that there are a good many of them who do not even know the purpose of their lives. If you ask them about the purpose of their existence, there will be very few who would be able to give a proper and somewhat mature answer to this question. They do not even realize where they are heading. Their thoughts are limited and their views confused. To be more exact, their thoughts are mostly focused on possessing the latest electronic gadgets. More than that, they are more easily influenced by peer pressure and so spend a lot of time partying with friends. The manner of their dress, hair style and way of speaking easily take after film stars and sportspersons.

There is also a minor correction here. There were times when parents used to go out in search of their children who might still be hanging around with their friends; today parents are not able to send their

children out of the house even on a small er-

rand because their children stay

put in their home all the

time, busy with their

electronic gadgets.

So much so that the

youth of today may

be ready not to spend

time with their friends

but never to give up playing

with their electronic gadgets. The

truth must be told - electronic gadgets have replaced

human friends! Electronic goods such as two wheel-

ers, motor cars, laptops, mobile phones and the like

have become the primary things of today's youth.

Today, instead of the youth looking at the future, the

future is looking at the youth of today.



"The duty of youth is to challenge corruption." - Kurt Cobain

EXPERIENCES FROM POWER HOUSE - JESU BHAVAN

Experience

Manresa Experience



Mihir Kumar Bero is a first year Novice in Jesu Bhavan, Jamshedpur.

My Long Retreat was very good for strengthening my vocation. Days and weeks before we began the month-long Spiritual Exercises, I was full of fear and experienced a great degree of hopelessness. But, in spite of such negativities, I entered into this retreat with great openness. During the retreat itself, our Novice Master, guided us through many meditations and contemplations. The sharing of Fr Master about his own personal experiences was very inspiring and helpful. I felt really happy throughout the retreat. I must add that, during the retreat, the Lord granted me an abundance of graces and blessings, thanks to the intercession of our Founder Father Ignatius.

The Spiritual Exercises helped me to understand the meaning of my life in general and my vocation to the Society, in particular. True, during the retreat, I did face many problems, difficulties and temptations. Many times, the Evil One was trying to distract me by offering worldly gifts, which I would miss if I were to continue as a religious. Such temptations made me nervous and anxious about my future. So much so, often times I did not feel like praying and even took solace in sleep. But, thanks to the intercession of our Holy Father St Ignatius, I continued to trust in God and I put myself entirely into His hands. I experienced His presence in my life; I received the grace to understand very well the meaning of my vocation and how best to overcome these and similar temptations in the years to come. The Spiritual Exercises taught me how to live as a true Jesuit, as a spiritual or as a religious person. They taught me how to be a person of the calibre



of the Third Class, a lover to the point of the Third Degree of Humility and to be a Contemplative in Action. During the first two weeks of the Exercises, I was able to experience God's unconditional love for me, a love which enabled me to respond to the Call of the King to be WITH Him, to labour WITH Him, to suffer WITH Him and so to enter into glory WITH Him. Contemplations on the various mysteries of the life of Jesus helped me to know my King and His mission much more clearly. The Third and Fourth Weeks of the Exercises led me to a deeper experience of the pain and suffering of my Saviour as well as the joy of the resurrection. A day spent with Mary in her sorrow was a very touching experience for me. I contemplated and prayed over the seven sorrows of our Blessed Mother.

All these changed my mind and heart and I became confident about my life and vocation as a Jesuit novice. Three factors that inspired me most were: (1) Forgiveness: When Jesus was dying on the cross, he forgave his enemies and prayed for them. (2) Love: Jesus

loved His disciples as His own and loved them to the end by giving His life for them. (3) Poverty: Jesus practised poverty in His life and gave me a clearer understanding of the power of a life of poverty. During our month-long retreat, we had one meditation and contemplation on Nature. It was a very beautiful moment for me to see the beauty and the footprints of God in everything that He created with so much love and care - all for me.

I truly enjoyed my Long Retreat. It got over very fast; I did not feel that it lasted one full month. I am very happy to have gone through this experience. My prayer these days is that I may be blessed with more and more graces to continue to experience God's love and His presence in my life as a Jesuit novice.

*"For it is not knowing much, but realising and relishing things interiorly, that contents and satisfies the soul."
Ignatius of Loyola, The Spiritual Exercises*

Work Of Mercy



Abraham Tudu is a second year Novice in Jesu Bhavan, Jamshedpur.

The Hospital Experiment is a unique gift and legacy given by our Founder Father, St Ignatius, to each one of us, his followers. It was my privilege to make it as a novice of the Society of Jesus. I believe that Ignatius and his first companions, as well as all those who go through the hospital experiment, have a special experience of God which leads to self-transformation. On the 11th of November, 2017, I, a second year novice, along with my companions, went to a place called Noorpur in West Bengal, for our hospital experiment. The hospital has mentally and physically challenged persons as inmates. Initially, seeing the miserable condition of the patients, I was terror-stricken, almost went paranoid, felt great repug-



nance and was utterly despondent. In that traumatic condition, I surrendered myself to God and asked for the grace of an immense courage from the Holy Spirit. Then I started to serve the patients with all possible enthusiasm. I gave them a bath, cut their nails, washed their clothes, gave them a haircut and was ever at their beck and call. The patients were really overwhelmed by my dedicated service and loving care. I personally experienced the genuine presence of God and joy visible in their broad smiles. For one whole month, I rendered my service to them with great humility and generosity. My happiness was in suffering for and with them just as our Master, Jesus Christ, had precisely done for all of humankind. Within this short span of time, this joyful and wonderful experiment invigorated my heart and mind. I sensed that I was growing spiritually. I guess I needed this exposure to build a strong foundation for my vocation and to remain deeply united with Almighty God.



A Month With Christ Wounded



Amit Soreng is a second year Novice in Jesu Bhavan, Jamshedpur.

God's profound affection is obvious and becomes meaningful in service. His immense joy and affection is seen when we serve the poorest of the poor. During my Hospital Experiment, I experienced His bountiful love. Through my words and actions the patients came to know of God's love. The sense of God's presence assisted me to be with the distressed and the suffering people. The journey of love in the hospital enriched my faith and my vocation. Indeed, God's plan is very unique and phenomenal. This experience gave me clarity about the meaning of my life. I relished the moments of God's love with the poorest of the poor, yes, to be part of the poorest of the poor. I felt myself blessed to be with patients of different kinds: the mentally and physically challenged. All this was possible

because of His unconditional love being poured on me to make my self-surrender, to be cheerfully patient, obedient and humble.

However, I need to be honest. In the beginning I struggled to be near those inmates. More, I felt disgusted. But I kept on imploring God's grace of surrender and strength to jump fully into the work of mercy. God graciously answered my prayer so that I could overcome my initial reluctance and get into the act easily. I felt God's strength and love deep within my heart which led me to enjoy being with the patients. I remembered



*I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love -
Mother Teresa*

my core-grace that I am loved, that I am precious and that I am important. I thanked God for His grace and the awareness of His continued presence in and around me.

I would like to share with you my peak experience in Shanti Bhavan. One evening, I visited the ward. When the patients saw me, they were delighted. They got up from their beds and came over to meet me. I gave them a warm smile and talked to them. I felt good. I felt that I had brought some change in their lives.

I felt touched by a sentence of the prayer in the community, "Lord, bless me so that I could be to be an example to the people, not with my words, but with my actions. This sentence encouraged me to accomplish my mission. The MC Brothers and co-workers were very encouraging. Their encouraging words and help made my experience successful, effective and meaningful and I prospered. I thank Fr. R Anthony for giving me this opportunity to be with the poorest of the poor.

An Experience of Christ

Experience



Anchit Tirkey is a second year Novice in Jesu Bhavan, Jamshedpur.

I was with the MC Brothers in Dumdum, in Kolkata, the City of Joy, for my Hospital Experiment. I spent one month in that community which comes under St Patrick's Parish. There were 43 patients. The Superior of the community was Bro. Jesu Das.

I used to beg the Lord for the grace of zeal, humility and charity. Before going for my apostolic ministry, I would always pray, "Lord, make me a channel of your peace." I wanted to gain something more from this experiment. My one-month hospital experiment was grace-filled and enjoyable; it was indeed a spiritual experience and a very fruitful one at that. The initial days were challenging, difficult, full of doubts and hesitation. I

was unable to accept the patients as my brothers and to love them as normal human beings. I often asked myself, "Am I living the life of a Jesuit? Will I serve them openly and lovingly?" These thoughts bothered me because of my lack of humility, charity and spirit of self-sacrifice. I remember that it was a Sunday when I had a beautiful experience: I felt that somebody was helping me in all my activities. It was like all the work of attending to the needs of the patients were done by someone else through me. Later on, I found that it was a gift of God and the living Jesus was acting through me in the midst of the patients, to enable me to help them and to love them.

The next day, a physically challenged person came to me and put his head close to my heart. I wondered and admired the beauty of the person who hugged me. I



experienced brotherly love. And from that moment, I could accept all the patients as my own brothers. A great desire to give my best to them formed in me because I had experienced Our Lord being with them. I was able to see Jesus in them working day and night for all. I experienced, too, that there was readiness and willingness in me to serve the poorest of the poor.

I entered quickly into the mission with vigour and zeal. It was a good experience for me to understand people from different backgrounds and needs. I constantly felt grateful to God for allowing me to take part in an experiment like this in the Society of Jesus. I was much aware of my feelings. I could feel the presence of Our Lord. I could encounter Jesus in the poorest of the poor. I blessed those who were rejected and neglected in society and I put in all my efforts to help them. I often connected my Long Retreat with this mission.

Once I got a chance to go to Mother Teresa's House. There I felt peace and joy in my heart. My prayer life was going well along with the work of serving the poorest of the poor. We had a Day's Recollection on the 9 December, 2017. The theme was The General and Regional Letters of the MC Brothers. From one of these letters, I was inspired by what the Superior General, Bro. Andrew, said, "Unless we continue to grow in prayer and union with God, we shall lose our spirit. Let us always remember – a brother who does not take care of his spiritual life and prayer is not an MC Brother; he is something else."

At the end of my hospital experiment, I felt that what I could accomplish was entirely due to the presence of the Lord who accompanied me all through. It was He who enabled me to bring joy and happiness to the patients with simple acts of love-filled service. All honour and glory to Him!

Intense love does not measure, it just gives - Mother Teresa

Nothing to Something

From nothing
 God made us something.
 From dusts and sands
 He formed us in his hands.
 But why on this earth? We ask.
 To be born, to live, to die?

No, we are here on earth for a task
 Given by God which we cannot deny.
 What task? And why?
 To give him honor, praise and glory.
 To be blessed with his love and mercy.
 Why do we even need his love and mercy?
 Is that not injustice and slavery?

Grappling with so many such stupid questions in
 head
 Understanding nothing as if senseless or dead.
 Whatever and however much we try
 We shall never ever understand God fully.

Like dusts in the swirling wind
 We can only be lost in our thinking mind.
 His works are beyond our meager comprehension.
 We are just a small part of a much larger creation.

Then what must we do?
 Do nothing just surrender
 In the hands of God our Creator
 Life that we don't have control over
 Let him be the Lord and Master.

Remember! He sent his only son, Jesus
 To die for our sins to save us.
 He sent his holy spirit
 To guide us and protect us.

Thus, he made us his beloved children not servants.
 Then why should we not glorify him and be his in-
 struments?

So, let's believe in God the Holy Trinity,
 And do something good for God and the humanity
 Doing God's will is our only mission and duty.
 And leave the rest to God Almighty.



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Vision of the Society of Jesus

Vision of SJ

The Society of Jesus was founded in the middle of the 16th Century in Europe. Ignatius Loyola and his nine companions were an international group of theologically and spiritually formed priests. After prayerful reflection they decided to obey one of them as superior and unanimously chose Ignatius. They then offered themselves to Pope Paul III, ready to accept to be sent by him wherever he chose. This was based on the strong belief that the Holy Father, as vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, had the best overview of the Church's needs throughout the world.

All of them lived the deep experience of the "Spiritual Exercises" that Ignatius had written and decided to consecrate their lives to Jesus Christ. For that reason they chose "Society of Jesus" as the name for their new congregation.

This desire to serve Jesus Christ through his representative, the Pope, is concretized in the so called "Fourth vow" of the Jesuits. This vow consists in the willingness to accept any mission from the Pope.

Although the social and economic conditions in various parts of the world today are quite different from those in the time of Saint Ignatius, Jesuits on all continents are receiving a solid spiritual formation, including a 30-day retreat at the beginning and at the end of their formation, Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises. All Jesuits make themselves available to follow Jesus Christ in today's Church and world.

During the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (January – March 2008), Pope Benedict XVI entrusted the Jesuits with the mission to take the Gospel message to the "frontiers" of faith, culture and civil society. The Holy Father expressed his confidence and the confidence of the whole Church in the Society's ability to carry out this mission.

Courtesy : Jesuit curia web <http://www.sjweb.info/mission/vision.cfm>



ART



Akhilesh SJ



Prabhakar, SJ



Divya Bharati Pastoral Centre, promotes faith formation of the laity, through Ho Bible, Ho Dictionary, Ho Prayers and culture and many more. It also provides facilities for seminars and residential programs
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