

A MONTHLY
FOR PERSONAL,
SOCIAL AND
SPIRITUAL
INTEGRATION

MAGnet

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Migrants and Refugees:

Huge Tragedy
Huge Need
Do We Care?



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DOCTOR EXTRAORDINARY

"Migration is an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family."

(Ban Ki moon)

"In the midst of migrants in search of a better life there are people in need of protection: refugees and asylum-seekers, women and children victims of trafficking... Many move simply to avoid dying of hunger. When leaving is not an option but a necessity, this is more than poverty."

(Antonio Guterres)

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

(Emma Lazarus)

"I urge you to celebrate the extraordinary courage and contributions of refugees past and present."

(Kofi Annan)

"Refugees didn't just escape a place. They had to escape a thousand memories until they'd put enough time and distance between them and their misery to wake to a better day."

"Your enemy is not the refugee. Your enemy is the one who made him a refugee."

(Tariq Ramadan)

"Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of history."

(Pope Francis)

"Despite very harsh living conditions and the trauma of what they went through, they [Sudanese refugees] had a lot of dignity."

(Julien Clerc)

"A child on the other side of the border is no less worthy of love and compassion than my child."

(Barack Obama)

"Who are we as human beings, if we ignore the sufferings of others?"

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A Huge Human Tragedy

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EDITORIAL



Migrants, Refugees, and Victims of Trafficking

By the time you finish reading this sentence, one more person will have become a refugee.

A refugee is someone who has been forcibly displaced because of war, persecution, ethnic violence or human rights violations.

There are 66 million displaced persons in the world. They belong to three categories: Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Asylum Seekers.

Refugees are persons who have been forced to flee their country because of war, persecution or other types of violence. They number 23 million today. Small countries of West Asia, like Lebanon or Jordan, have millions of refugees from Syria. The Rohingyas are another sad example.

Internally Displaced Persons are persons who run away from their homes because of war, persecution, natural disasters or state policies. They are not protected by international law, since they are supposed to be protected by their own government. People lose their homes and land, for instance, to make way for grandiose projects. They number around 40 million around the globe.

Asylum seekers are persons who flee their own country and seek protection, stay or citizenship in another country. They are about 3 million.

These three groups of human beings undergo tremendous suffering, and need our help. They have neither political power, nor powerful supporters, nor financial clout. They are at the mercy of inhuman government policies, agents who exploit them for money, sex predators who take advantages of their vulnerable situation and traffickers who dupe them and sell them for money, sex and sale of organs.

Pope Francis has given a lead in this matter, as he has done in so many other areas of human need. He speaks up for refugees; he has washed their feet. He pleads with governments to take in more refugees.

One group whom we can and must help are domestic workers. Many of them, often semi-literate and poor, work in homes or religious houses in other parts of India. It is our duty to treat them well, defend their rights, make sure they are paid a proper salary, and helped to save money and get married.

May we be grateful for the safety, freedom, financial security and opportunities that we enjoy, and have a heart for the millions of children, women and men who have the same rights as we do, but are deprived by poverty, war and violence, state policies and prejudice, natural disasters or loss of land and home.

We launch two new features this month—WWW and MOVING TO THE MARGINS.

WWW is not the Worldwide Web, but “We Women Will.” It will highlight the achievements of women. The columnist is known to our readers: Sr Marie Gabrielle Riople SCSM.

“Moving to the Margins (Peripheries)” is a call Pope Francis has been repeatedly giving to religious. May we, religious, truly be where we are meant to be—pioneers in new and difficult areas of ministry, where others dare not go because of fear, hardships or lack of financial gain. May we truly be good news to those in the margins of society, whom others forget, or shun, or exploit.

FR JOE MANNATH SDB,
Editor

Write to the address given on page 4, or email to crimagnet@gmail.com
Emails, too, should include the writer’s postal address or phone number.

Minimum Age for Social Media

I just wanted to let you know that I absolutely love what you and your team are doing with Magnet. There are nuggets in there for everyone! I especially loved the opening story of the article, “Eyes and Heart Opened.” The words that changed Fr Alban’s life, “You did not give us what we really needed. You did not give us Jesus,” cut through me too. It is a story I will always carry with me. Thank you.

I also enjoyed “No such thing as a Bad Boy,” “Small things come in small packages” and the cover story on the use and abuse of social media. I wanted to clarify something... On p. 25 there are: Online Safety Tips Every Parent Should Know, with the minimum age required to join / use various social media sites. If I am not wrong, these are the minimum ages accepted globally, but in India the minimum age to join any social site is 18. While I am not an expert on this subject, the website below states 18 as the minimum age requirement: <https://cyberblogindia.in/minimum-age-use-social-networks-india/> However, as I said, I am not an expert on this, but I feel 18 years is good news for parents, though it also means children could make fake accounts to join these sites.

All in all, I just wanted to thank you for the inspiring articles that *Magnet* brings out every month!

BERNADETTE MORRIS,

COMMISSION FOR
EVANGELIZATION,
ARCHDIOCESE OF DELHI, NEW
DELHI

Relevant and Very Apt

Congratulations! and Happy New Year! This is another excellent issue of the Magazine. Very relevant! I particularly liked the Alphabet Soup for Growing Up. Just one question: Is the main audience Youth or Religious or is it both? This issue felt very much on the youth side. It is certainly very apt! Where do you get the energy for so much and such good work? Bravo!

BEATRICE CHURU, NAIROBI,
KENYA

Fake News and Credible Journalism

I am a regular reader of the MAGNET magazine and really appreciate the thought provoking articles published. However, the January 2019 issue shed light on a very important issue ‘Fake News’. As a lecturer of journalism, I face this challenge quiet often. When I questioned my fresher batch on which paper or website they read to know current affairs, many to my shock said they relied on WhatsApp.

As messaging services such as WhatsApp enable easy forwarding of messages, the spread of ‘fake news’ is easy and it becomes a challenge to explain to people not familiar with news coverage techniques on distinguishing between real

and fake.

A study by BBC researchers showed 72% of Indians struggled to distinguish real information from made-up stories. Of the people interviewed, the researchers found that respondents made little effort to figure out the original source for what they shared. Hence, while India is blessed with digital platforms and technologies, one cannot overlook the dire need for greater digital literacy in India, coming amidst growing concerns over the deadly consequences of fake news in the country. While now I am training my students to distinguish between real and fake news, I also encourage them to debunk rumours being spread on WhatsApp groups, by sharing links from credible media. It’s a small initiative we have started to spread better and credible journalism.

SANDHYA D’SOUZA, HOD
JOURNALISM, ST AGNES
COLLEGE, MANGALORE.

It’s Magnetic!!!

It was worth reading the previous issue of MAGNET. Some write ups were captivating. I would like to appreciate M A Joe Antony SJ for helping us to know Fr Edward Joseph Flanagan. His story and his contribution to the Church and world are inspiring. It is easy to relate with his life as he was a man of recent times who brought big change. He showed us that

how one needs to change the perspective in order to bring change and transformation in the other. His life reminisces St John Bosco, who in his times identified the problem and brought transformation. Fr Flanagan truly stands as a role model to learn from. Let us be inspired by this great priest to create Boys and Girls **Town** everywhere. Indeed we must let everyone know this voice of change. Thank you for letting us know about him and keep letting us know many other such great inspiring priests and nuns from whom we can learn to build a better world. MAGNET is indeed magnetic. Kudos to the MAGNET team. **G JESUS VIVIAN RAJA SJ,**
VIDYA JYOTI, DELHI



GST FOR REGISTERED TRUSTS

- FR ALEX GNANAPRAGASAM SJ

The Goods and Services Tax (GST), as we know, is an indirect tax levied both by the Central and State Governments. It is applicable for any activity of “sale” or “transfer” of a “taxable” supply of goods or services for a “consideration” in the course of “furthering one’s business.” It may sound that GST is applicable only to the business entities and not to the Charitable Trusts, but in reality it is not so. To understand this, we need to understand what each of the above terms means.

By “sale” or “transfer” we mean not only the actual selling of any concrete object (goods) or service for a price (e.g., selling religious articles, books, milk from the farm, computer maintenance service, security service, etc.,) but also giving a building or ground or land or space on rent (e.g., giving a hall or playground or hoarding space on rent, giving a plot of land for lease rent, etc.,). By “taxable” we mean all those goods and services which are brought under the category of taxable items. Note that there are quite many items that are not brought under GST. They are tax-free. At the same time, there are quite many items which are taxable under GST at the rate fixed by the Government as 6%, 12%, 18% or 28%.

By “consideration” we mean any benefit given against any payment (e.g., an advertised sponsorship for an event). Here, the donor or sponsor gets the benefit of his name being advertised. Hence, such a donation or sponsorship is taxable under GST. But a pure donation, that is given without any consideration or benefit to the donor, is tax-free. Donation itself is a voluntary action, without expecting anything in return and hence it will not attract GST. Finally, by “furthering one’s business” we mean in the course of any on-going activity. Thus, collecting school fees or hospital charges is in the course of furthering one’s “business” of education or health work.

Thus, seen in the context as explained above, we can realize that quite many of our activities come under GST. Every Trust has to examine all its sources of income and see which items will come under GST and which will not. This article is an attempt to help us to see where GST is applicable to our trusts and societies.

A. GST-EXEMPT ACTIVITIES:

The following goods and services do not attract GST:

1. The following services are exempt from GST, when they are supplied BY or TO an educational institution (all school level:

from Pre-Nursery to Plus Two).

- a) Transportation of students, faculty and staff;
- b) Catering, including mid-day meals sponsored by the govt (for schools);
- c) Security, cleaning & housekeeping services;
- d) Outsourced services related to school admission or exams.

All the above services, whether given by the school itself or by a third party to the school, are GST-exempt. In the case of colleges and technical institutes approved by their competent authorities, such as the UGC or AICTE, transport and catering services, if provided by the institution to its staff and students, are GST-exempt, but if the same are outsourced to a third party, it will attract GST. Similarly, all fees collected for approved courses will be GST-free (but fees for the unapproved courses or institutions of higher education will attract GST).

2. All healthcare services and medical treatment of humans and animals are GST-free. Thus, hospital charges, bed charges, nursing charges, medical facilities for in-patients, operation charges, catering service, etc., will not attract GST. However, running a pharmacy for outpatients may attract GST.

3. Any religious activity conducted on the premises, e.g., Christmas celebration, Ordination, Wedding and reception on the Church premises, etc., will not attract GST.

4. Renting of precincts of a religious place meant for the general public, if the rent is below Rs 10,000 per day for the premises, community hall, open area, etc., below Rs 10,000 per month for the shops and below Rs 1,000 per unit per day for accommodation, then there will not be any GST on these. (This means rates above than given here will attract GST.)

5. Similarly, activities such as advancement of religion, spirituality or Yoga, preservation of environment, including watershed, forests and wildlife, care or counseling of terminally ill persons, physically or mentally handicapped, persons with HIV or AIDS, drug addicts, activities related to public awareness in preventive health and family planning, running a public library for the general public and agriculture related activities by farmers are exempt from GST.

Thus, “GST Charitable Activities” are exempt for those registered under 12A, but about 95% of the “IT Charitable Activities” would not be treated as “Charitable” under GST.

B. TAXABLE SUPPLIES:

Activities dealing with the following goods or services are considered taxable.

- Fees collected for any camp, seminar, training programme;
- GST of 5% applicable on food supplied in hostels (except schools) without the benefit of the input tax credit (ITC);
- Any rental income beyond Rs 10,000 (other than residential rent): Hoarding rent, ground rent, hall rent, shop rent, etc.;
- Incentives on investments;
- Advertisements in souvenirs;
- Any commission or “donation” received from canteen, the seller of uniform, stationery, karate, dance, computer education, smart class, music class, etc.;
- Pharmacy for out-patients;
- Selling donated material;
- Selling scrap;
- Stalls at charity events;
- Ticketed events (entry tickets if more than Rs 500);
- Benefit dinners;
- Sale of taxable religious articles;
- CSR (corporate social responsibility) grants (with publicity request);
- Any fee-based service (karate, dance, music, computer maintenance, etc.,)
- Giving any service against grants;
- Exports.

If a trust has any of the above listed activities and the trust’s aggregate turnover is Rs 20 lakhs and above (Rs 10 lakhs for the North East), then GST is applicable and the concerned



Trust has to register itself under GST. By “aggregate” we mean all receipts of all the Centre & its Units using the same PAN. Aggregate turnover includes fees, sales, exports, donations, grants, investment or interest income, farm income, etc., Note that if a trust deals only with the GST-exempt items, it will not come under GST even if its aggregate turnover goes beyond Rs 20 lakhs/10 lakhs.

C. TRIGGERS:

I call the following items “triggers.” This means: Irrespective of the aggregate turnover going beyond Rs 20 lakhs/10 lakhs, the moment the trust is involved in even one of the following activities, then GST is applicable and hence the trust has to

register itself under GST.

1. Reverse Charge Mechanism (RCM): As against the normal procedure where the service provider collects the GST from the customer and deposits the same with the Government, under reverse charge mechanism (RCM), the customer himself/herself pays the GST directly to the Government for the services he/she has availed. Services of the advocates, authors or composers fall under this type. Hence, a trust, in order to avail the services of an advocate, has to register itself under GST.

2. Import of goods or services from abroad: Since the Indian Government cannot levy any tax on foreign nationals, it becomes the duty of the importing trust to pay GST on the goods or services imported.

3. Inter-state: Wherever inter-state business occurs—selling books, for instance—the agency has to comply with the GST requirements.

4. Sponsorship services: Whichever trust avails of the sponsorship has also to comply with the GST requirements.

5. GST TDS (as and when enforced).

6. URD (unregistered dealers), if the turnover crosses Rs 5000 in a day (as and when enforced).

D. INPUT TAX CREDIT (ITC):

A trust registered under GST can avail the input tax credit (ITC). It is a mechanism where the GST amount payable by a trust on its output supply can be adjusted against the GST amount it has already paid for its input supply. For example, a trust is running a computer training centre. To get the computer centre set up, the trust would have paid GST on the computer, software and furniture purchased. The trust, since it is an unapproved course, will charge GST on its fees. The GST amount thus collected, can be set off against the GST already paid on the input supplies and the difference is paid to the Government.

E. GST ON CONSTRUCTION WORKS:

Without any exception, GST is applicable on all the construction works of the trust. The contractor will include GST in the bills he gives us for the construction works.

CONCLUSION: Knowledge on GST matters is a must for all trusts and societies. All have to comply with the legal requirements—or face the legal consequences. Hence, my advice to Trusts is: DROP the activities involving any taxable item that draws them under the GST net because of the insignificant income it brings.



● Fr Alex Gnanapragasam SJ is the Secretary and Treasurer of Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth and De Nobili College, Pune, with 22 years of experience in financial administration. He conducts sessions on financial matters for religious congregations and dioceses.

SPECIAL DAYS IN FEBRUARY, 2019

- SR ESME DA CUNHA FDCC

Feb.
4

International Cancer Day

The Celebration raises awareness of cancer and how to prevent, detect or treat it. The primary goal is to significantly reduce illness and death caused by cancer. It is an opportunity to raise our collective voice to end the injustice of preventable suffering from cancer.

Cancer is a leading cause of death around the world, according to the UN World Health Organization (WHO), which estimated that 84 million people would die of cancer between 2005 and 2015 without intervention. Low-income



and medium-income countries are harder hit by cancer than the high-resource countries. It is essential to address the world's growing cancer burden and to work on effective control measures. This calls for a strong alliance between researchers, health-care professionals, patients, governments, industry partners and the media to fight cancer.

New strategies and programmes need to be implemented in India to fight and control this deadly disease. More than 12.7 million are diagnosed with cancer. More than 7 million die of cancer every year. The various types of cancer and death ratios per year are liver cancer (6,10,000), lung cancer (1.3 million), colo-

rectal cancer (6,39,000), stomach cancer (8,03,000), breast cancer (5,19,000).

People need to be instructed to check its symptoms, follow its preventive measures, protect oneself from environmental carcinogens and be saved from the risk of this disease. Risk factors causing cancer are use of tobacco and alcohol, overweight, low fruit or vegetable intake, less or no physical activity, sexual transmission of HPV-infection, air pollution in urban areas, indoor smoke, genetical factors, over-exposure to sunlight, etc. People are also made aware about the vaccination method against the human papilloma virus and hepatitis B virus.

There are social myths that cancer is contagious and communicable by touch, so that patients are sometimes ostracized and treated as untouchables, whereas in reality they need a lot of support, care and concern, comfort and understanding. Patients have equal rights to live like normal persons in society with self-respect and a normal environment in their home and society. Their wishes should be fulfilled by their relatives even if they have less chances of survival. Yet over-sympathy or pity may only increase their pain and fear. A new positive approach that cancer is curable is needed to boost their courage to fight the disease.

Feb.
14

Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day originated as a Western Christian feast day in honour of the Saint, a Roman priest martyred in 270 AD and considered the patron saint of lovers. He was imprisoned for performing weddings for soldiers, who were forbidden to marry and for ministering to persecuted Christians. Valentine was interrogated

by the Roman Emperor Claudius II in person. Claudius was impressed by Valentine and attempted to get him to convert to Roman paganism in order to save his life. Valentine refused and tried to convert Claudius to Christianity instead. Because of this, he was executed. Before his execution, he is reported to have performed a miracle by healing Julia, the blind daughter of his jailer, Asterius. He wrote her a letter signed "Your Valentine" as a farewell.

The expression "From your Valentine" was later adopted by modern Valentine letters. According to legend, Julia herself planted a pink-blossomed almond tree near his grave. Today, the almond tree remains a symbol of abiding love and friendship.

Another legend has it that to remind these men of their vows and of God's



love, Saint Valentine is said to have cut hearts from parchment, giving them to these soldiers and persecuted Christians, a possible origin of the widespread use of hearts on St Valentine's Day.

The celebration of Saint Valentine did not seem to have any romantic connotations until Chaucer's poetry about "Valentines" in the 14th century. Marking the beginning of spring, Valentine's Day has more recently been celebrated as the day of love.

In spite of its obscure origin, this day has become a very popular day dedicated to love and friendship, fidelity to marriage and the family. A day to remember and cherish. It brings out what is most beautiful in human life and relationships.

☪

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BURNOUT

- Fr Jose Parappully SDB

In this article, the author, an experienced clinical psychologist, explains a dangerous pitfall which affects especially those in the helping professions—such as, teachers, managers, counsellors, nurses, doctors, social workers and clergy.

Sr. Martha entered religious life with a high motivation to work for the poor, especially the sick. She was inspired by the life of her founder, who was deeply committed to the sick. Her religious superiors considered favorably her desire to be a nurse. She studied nursing with great passion, sparing little time for friends and relaxation.

After completing her studies, she was assigned to a large hospital managed by her congregation. She worked selflessly and with great compassion. The patients and hospital staff admired her commitment and became very fond of her. She continued to work zealously for a few years there.

Meanwhile, a number of administrative changes happened which affected the environment at the hospital. Martha could not work the way she had been doing. Her enthusiasm began to wane. She felt emotionally drained and physically exhausted. The compassionate nurse began to be irritated and careless. She did only the minimum work required. Other staff members, as well as her patients, began to complain about her. Martha herself would get sick and ask for leave from time to time. Finally, she lost interest all together in nursing and, to the surprise of many who knew her, Martha asked for a transfer to another ministry.

Sr. Martha had experienced what in scientific literature has come to be known as “Burnout” – a phenomenon that affects those in the helping professions - such as teachers, managers, counsellors, nurses, doctors, social workers and clergy.

While helping people is a praiseworthy vocation, it can also be extremely hazardous to physical and mental health. If care is not taken, it can result in burnout. This is the conclusion of psychologists who have carefully studied people in the helping professions.

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

Webster’s International Dictionary gives three specific examples of use of the term “burnout”:

1. The burning out of the interior or contents of something such as a building.
2. It is used in the field of electricity to refer to the breakdown of a circuit owing to combustion caused by high temperature;
3. It is used in forestry to refer to a forest fire that has been so severe that the vital humus on the forest floor has been destroyed leaving the forest denuded.

Psychologist John Sanford observes that these examples can give us a pretty good understanding of what happens to human beings when they experience burnout: we can imagine a man or woman who has been devoured from within by fiery energy until, like a gutted house, nothing is left. Or, we may imagine a person who once carried a current of psychic energy but now, like a burned out electrical conductor, cannot provide energy any more. Or an individual who, like burned out forest, feels that his or her capacity to renew oneself has been destroyed.

Herbert J. Freudenberger, a New York-based clinical psychologist who introduced the term to scientific literature in the early 1970’s, defined it as “a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, way of life, or relationships that failed to produce the expected reward.”

Christina Maslach, the University of California at Berkeley social psychologist who popularized the term and has done extensive research on it, described burnout as “a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do ‘people work’ of some kind.”

What these definitions tell us is that burnout is the end result of a process in which highly motivated and committed individuals lose their spirit. Those who enter a profession with little passion or enthusiasm and especially with a cynical or lethargic attitude

are unlikely to burn out! Only those who are “on fire,” on high energy, can burn out.

Stress, which was explained in the previous three issues of MAGNET, psychologists tell us, happens to more people and in more situations than burnout. *Everyone can experience stress, but burnout can only be experienced by people who entered their careers with high ideals, motivation, and commitment.* A person without such initial motivation can experience job stress, alienation, or depression—but not burnout. *Stress in itself does not cause burnout.*

People are able to flourish in stressful and demanding jobs if they feel that their work is significant and appreciated. However, *an unfriendly and frustrating work environment, which prevents one from functioning at his or her optimum level by stifling initiative and creativity and preventing access to needed resources, leads to burnout.*

According to psychologist Robert Pines, unlike stress, which can occur in almost every type of work, *burnout occurs most often, or even exclusively, among those who work with people and results from the emotional stress that arises during the interaction with them, especially with those who are very demanding or uncooperative.*

THE BURNOUT SYNDROME

I would like to stay a while with the definition of burnout provided by Maslach and her colleagues because it clearly presents what happens when one is burned out. They proposed that *burnout is a particular kind of response to excessive job-related demands that results in the tendency to treat recipients of one’s services in detached and dehumanized and sometimes even hostile ways.*

The main aspects of the “Burnout Syndrome” are the following:

- a) *emotional exhaustion* (being emotionally over extended and exhausted by one’s work and people around),
- b) *depersonalization* (having a cold, unfeeling, cynical, distant and impersonal response toward recipients of one’s services and to one’s own work),
- c) *diminished personal accomplishment* (having diminished feelings of competence and successful achievement in one’s work with people - feeling ineffective).

BASIC THEMES IN BURNOUT

Maslach and colleagues highlighted the following three basic themes in burnout. All of them are evident in Sr. Martha’s experience:

1. *An erosion of engagement with the job.* What started out as an important, meaningful, fascinating work becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless.
2. *An erosion of emotions.* The positive feelings of enthusiasm, dedication, security, and enjoyment fade away and are replaced by anger, anxiety, and depression. Frustration and anger are the emotional hallmarks of burnout. The anger accompanying the frustration fuels negative reactions toward people and cynicism about the job. One’s



level of self-esteem plunges and the level of competence is undermined.

3. *An erosion of fit between the person and the job.* The roots of burnout stretch far beyond the individual to the work environment. Although it is the person who experiences burnout, it is the job situation that is the primary cause, specifically a mismatch between personal aspirations and the job environment. Lack of sufficient resources to do the job, lack of control over the work, lack of expected rewards, lack of respect and trust—all these elements lead to a feeling of ineffectiveness as well as of exhaustion from wasted time and effort.

STAGES IN BURNOUT

One does not burnout suddenly. It happens gradually. Maslach and colleagues present the progression toward burnout in three stages:

Stage 1. This includes physical warning signs such as inability to shake of a lingering cold, frequent headaches, and problems with sleep. The thought of going to work in the morning loses its appeal.

Stage 2. This stage involves such emotional and behavioral signs as angry outbursts, obvious impatience or irritability, treating people with contempt. An attitude of suspicion often manifests at this stage. Work deteriorates. Productivity drops. Drug or alcohol abuse also happens often. This stage is often known as “*Brownout*.”

Stage 3. Described as “*Terminal Burnout*,” this happens when one becomes cynical, detached, and openly critical of the organization, superiors and co-workers. Intense feelings of failure, low self-esteem, loneliness and alienation are characteristics of this stage.


In the next issue I shall present more in detail the frequent causes and manifestations of burnout, those more vulnerable to it, as well as preventive and remedial measures.

Reflection

- *Can you identify with the experiences of Sr. Martha? If yes, in what way?*
- *How are the basic themes of burnout playing out in your life and work?* ☩




● **Rev Dr Jose Parappully** is the Founder-Director of Sumedha Centre, which runs courses and retreats in psycho-spiritual integration. He also does individual and group



Missionary Congregation of the Daughters of St. Thomas the Apostle (DST)


DST Generalate, Bharananganam, Kottayam (Dt), Kerala.



Founder
Rev. Fr. Jacob Thazhathel

About us

Congregation : DST
Founder : Rev. Fr. Jacob Thazhathel
Founded On : July 3, 1969
Place : Aruvithura, Palai diocese
Spread out in : 4 Countries
Province : 2
Region : 1





Our Patron



Charism


To experience the Risen Lord in the word of God and share this experience with the humanity especially with whom the Word of God has not yet been preached. This sharing of the experience of Christ is sustained by prayer, asceticism, self giving and life witness and above all by proclamation of the Good News, following the example of St. Thomas the Apostle.

VISION

DST, aware of the missionary mandate of Jesus, moved by the same spirit of St. Thomas, while being faithful to the heritage of the Syro-Malabar Church, commit to evangelize by words and deeds especially among the ad gentes and transform the society with the values of the kingdom of God.



John Scotus Eriugena

(810? CE - 880 CE)

- FR FRANCIS PUDHICHERRY SJ



For everything that is understood and sensed is nothing else but the appearance of what is nonapparent, the manifestation of the hidden, the affirmation of the negated, the comprehension of the incomprehensible

(Periphyseon, Bk.3)

Scotus Eriugena was as his name suggests born in Ireland. However, he would become famous in France where he found favor with Charles the Bald and would be deeply involved in the theological debates of the day. When John was made the Master of the Frankish Palace School in 846 he was already a well accomplished person. His breath of learning was immense and he knew Greek, Latin, medicine, liberal arts and astronomy. Though he belonged to the Western tradition, he was able to integrate the insights of the Western tradition based upon Augustine and Ambrose along with Eastern writers such as Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor. A major focus of his writings dealt with the relationship between God and the cosmos wherein he pointed out that though the visible cosmos reveals to us the hidden God, God will always remain the incomprehensible and transcendent mystery.

The initial works of John Scotus were translations of Dionysius and other Eastern classics by Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus. His major work would be the *Periphyseon* considered to be his Summa and is in the form of dialogues. This work was later called *De Divisione Naturae* and contains two contradictions which are held in tension. On the one hand there is the ineffability of God – i.e, the mystery of God as being too great to be expressed or described in words. Affirmations, even affirmations of God's love can only be made metaphorically or analogically. This point of view relates to the apophatic tradition – a view that God can only be known through negations. But on the other hand, John Scotus also underlined the view that God is present (though not identified) in created reality. God 'descends' into created reality so that the visible manifestation or revelation of God takes place. This point of view relates to the cataphatic tradition – a view that approaches the reality of God through affirmation. John Scotus is one of the few spiritual writers in the early centuries who is able to speak of God using a language which fuses and

transcends both affirmation and negation.

The spirituality of John Scotus responds to two important questions: a) what is the purpose of creation? and b) how does the progressive movement of salvation history take place? The purpose of creation is the manifestation of the Divine where God is simultaneously experienced as illumination (light) and darkness. Both, light and darkness simultaneously coexist in human experience and find an echo in the human experience of the Divine. It needs to be recalled that within all created reality, the human person has a special place because of the possibility of participating with the Divine or Creative Wisdom. Regarding the second question John Scotus affirmed that the death and Resurrection of Christ takes forward the history of salvation. History is a circular movement where the starting point is oneness and harmony. Sin has resulted in fragmentation, disharmony, illusion and ignorance and can only be overcome through the Creative Wisdom in the person of Jesus Christ. The process of reconciliation has begun and all reality is now moving towards a new point of fullness and glory. The stages of purification, illumination and union are interpreted historically with the cosmos being progressively 'purged of all ignorance, illuminated by all wisdom and perfected by all deification' (*Commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy*, 10). John Scotus Eriugena draws upon the best wisdom from both the East and West and offers a method of progressive union with the Divine – a union which is already being experienced in the here and now and will be fully accomplished in the time to come ☩



● Fr Francis Pudhicherry SJ is Professor of Spirituality at Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, and editor of Ignis, the magazine on Ignatian Spirituality for S. Asia.

BRINGING HOPE TO THOSE WHO HAVE NONE

- CRYSTAL AND KEVIN SULLIVAN

CRYSTAL

Ever since I was a young girl, I have enjoyed reading stories about the saints. Each saint has such a unique story to tell of how their lives were shaped by their love for Christ. Recently, I read a biography of St Catherine of Siena, and was captivated by the struggles she faced in being faithful to the Church amidst the wars, plagues and schisms which threatened the people of her land. It occurred to me that, although she lived more than six hundred years earlier, many of the difficulties she faced are just as prevalent today. I experienced a great desire to learn more about her life, so that I could benefit from her experiences. It has been recorded that St Catherine received supernatural assistance in her spiritual life, and was even given the gift of hearing the voice of Jesus speaking to her of His immense love for all of His creatures and of His desire for her to act lovingly on His behalf.

One story struck me in particular. It occurred at a time relatively early in her life, yet Catherine had already had

a number of experiences of ecstasy and therefore had a deep understanding of Jesus' love for all persons. By this time, she was already well known for her generosity in giving the best of her family's food and clothing to the poor, often needing to smuggle it away because of the resistance she received. One cold winter's day, she was praying in church when she was approached by a scantily clothed man, who asked her for relief from the cold. Not wanting to force him to come home with her, she took off some of the clothes she was wearing and gave them to him. But they were not enough to keep him warm, so he followed her home where she was able to find a few more items for his comfort. Finally the man realized that she had nothing left to give and he thanked her for her charity. That night, as she was praying, Jesus appeared to her clothed in the garments she had given the man, but which were now resplendent with jewels. From this and many other such experiences, Catherine learned that the words that Jesus speaks in Matthew 25:40, "Amen, I say to you,

whatever you do for one of these least brothers of mine, you do for me," are literally true.

How often I take Scripture passages such as these and consider them a command to help those who are suffering in the world, but not linking any assistance to the physical person of Christ. But St Catherine (and St Francis and St Martin and perhaps many others) were given the clear understanding that their service to the poor wasn't just the right thing to do; it was personally serving Christ. Oh that our imperfect, clouded minds could only grasp the potential significance of each act of charity done in love for Him who lives in other people! It seems that as Christians we should be stumbling over ourselves to find those who need our love and assistance, so anxious should we be to find ways to please Jesus and to heal his hurts.

We might think we are not in a position to help others if we have no contact with any beggars. But let us look beyond the immediate definition of beggars and be inspired to find those who are the

"hidden Christ" where we find ourselves in this world. For me, it is easy enough to begin with the homeless man who sits in the back of church every morning when it is cold outside, never 'begging' but clearly in need of assistance. How convenient it is to walk by with the thought that money given would only be used for alcohol or drugs, without making the effort to get him some food from local eateries. More "hidden Christs" can be found in the homeless shelters which are constantly in need of food, clothing and toiletries. With a little more imagination, I find Christ in the local nursing homes where the elderly lie day after day with no visitors to cheer them. Yes, it is true that I do not have any direct contact with migrants or immigrants, beggars or lepers, but I certainly am surrounded by

religious persecution and political instability being experienced throughout the world. Admittedly, as the problem gets bigger and the impacts on receiving nations become greater, the answers become more difficult to identify and even more difficult to implement.

Whether the motivation is economic or fear of persecution, at the heart of all immigration is the hope for a better life. As we witness places in the world racked by political instability and economic and moral decline, it should come as no surprise that so many are seeking a safer or more rewarding life elsewhere. At a global level the problem can seem overwhelming. Too often those emigrating are finding their new lands unwelcoming or unable to meet their needs or expectations resulting in dashed

As I consider the enormity of the immigration problem, I can't help but reflect upon the many years I spent being educated in Catholic schools where we were collecting money for the poor and needy in mission lands. More recently, as adults, we have been partnering with parishes in South and Central America not only to offer aid but also encouragement and hope for better education and health. I think specifically about our current parish's multi-year effort in Tanzania to establish a Catholic school with a tourist guest house operation large enough to assure adequate resources to sustain the school and invigorate the village. We probably can't solve the global immigration crisis ourselves. However, we are called to make whatever difference we can even if it is only one village at a time. Let us pray to find the strength, wisdom and courage to seek out ways that we can each bring more hope to all of those who have lost or are losing hope ☩

"let us look beyond the immediate definition of beggars and be inspired to find those who are the 'hidden Christ' where we find ourselves in this world."

others who are in desperate need of love and assistance. I pray for the intercession of St Catherine to help me see Christ in all those I come in contact with throughout my day, and to be as generous and other focused as she was.

KEVIN

As Crystal's reflection on the loving example of St Catherine of Siena highlights, our inclination to the migrant or marginalized when we encounter their plight should always be to treat them generously with dignity and respect. We should always care enough to understand their plight and offer any assistance that we might provide which is truly helpful. It seems that our inclination should be the same as we contemplate our response to the ever-growing problems of mass migration fueled by economic hardship,

hope and despair. Yet we, individually and as a Church, must not surrender to the challenge. While we may not be able to address all of the temporal needs for food, clothing, shelter and employment in new homelands of all of those who are suppressed throughout the world, we can begin to explore how we might begin to meet those same needs and their spiritual needs in their own homelands. We must find ways to provide hope for a better life in villages and towns where their families have lived for many generations. Homelands may never be able to provide the levels of comfort that emigrants hope for and dream of in far off lands, but there is no reason to give up hope that they can still experience the joy and peace that Christ promises in where they and their families call home.



● **Crystal and Kevin Sullivan** have been involved in ministering to young couples for years. Kevin retired early from his legal firm to dedicate himself full time to ministry. Crystal left the corporate world to raise her children, completed a Master's in Pastoral Theology and is into various forms of ministry. They have a daughter and a son, and three grandchildren.



SUZANNE'S SIX SECRETS

We start a new column by Sister Marie Gabrielle Riopel, Canadian by birth, who has made India her home. What is the WWW? Not “World Wide Web,” but “We Women Will.” This column will highlight the difference that women make to their own lives and thereby teach all of us the art of living. The first heroine of her column is a swimming instructor who became her friend.

- SR MARIE GABRIELLE RIOPEL SCSM

I first met Suzanne in 1985. She was a Lifeguard and Red Cross swimming instructor.

I had always loved swimming, but knew the training required by Red Cross and the Federation for National Lifeguards was strenuous. I had also heard unpleasant stories from sisters who had done it before. But then, they had not been trained by Suzanne!

As soon as she set foot in our school, Suzanne became a hit! Her bubbly-bossy though respectful manners made us look forward to her classes, however hard or demanding they were! (Ever tried raising your hands holding bricks while being in deep water?)

In spite of Suzanne's enthusiasm, after attending her classes for three years, we became a bit used to her ways. Gradually, our participation grew lukewarm. It was nothing dramatic, but Suzanne might have noticed it. She, however, never said a word about it.

One day, when we arrived for the class, we were in for a surprise. No more lecture, no more theory. There were games, quizzes, materials, projects, visuals, etc. From that time, the class hours became learning games! Suzanne even involved us in the process of inventing learning games. When we asked her what had made her change her ways so radically, her answer was: “When I saw you growing disinterested, I knew I had to change my way of teaching. I spent hours thinking how to get your attention and participation back...”

In 1988, I moved to Mexico, then, in 1992, to India. I somehow lost track of Suzanne. I knew she had become P.T. and biology teacher in our school. So,

while visiting Canada, I asked about her. During one of my visits, I met her. I knew her husband had left her. She only told me: “I cheated my husband with my job”! She blamed herself for failing to see when her commitment to teaching had become a threat to her marriage.

Last year, I met Suzanne again. She was still teaching, still bubbly. I asked her if she could help me become physically active again. Her immediate answer: “Of course!”

We started in the swimming pool and moved to fast walks. Our walks, besides keeping us fit, became moments of sharing.

I vaguely remembered her being brought up by an aunt; so I asked about it. Here is what she told me:

Her father had been a race-car driver. He and her mother had met, fallen in love and married. Very soon, Suzanne had been born.

It was far from a happy family story! Suzanne's mother was still very young and did not feel ready for family responsibilities or motherhood. She resented having to care for her baby. Later on, Suzanne was told that more than once her aunts had seen her mother pushing her head under water. Even Suzanne could remember her mum pulling her hair and screaming, “You are stupid! Shut your mouth!”

When Suzanne was still a child, her mother left the family. Her paternal grandmother and aunt became her mothers. Suzanne's view of this situation: “Being loved and brought up by my father and these two women was such a good thing... I would be ready to do it again anytime.”

Over the years, Suzanne became a P. T. Teacher, and a much sought after

instructor in the swimming, first aid and lifeguard fields. She married the man she loved and started her teaching career in a juvenile prison school.

Her first workplace toughened her. In there, most teachers ended up with a break down and many were victims of students' violence. Though she found her work meaningful, she realized that the set up and stress were taking a toll on her. When she saw how aggressive and nervous she had become, she started applying for work in other schools. That is how she ended up in ours.

Whenever she thought that her life was finally becoming ‘normal’ (good work, husband, kids, etc.), she'd hit some rough patch. It would be either major health issues, the death of her grandma or aunt or father, or her husband leaving.

After hearing Suzanne's story, I asked: “How come we could never find out the hardships you were undergoing? You'd always come with a smile, never complaining, never bitter? What gave you the strength to go on and be so giving with your children, students, people and even with your ex-husband?”

Suzanne explained that early on, she had decided to never speak ill of others, to see the positive side of whatever was happening to her, to love 100%, give herself 200%, to never fall into self-pity and to forgive.

Learning first aid and swimming really came handy in my life. However, meeting and knowing Suzanne taught me something much more precious. It showed me how joyful dedication and forgiveness truly make one alive ☺

● Sr Marie Gabrielle Riopel SCSM is the provincial of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Mary.

HERALDS OF GOOD NEWS

CLERICAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF APOSTOLIC LIFE

Heavenly Patrons



Founded On: 1984, 14th October in Eluru Diocese

Purpose: Formation of Dedicated Missionaries and Participating in the Church's Universal Mission Outreach

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- FR CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ

What is our attitude towards the millions of children, women and men who have to flee their homeland because of violence, war and grinding poverty? Do we see them as our sisters and brothers, or as a threat or a burden—or do we simply ignore their desperate need?

On 7 January 2019, in his annual but defining address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Vatican, Pope Francis said, *“Among the vulnerable of our time that the international community is called to defend are not only refugees but also migrants. Once again, I appeal to governments to provide assistance to all those forced to emigrate on account of the scourge of poverty and various forms of violence and persecution, as well as natural catastrophes and climatic disturbances, and to facilitate measures aimed at permitting their social integration in the receiving countries. Efforts also need to be made to prevent individuals from being constrained to abandon their families and countries, and to allow them to return safely and with full respect for their dignity and human rights. All human beings long for a better and more prosperous life, and the challenge of migration cannot be met with a mindset of violence and indifference, nor by offering merely partial solutions.”*

A day earlier, on 6 January, in a “heartfelt appeal” to European Leaders, Pope Francis in his Angelus message on the Feast of the Epiphany, urged them to show “concrete solidarity” and respond with compassion urgently to the

plight of 49 migrants aboard two ships in the Mediterranean Sea. The Pope was speaking to over 60,000 people assembled in St Peter’s Square.

The Dutch-registered vessel ‘Sea-Watch 3,’ operated by a German humanitarian group, picked up thirty-two of the migrants off Libya on 22 December while ‘Sea-Eye’—a second ship run by a different German charity—rescued another seventeen people on 29 December. Most of them are literally stranded at sea for more than a fortnight. Both Italy and Malta (countries with apparently Christian roots) have refused permission for the ships to land.

This is not the first time that European countries have vehemently opposed refugees fleeing war and persecution. On 17 June 2018, six hundred and thirty refugees finally disembarked in the port of Valencia, Spain, after an ordeal in the high seas, which lasted for more than a week. They arrived in three different ships, but the ship that was the focus of world attention was ‘MV Aquarius’—a refugee rescue ship jointly operated by ‘Doctors beyond Borders’ (known by the French acronym *Médecins Sans Frontières*, or MSF) and ‘SOS Mediterranean.’ Their teams have constantly been picking up people from the high seas making the perilous journey towards the European coast from sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. The ship was denied the right to dock in the two closest countries, Italy and Malta. There was a natural outrage on this inhuman stance by several other EU countries and from the global community. Fortunately, the newly elected Prime Minister of Spain volunteered to accept them, ordering authorities to allow the rescue ship carrying the refugees to dock in the eastern port of Valencia *“It is our obligation to help*

to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe and to offer a safe port to these people,” the Prime Minister’s office said in a statement.

Pope Francis has been a consistent and unequivocal champion of the refugees, the displaced and the migrants. Last year, on 1 January 2018, for the ‘World Day of Peace,’ his message focused on *“Migrants and refugees: men and women in search of peace”*. It was a direct invitation to *“all people and all nations on earth”* to realise that refugees and migrants are *“men and women in search of peace.”* He urges all through four key verbs to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees saying, *“In a spirit of compassion, let us embrace all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands. We know that it is not enough to open our hearts to the suffering of others. Much more remains to be done before our brothers and sisters can once again live peacefully in a safe home.”* He has never ceased to remind all—particularly Christians—that the refugees, the displaced and the migrants are our sisters and brothers. It is our duty to respond to their cries, to their plight!

From Good Times to Tragedy: The Case of Mahmoud

There are innumerable heart-rending stories of children, women and men who have to suffer because of forced displacement. Mahmoud from Al-Raqqah, for one, seems to have seen it all. There were the “good times,” he reminisces. Those were the days when he worked in Saudi Arabia in a multi-national company, which manufactured wires and cables. “We were people from different nationalities (India, Philippines, and Turkey) and even religions. We were like one family. We enjoyed each other’s company and food!” Mahmoud still uses his smattering of English, which he picked up there. However, everything changed for him very dramatically; today he feels that life for him is only about helplessness and hopelessness.

Seated in his dilapidated tent, Mahmoud looks much older than his sixty-seven years. His breathing is heavy. He has no sight in one of his eyes, and is partially blind in the other.

He sadly narrates how he lost his sight, “It was a day of heavy fighting; there were mortar shells falling everywhere. We were fleeing from one secure area to another. Suddenly I tripped and had a bad fall. Something pierced my left eye. My family rushed me to the nearest doctor. The Islamic State was ruling Raqqah at that time. No doctor was willing to treat me since it was a Friday (Friday is only for God, according to them). I was told to come back on Sunday. It was too late then. I lost my eyesight for no reason. I am angry about it!”

It is two years now since he and his family fled Al-Raqqah in

Syria and came to Lebanon. It was an extremely difficult trek for ten days through the mountains. The aerial bombings were on. They had to walk carefully through the tractor ruts because landmines were planted in several areas. They slept under the olive trees. They finally reached the safety of Bar Elias where they are in the midst of others from their own area.

“Today I feel totally lost, without sight, without work. What do I do?” The only comfort for him is the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). “The school is just across from our tents and our children can go there. They are accepted and welcomed. It is a joy to know all that they experience. Besides the JRS team comes to visit me often. They encourage me a lot. The little hope I now have in life is only because of them!” There is anguish in his voice when he says, “I don’t want to return to Syria, there is nothing left for me there!”

Roula, a Hope-Filled Fourteen-Year-Old

A complete contrast to Mahmoud is fourteen-year-old Roula Zahra. “I want to do everything in life,” says Roula coyly, but with a sense of determination. The ‘everything’ seems to be the mission statement of the life of this vibrant refugee girl child.

She was born in Homs, Syria. She hardly remembers her father. He died due to some illness when she was barely three.

Her mother had to struggle and to bring up the six children—two girls and four boys. It was a herculean task, but the family was able to make both ends meet.

That was before war broke out in Syria in March 2011. Overcoming many hurdles, Roula came, along with her mother and siblings, as refugees to Lebanon. A small apartment in the Bourj Hammoud area of Beirut has been their home ever since. Her sister, who is the eldest among the children, is now married, and lives in the same building. Roula is the youngest and in all frankness says that her brothers treat her very well.

Roula loves to study. She is one of the fortunate refugee children who is able to go to a Government morning-shift school. She is very focussed and wants to pursue a career as a scientist.

“What type of scientist would you like to become?” we ask her. She thinks for a while, then shakes her head and says, “I don’t know yet!”

When asked if she would like to be a space scientist, become an astronaut, and go to the moon or to mars, she smiles. There is a glint in her eye and she says boldly, “Maybe!” For Roula the sky is indeed the limit!

She is also a budding poet and artist. Her drawings speak volumes of her meticulousness and care for detail. However, her poems and jottings personify her passion and zest for life.



From her notebook, she reads out a touching poem, which she recently scripted in Arabic.

“I wish we could return to those good old days... I hope one day people awake from their deep sleep so they start loving, respecting, giving and the souls return to their old days. I hope that one day we would be able to exchange bread for salt, love for feelings and respect for kind words. Yesterday was a lesson, today is an experience and tomorrow is a new beginning!”

Roula is adamant she does not want to return to war-torn Syria. Instead, she dreams of Australia. Her best friend has now settled there. For the past one-year, she has been coming to the JRS Frans Van Der Lugt (FVDL) Centre for the afternoon tuition classes.

“I love coming here,” she says. “I make many new friends. I learn many new things. The teachers help me in my homework. Everyone is very helpful and loving.” In her notebook, Roula has a meaningful quote,

*“When it is raining, look for the rainbow;
When it is dark, look for the stars.”*

The “everything” in Roula’s life will have rains and darkness, but she will surely have the courage to see the rainbows and stars in them. It is not every day that one encounters a fourteen-year-old Syrian refugee girl who is ready to row out into the deep!

Mahmoud and Roula, in many ways, epitomise the suffering and helplessness; the resilience and hope of millions of refugees who have been forced to flee the security and safety of their homes due to conflict and persecution.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) states, “We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. An unprecedented *65.6 million people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. There are also 10 million stateless people who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights, such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement; nearly 20 people are forcibly displaced every minute as a result of conflict or persecution*”

Sadly, with growing numbers of refugees and others displaced, their reality across the world seems to be becoming more and more difficult. On 19 September 2016, at the conclusion of a United Nations Summit on Refugees and Migrants, in New York, world leaders produced a significant declaration to deal with the refugee crisis. To implement the lofty ideals encompassed in the Declaration, they committed themselves to drafting and approving, by the end of 2018, two Global Compacts: one regarding refugees and the second, for safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration. Both these

compacts are meant to comprehensively protect, promote the rights and integrate migrants and refugees into the mainstream.

We are already in 2019, but very little headway has been made.

Fears, Lies and Exclusion

On the contrary, xenophobia, racism, discrimination, pseudo-nationalism and exclusiveness is on the rise in several countries, including India. Right wing, anti-immigrant ‘populist’ leaders are winning elections in some key western countries. The military-industrial complex is certainly not keen that the wars end; they rake in huge profits from the sale of arms and ammunition to all the warring factions. There is an ever-increasing hostility towards refugees and the displaced. The bottom line among many of the politicians is that these

“outsiders” are a “threat” to their religion, culture and their established way of life. This naturally creates

insecurities and fears among many, especially among the older generation. Several recent studies, however, show that refugees and migrants contribute significantly and positively to the economy, the social life and the diversity of the host country. What is urgently required is a groundswell of public opinion that must challenge and even contradict the lies, the myths and the rumours about the refugees that seem to have a stranglehold on large sections of the population. There must be an attitudinal change among people from all walks of life.

Recently, India has been faring extremely poorly in response to the refugees and the displaced. In the past, India has always been a welcoming home to refugees. During the bloody and painful days of partition, there was a steady influx of refugees into India. Thanks to the statesmanship of India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, hundreds of thousands of Tibetan refugees (including the Dalai Lama) have made India their home for more than fifty years now. The Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 saw another major influx into the country; it was estimated that more than ten million East Bengali refugees entered India to escape mass killings and the brutality of that war. Though most returned to Bangladesh after independence, an estimated 1.5 million have continued to stay on in India. The Soviet-Afghan war of 1979, the more than twenty-five years of civil war in Sri Lanka since 1983, the atrocities on minorities in Myanmar, have in their wake brought in huge numbers of Afghanis, Sri Lankan Tamils, Chins and Rohingyas into India.

In 2017, thousands of Rohingyas fled Myanmar in the wake of unbelievable persecution. The Rohingyas, numbering about



1.2 million, are an ethnic minority group, mainly Muslim, who are concentrated in Myanmar’s Rakhine State. Despite having roots and living in the Buddhist-majority country for centuries, the Rohingyas have been ill-treated since 1982. They are denied citizenship, disenfranchised, regarded as illegal immigrants and rendered stateless. Since the late 1970’s, many of them have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, particularly Bangladesh.

In February 2017, a United Nations report had documented numerous instances of gang rape and killings, including of babies and young children, by Myanmar’s security forces. In the past month, because of some insurgency on the part of a small group of Rohingyas, the army’s viciousness, already very ghastly, has escalated even further. The military action triggered Asia’s biggest humanitarian crisis since Cambodia’s Pol Pot. Recently, the United Nations’ top human rights official called Myanmar’s ongoing military campaign against the Rohingya Muslim minority group in that country’s Rakhine state “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.”

Despite the suffering of the Rohingyas, the Government of India has been desperately trying to deport about 40,000 Rohingyas who are currently living in India and to prevent other Rohingyas from entering the country. This is a very sad commentary on the moral fibre of the current ruling dispensation. The actions by India against the refugees would clearly go against the country’s obligations under international and domestic law. Early last October, the Supreme Court rejected a petition not to deport seven Rohingyas back to Myanmar in spite of the country’s best-known legal luminaires defending the Rohingya petitioners and others against the Government of India. Their petition rested on two basic premises—that any deportation would violate their fundamental rights to equality and to life, under Articles 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution, and, secondly,

that any action by India in returning them to Myanmar would infringe international law, particularly the principle of non-refoulement (Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention). The Government’s key arguments were that terrorists ‘might’ have infiltrated the Rohingyas, therefore the security of the country is at stake; and that the country is not bound to follow the principle of non-refoulement, since it is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Anyone with a bit of common sense and compassion would refuse to buy these arguments.

India’s decision to send back the seven Rohingyas drew criticism from the United Nations. “The Indian government has an international legal obligation to fully acknowledge the institutionalised discrimination, persecution, hate and gross human rights violations these people have faced in their country of origin and provide them the necessary protection,” the UN’s Special Rapporteur on racism, Tendayi Achiume, said in a statement.

At the end of November and beginning December 2018, Pope Francis visited both Myanmar and Bangladesh. His visit brought global attention on the plight of the Rohingyas. On 27 August 2017, he said, “Sad news has reached us of the persecution of our Rohingya brothers and sisters, a religious minority. I would like to express my full closeness to them – and let all of us ask the Lord to save them, and to raise up men and women of good will to help them, who shall give them their full rights. Let us pray for our Rohingya brethren.” After meeting some Rohingyas in Bangla Desh, he said, “The presence of God today is also called Rohingya.”

There are also millions of poor and marginalized all over the country, who are internally displaced because of persecution, natural calamities, mega-projects and want of basic amenities. Most of them are exploited and fall prey to unscrupulous elements like human traffickers and smugglers. They are denied their basic rights and become victims of an unjust and callous system.

The Church in India, particularly men and women religious, are challenged to accompany and advocate for the refugees and the displaced – to ensure that they are welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated in the wider society and, above all, treated as “our sisters and brothers”



● **Fr Cedric Prakash**, a Jesuit priest of the Gujarat Province, is a renowned human rights activist. For his work on human rights, reconciliation and peace he has received several international and national awards. From 2016 to 2018 he was based in Beirut, Lebanon, and worked with the refugees/displaced in Advocacy and Communications in the Jesuit Refugee Service (MENA Region)
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Two Migrant Workers

Here are two true stories that illustrate the condition of India's millions of migrant workers. They move hundreds of kilometres from their home states to wherever they find—usually to a city, but more and more to the Southern States, especially Tamilnadu and Kerala. With 45.36 crore migrants in India, every third citizen of the country is a migrant. Of these, 69 per cent are women, majority of whom have cited marriage or having migrated with their husbands as the reason for their translocation.

“The socio-economic development of the southern states is considerably higher and that attracts people. Another factor is that because of better education levels and awareness, local residents of these areas get drawn towards better economic opportunities. This vacuum that gets created gets filled up by people from outside. These developed areas face a crisis of manpower, especially for low-skilled jobs, which leads to migration,” says Dr Abdul Shaban. Some other states too have high numbers of migrants. (*The Indian Express*, Dec. 5, 2016)

Lalita's Story

Mrs. Lalita, 35, lost her husband in 2016. She has three school-going children. Lalita and family live in Palam, Delhi. She used to work for three or four families. Her husband was a security guard and was given the Guard's room for their stay. One morning Lalita found her husband lying below the stairs, unconscious. She got him admitted in the hospital in a Government Hospital, since she could not afford a private hospital. He passed away after three days. Lalita had no means to take his body to Bihar, where they came from, but she had to go there for the ceremonies associated with his death. When she came back, she lost her job, and now had no place to stay. Where will she and her three children stay? How will she feed them and clothe them?

This is the story of most of the domestic workers in India. They work far from their native villages. They do not have any social security coverage, and often no fixed salary either. They make others' lives comfortable, but they themselves are deprived of the necessities of life.

Most migrants within India are illiterate, poor and have no social security or other sources of income. Their numbers are huge, going into many millions. Most migrate to other states for work; women have to migrate if their husband is from elsewhere, or finds work in a new place. Financial hardships are their most pressing problem. Take the case of Rathore.

Rathore: “We, poor people, must work till we die”

Sixty-year-old Jeevan Rathore from the Bhil community, Bhuriwada district of Rajasthan, is a widower, living with his four married children. They live as a joint family with three daughters-in law. Though he has a small thatched house in his village, he prefers to live in a tiny rented single room in a multi-storey building with his eight family members. He came to Delhi when he was 15 and got work at a construction site. He lives in a slum with no toilet. He has no land. He proudly said he has all the government IDs (voter ID and Adhar card) with



a Delhi address. The room has no water. Every day, he has to carry water from the ground floor to his 2nd floor room. When asked about his plans and dreams, he said: “Those who have no home or property, must work until we die. What dreams can we have?” His work for the past forty years has been “brick-breaking.” He works eight hours, and earns Rs.300 or Rs.350 per day, and his wife earned still less for the same work. He is afraid that, if he loses his job, others may take it; so, he accepts whatever the contractor pays him. His family's total monthly income is Rs 8,000, all of which they have to spend on food.

Rathore suffers from TB. When he got hit by an axe, the contractor took him for first aid, but did not give him any compensation. If he had land in his village, he would go back. His children are not educated, since they too started working early.

There are millions of Rathores in India. They come from UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and now also from the North East. They work in the construction sector (40 million), domestic work (20 million), textile industry (11 million), brick kiln work (10 million), transportation, mines & quarries and agriculture. Migrants form the largest part of India's vast unorganized work sector. Most live in urban slums, from which they can be evicted suddenly ☹

(From a report prepared by the CBCI Commission on Labour)



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WHY ME???

- SR ANTONY MARY FMM

We can learn precious lessons from what this Franciscan Missionary of Mary experienced and learnt by working for HIV-positive children. With this article, we launch a new column, “Moving to the Margins (Peripheries)”, something Pope Francis has been repeatedly asking religious to do. MAGNET welcomes other contributions about ministry among the most disadvantaged—prisoners, street children, trafficked persons, palliative care, -- Editor

All of us raise this question when we face tough situations in life. This question haunts us when we become a victim to certain VERY HARD SITUATIONS.

I live and work among children affected by AIDS. When I was asked to take up this ministry, a lot of thoughts disturbed my mind... fear of the severity of the disease, fear of social stigma, fear of its contagious nature, etc. With all these disturbing thoughts in my mind, I said ‘Yes.’ Actually, when I looked at this ministry from far, it seemed frightening. Now it has changed my attitude completely.

Living with these children, who contracted AIDS through no fault of their own, taught me much. It has changed me profoundly.

You may wonder about the question: WHY ME?

Yes, this is the question we need to answer day in and day out to every child living with HIV. We run a home for the HIV-infected girl children and a rural health centre. It is situated twenty-three kilometres from Namakkal in Tamil Nadu. They are school-going children from 3rd std to 12th std, studying in the Government schools. We take the children referred by GOs, NGOs and any infected child in need of our care and



They are to be treated as preterm children with very low immunity. They need good nutrition, prompt medical assistance and, above all, much LOVE and ACCEPTANCE.

support.

They are to be treated as preterm children with very low immunity. They need good nutrition, prompt medical assistance and, above all, much LOVE and ACCEPTANCE. The children are mostly from broken families, single parents or illegally born and not accepted as their own by the parents.

Each one has a sad story behind her. Their need for belongingness is, understandably, very strong. They are angry with their parents and with their health condition. They raise a lot of questions which are difficult to answer. One of the major questions is, WHY ME?

They have hidden fears of being rejected if known as HIV-positive, and difficulty in accepting themselves.

It broke me to pieces when I asked a child for her Dad’s name. She said, “Which Dad’s name should I tell?”

Another child told me, “My father lives in the same village, but so far I am never allowed to call him *Appa* (Daddy) or talk to him.”

It embarrassed me when a child asked me, “Can I call you Mom?”

They like to hang around you—touching, playing, pulling and pushing. This home is their whole world. They enjoy our chats and ask many interesting

questions. The old students come for Christmas without any invitation or information, just as our close relatives come to our homes. Christmas has a totally different feel here which makes me grateful for the commitment of my predecessors. The simple life style, flexibility of the programme and the hospitality of this community makes one feel at home.

The sharing of the people living with HIV has changed my attitude of anger to compassion. We take the necessary steps to reorient the children to their family or relatives, taking care of their safety, education and settlement.

They are innocent. They live with a life-threatening and contagious disease, which they acquired through no fault of their own. Those whose behaviour caused their disease do not even own up their responsibility or care for these children.

What is our role? What can we do for them? As religious, I believe our role lies in helping them accept the GIVENS of their life and make RIGHTFUL CHOICES to live life to its MAXIMUM that is possible for them. Right now, the best we can do is to care for them lovingly, give them as much loving attention as we can, look after their health and other needs, and help them make the best possible choices.

They look happy even though their days are numbered. They have very few expectations from their life. They get



into mood swings often, of course, and are very sensitive to corrections. They don’t appreciate sympathy, but like to be treated as normal kids. Sometimes they make me wonder if they really know their condition. Adolescent crisis is another major challenge to be dealt with. We had to change them from co-educational schools to an all-girls school which they never liked so far. Fear grips us when we hear constant complaints about them.

Their future settlement is a question mark before our eyes. We educate them according to their calibre. Many girls are now doing

their college and professional studies. They are slowly reaching the age when other young women of their age get married. It is a long journey ahead.

We do look forward for the gradual decline in the number of children being born with HIV, since an HIV-positive mother can give birth to a healthy child. A day may dawn when all the children are free of this disease. Let us together work to see this day!

It helps us also to open our eyes and be immensely grateful for the priceless gift of life and health—something these children desperately wish for, and do not have.



● Sr Antony Mary FMM is a Franciscan Missionary of Mary working for girl children suffering from AIDS.

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TEAM: A group of Religious and lay professionals, headed by Dr. Clifford, ocd.

Participation: Only through prior registration; Limited number and on *first come, first served* basis.

WRITE TO US: For all details, later dates & registration (*in case of necessity, retreats & spirituality courses*).

Director, Dhyan Sadhana, Bogadi, Mysuru (Mysore), Karnataka 570026; Whatsapp: 87624 23129; 88674 06776; dhyanasadhana@gmail.com, hhtcell@gmail.com, Website: www.dhyanasadhna.com



HUMAN BEINGS TRAFFICKED FOR PROFIT

The three most profitable “businesses” in the world are deeply damaging to human beings—sale of arms, sale of drugs and sale of human beings. From being the third most profitable, trafficking in humans has become the second most profitable industry, since (unlike drugs) a human being can be sold again and again. Think of girls promised jobs in our cities, then gang-raped and sold to brothels where they meet violence and degradation every day. Often they were led there by people they knew and trusted, including some family members.

A recent Vatican document addresses this issue.

Pope Francis has been very vocal in addressing the world community on Migrants, Refugees and Trafficking. On 17 Jan 2019 he released a document: *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking*. To address the trafficking and enslavement of human beings, the Migrants & Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development held two consultations with Church leaders, scholars and experienced practitioners and partner organizations working in the field. Participants exchanged experiences and viewpoints, addressing relevant aspects of the phenomenon. The Church’s full response was considered, in terms of strengths, weaknesses, pastoral and political opportunities as well as enhanced coordination worldwide.

This 42-page document takes a wide-ranging look at the question of Human Trafficking, providing both a reading of the phenomenon, its causes and origins, seeking to offer an adequate understanding of its dynamics and developments in order to support the necessary struggle against it.

Human trafficking, a grave crime in itself, is accompanied by other atrocities and violations of human rights, such as slave labour, using child soldiers, sexual violence and exploitation, as well as the commercialisation of human organs.

The exploitation of others has perversely but quietly been accepted as a means to achieve one’s own pleasure and gain, although the language used may reference the laws of the market: relentless competition to reduce by any means the costs for any good and service. Human trafficking deprives many people of their identity and dignity, and commodifies them to the advantage of a few.

The Sad Truth

Each year thousands of innocent men, women and children are victims of exploitative labour and sexual abuse, and of organ trafficking, and it seems that we have become so accustomed to this, as to consider it a normal thing. This is deplorable; it is cruel; it is criminal! I wish to remind everyone of the duty to combat

this abhorrent plague, a form of modern slavery. (Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 30 July 2017)

This happens when the deity of money rather than the human being is at the centre of an economic system. Yes, at the centre of every social or economic system must be the person, image of God, created to ‘have dominion over’ the universe. The inversion of values happens when the person is displaced and money becomes the deity.

Those Who Abuse the Victims

In public discourse, much attention is paid to traffickers who provide the supply side of human trafficking, although few are arrested and far fewer still convicted. Little is said about the consumers: the factor of demand, which traffickers continue to meet. Considering the different areas in which the victims of trafficking work or operate (agriculture, domestic work, prostitution and so on), the consumers constitute a huge mass who seem largely unaware of the exploitation of persons who are trafficked, yet enjoy the benefits and services they provide. If men, women and children are trafficked, this is ultimately because there is great demand that makes their exploitation profitable.

People who generate the demand share real responsibility for the destructive impact of their behaviour on other human persons, and for the moral values violated in the process.

What Many Do Not Know

As the Pope says, “*Certainly there is a lot of ignorance on the topic of trafficking. But sometimes there also seems to be little will to understand the scope of the issue. Why? Because it touches close to our conscience; because it is thorny; because it is shameful. Then there are those who, even knowing this, do not want to speak because they are at the end of the ‘supply chain’, as a user of the ‘services’ that are offered on the street or on the Internet.*”

All over the world the Church is committed to denouncing the commodification and exploitation of people, resulting from the ‘throw away culture’ which the Holy Father repeatedly condemns and links to the god of money.

Modern finance, commerce, transportation and communications provide opportunities for the unscrupulous to enter into the system of entrapping and exploiting human persons. In industries such as agriculture, fishing, construction and mining, trafficking has expanded through collaboration among numerous and various perpetrators, making the phenomenon more complex and complicating the assessment of its origins and impact. The crime is easily hidden within current business models. Outrage, while utterly appropriate,

tends to obscure the cold logic of human trafficking as extremely profitable, implanted within even well-regarded businesses. When well-meaning efforts to block it are undertaken, unscrupulous entrepreneurs simply shift their tactics to avoid the counter-measures.

There is an urgent need for ethical assessment of current business models, aimed at revealing the mechanisms of entrapment and exploitation adopted by companies. The Church encourages both sides of the commercial relationship – entrepreneurs who provide and end-users who consume – to engage in this ethical reflection and then to make the changes that are called for.

We Need to Face the Facts

When Human Trafficking occurs across a country’s borders, the communities of origin, transit and destination should be properly informed. Relevant information includes prevention, identification and prosecution; the risks, modalities and consequences of trafficking; and applicable international and national laws. Specific programmes of education and self-education, aimed at reinforcing the capacities for prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership, should be offered at the community level.

If the human family wishes to stamp out this evil, society itself will have to change. In order to bring human trafficking to an end, all people will need to simplify their needs, control their habits, and rein in their appetites. “Simplicity, moderation and discipline, as well as a spirit of sacrifice, must become a part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few,” (Pope John Paul II) and this “implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures.” (Pope Francis)

“I would like to remind everyone, especially governments engaged in boosting the world’s economic and social assets, that the primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the human person in his or her integrity: Man is the source, the focus and the aim of all economic and social life.” (Pope Francis, *Angelus*, 30 July 2017).

The Three P’s of the Palermo Protocol

The Palermo Protocol is the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime is the internationally accepted definition of human trafficking.

The implementation of the *Palermo Protocol* has been commonly presented in the form of three Ps: *prevention, protection and prosecution*. Several national and international institutions have developed their policies and programmes along these lines. Moreover, there is a fourth ‘P,’ namely partnership, which is no less important, but may well remain weak. Lack of cooperation - or even competition - among various State actors often renders well-intentioned policies and programmes ineffective. This is true at the international, national and local levels. Similar difficulties diminish the effectiveness of the actions undertaken by civil society organizations.

When trafficking occurs across a country’s borders, the communities of origin, transit and destination should be properly informed. Relevant information includes prevention, identification and prosecution; the risks, modalities and consequences of trafficking; and applicable international and national laws. Specific programmes of education and self-education aimed at reinforcing the capacities for prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership should be offered at the community level. Such programmes should also envisage the appropriate involvement of individuals who have been trafficked.

In addition, youth should be educated to embrace a responsible sexual life within the context of faithful and life-long marriage, to show an ethical respect for other persons, to use the internet with prudence and discrimination, and to inform themselves about the origins and production of the goods they purchase.

A book

The Migrants and Refugees Section also released a separate publication, *Lights on the Ways of Hope*, which compiles Pope Francis’ teachings on migrants, refugees and human trafficking.

“Its purpose is similar to that of the ‘Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church,’ to serve one and all as an instrument for the moral and pastoral discernment of the complex events” concerning the movements of people today, and as “a guide to inspire” people to look to the future with hope.

The nearly 500-page volume collects more than 300 complete or excerpted speeches, messages and reflections by the pope on the three themes. The Vatican will host a conference focused on the implementation of these guidelines in early April ☞

(Compiled from the Vatican document, *Pastoral Orientations on human trafficking*)



"DO NOT STAND IDLY BY!"

- FR M A JOE ANTONY, SJ

The exceptional story of a courageous doctor serving victims of horrendous violence in what is known as the most dangerous country for women.

“It was in 1999 that our first rape victim was brought into the hospital. After being raped, bullets had been fired into her genitals and thighs. I thought that was a barbaric act of war, but the real shock came three months later. Forty-five women came to us with the same story. Other women came to us with burns. They said that after they had been raped, chemicals had been poured on their genitals. I started to ask myself what was going on. These weren’t just violent acts of war, but part of a strategy. You had situations where multiple people were raped at the same time, publicly—a whole village might be raped during the night.”

These are words spoken by Dr Denis Mukwege, one of the two who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2018. A gynecologist and Pentecostal pastor, Denis Mukwege was born on 1 March 1955 in a country that is said to be the most dangerous country in the world for women – Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). His father was a Pentecostal minister and he studied medicine because, he said, he wanted to heal the sick people for whom his father prayed.

After he got his medical degree from the University of Burundi in 1983, Mukwege worked as a pediatrician in a village hospital. In order to help women patients, he studied gynecology and obstetrics at the University of Angers, France, completed his medical residency in 1989 and returned to the village hospital in Limera, DRC. Describing what happened when a civil war broke out, he said, “Thirty-five patients in my hospital in Lemera in eastern DRC were killed in their beds. I fled to Bukavu, 100 kilometres to the north, and started a hospital made from tents. In 1998, everything was destroyed again. So, I started all over again in 1999.” Helped by Swedish aid agencies, he founded the Panzi Hospital that year.

Mukwege evolved a system of caring for these helpless women, most of whom came with nothing—not even clothes. So, after the surgery or treatment, his team helps them develop their skills, find a job and find a school for their children. His team includes lawyers who help the rape victims file cases against their assailants.

Along with his colleagues, Dr Mukwege has now treated more than 30,000 rape victims. Addressing the UN General Assembly on 25 Sept 2012, he said his country was “completely pillaged and powerless in the face of five hundred thousand of its girls raped during sixteen years; six million of its sons and daughters killed during sixteen years without any lasting solution in sight... We need action, urgent action, to arrest those responsible for these crimes against humanity and to bring them to justice. We need your unanimous condemnation of the

rebel groups who are responsible for these acts. We also need concrete actions with regard to member states of the United Nations who support these barbarities from near or afar.”

What happened when he returned to DRC after addressing the UN General Assembly was to be expected. Four armed men entered his hospital and tried to kill him. His guard, who tried to protect him, was shot down, but Dr Mukwege escaped. Fearing for his life, his friends asked him to flee to Europe. But after a year he responded to the pleas of Congolese women and returned to DRC on 14 January 2013, to a rapturous welcome by his former patients and the public.

After the announcement that he has been selected for the Nobel Peace Prize, Kate Grant, a longtime friend and supporter



of Mukwege, said, “His 400-bed Panzi Hospital is a beacon of healing and hope to women who have been traumatized by decades of war. He and his staff work day and night to heal these victims, body and soul... Every day, he serves as my North Star. His portrait has hung on the wall next to my desk for nearly as long as I’ve known him. In a white doctor’s coat and a lapel pin that says, ‘Do not stand idly by,’ he reminds me every day of the sacrifices he has made to give the voiceless a voice, and return their health and hope.” ☩



● **Fr M A Joe Antony SJ** is the executive secretary and advisor to the Provincial Superior of Jesuits in Tamil Nadu. For 20 years he edited *The New Leader* and gave it a new life and reputation, and for 17 years *Jivan*, the magazine of South Asian Jesuits.

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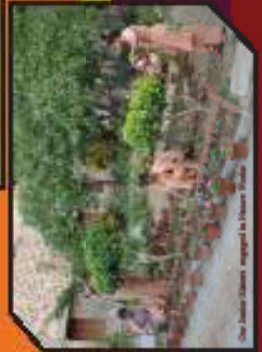
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Vision—a Leader’s Most Important Function

- FR JOE MANNATH SDB

Among the twenty-five seminars offered by National CRI between Jan 2018 and March 2019 are five one-week Seminars with the title, “Being a Superior Today: The Essentials.” We bring in competent resource persons, and look at the essential aspects of animation and administration which a religious superior should know. The anonymous written feedback after every seminar has been overwhelmingly positive.

One of the sessions I take in these seminars is “Tips for Superiors”—a sort of bird’s-eye-view of all that a superior needs to keep in mind today.

It may be useful—for present and future superiors, as well as others in leadership roles—to have a more detailed look at these tips. Let me start with the most basic—a clear vision.

Cases

Years ago, when a Salesian province in India published the ranks won by our pupils in every school, as well as the percentage of passes—showing a distinguished academic performance, one of our major superiors from Rome raised the question, “Is this your idea of a good Salesian school?” A very good question! If a school is concerned mostly about academic performance, it will be tempted to recruit cleverer students from better-off or well-educated families, rather than open its doors to the poor and to children of illiterate parents.

Whether a Catholic school or hospital caters more to the poor or to the rich, depends mostly on the vision of the founder and of the present superiors. The leaders need to be clear about this: *What is the ideal institution we want to run?*

The right vision is the issue here: What is a good Salesian school? The same goes for any Catholic school or any other work run by a religious order or diocese.

Right vision for an institution is like the roots for a tree. Roots are unseen, but they are more important than what is seen.

Another example:

Eat the Fruits!

When I was at Don Bosco Renewal Centre (DBRC), Bangalore, which runs month-long on-going formation courses for religious and priests, we used to introduce the participants to life in DBRC. Among our announcements was one about the fruit trees on the compound. We would tell the group: “Feel free to climb the trees, pluck the fruits and eat.” The participants would be surprised. They would tell us: “Many centres ask us on the first day not to touch anything.” We would say: “We want you to feel at home. This is your home now. The fruits are there to be eaten.”

This too comes from a certain vision of our place and our ministry. We wanted our centre to be a home away from home. Part of its being a home is that you can pluck the fruits on the trees and eat. This also means that treating people lovingly is more important than making money by selling those fruits.

In seminars for superiors, I ask each one to write: *“How would you describe a good Franciscan/Jesuit/Carmelite/MC Sister, ... (depending on their congregation)? How would you describe a good community of your religious order?”*

They share this in pairs, with someone of another religious order. This helps to clarify one’s own vision and to understand how another religious may have a slightly different view of the ideal religious or ideal community.

Vision of India

Right now, within our country, there are contrasting visions of India. This determines who is a good citizen, who is a true patriot, etc. People (and political parties) differ sharply (and at times violently) on what is good for the nation and how this country should be run. These are not minor points of dissent. The vision affects everything else. Someone faithful to our present Constitutions and another swearing by Hindu Rashtra will have very different visions of India.

This is true in all areas of life.

Here are a few examples: What is your understanding of an ideal

marriage? (A husband and wife may differ sharply on this.) Who is a good boy or girl? Who is a good religious? Who is saintly?

People Like and Dislike Pope Francis

Pope Francis is considered by many, even in secular circles, as the world’s most influential and admired leader. Most Catholics are enthusiastic about him. But this does not mean that everyone likes him or agrees with him. This depends largely on whether one is convinced of, and is enthused by, the vision of faith and of the Church that he stands for. He sees the Church as mostly a hospital near a battle field, where people are getting wounded and need urgent attention. There is no time in such a situation for beautifully worded theological discussions. The urgency is to save lives. His approach is pastoral more than theological or theoretical. Bishops, priests, religious and laity who prefer a Church with neat definitions and clear structures, do not like his approach. They are very critical of him. So, too, a number of Church members are not enthused about his insistence on a Church that is poor, and for the poor. Some like luxury, titles, special treatment for priests and bishops, etc., rather than the Gospel simplicity that Francis is trying to live and teach.

These are different visions of what it means to be Church, and what fidelity should mean.

Similarly, two members of the same religious order may have different visions of who is a good member, who would make the ideal superior, etc.

When the woman caught in the act of adultery was brought to Jesus by a group of self-righteous men who wanted him to answer with a clear Yes or No (and thus get trapped in their game), Jesus looked at the woman and the whole discussion differently. His insistent teaching was to help us move from condemnation to compassion, from self-righteousness to honest admission of our own guilt. God sees each of us—including the woman caught in adultery—very differently from how an angry crowd sees. His vision is not ours. The world would be a very different place if we were to develop a more God-like vision.

Are you a superior?

If you, who are reading this, are a superior, how do you see your role? What is your vision of a good religious and of a good religious community? How do you see people’s failures? What kind of community are you trying to build? By living with you, what image will the others develop about being mature or holy?

How do you see the community property or money?

Do you see the truth that it is not yours, but belongs to God, and hence to the community and to the mission?

There are basically two types of leaders—passive re-actors who move from crisis to another, and visionary leaders who pursue worthwhile goals. Some are passive until some crisis comes up, then invest all their energy in solving that crisis, after which they go back to their lethargic “normal” state.

Others have a clear vision and a sense of mission—more about mission in another article—and are *pro-active*. Their vision throws light on their path, and keeps them from investing much energy on trifles. They are willing to work hard and pay any price to be faithful to the vision; they will not swerve from it because of criticism or lack of encouragement from higher-ups.

Great leaders are visionaries



All great leaders are visionaries. They really see what many others do not. Think of a Mahatma Gandhi and his vision of an India where all lived in fraternity; or Steve Jobs, who did not cater to the vagaries of the crowd, but insisted on producing the best possible products; or Ambedkar’s vision of a country where people’s rights will be guaranteed; of Mother Teresa’s vision of the poor as the sacrament of encounter with God; or Don Bosco’s vision of young people as persons full of potential, who needed loving guidance, not punishments; or Martin Luther King’s vision of an America where a person would be judged not by skin colour, but by strength of character.

Visionaries are few. Grumblers and gossips are many. That is why there are millions of followers, but very few true leaders.

Religious superiors will do their real job if they integrate Jesus’ vision into their vision and life-style, and try to bring about the kind of “Kingdom” he lived and died for. May we at least try to see through His eyes, and develop a vision in line with His ✠

● Fr Joe Mannath SDB is the author of academic as well as bestselling books and hundreds of articles.

Communion, Compassion and Contemplation

- CHERYLANNE MENEZES



spirituality came to life, a spirituality of unity or communion lived by men, women, families, priests religious, bishops....

An original fact of this new spirituality, in the way it is lived and in its specific fruits, is that, it is radically *a shared experience*. *It is about going to God together; a collective sanctity of people*. And living this spirituality in the various environments and cultures, various avenues of fruitful dialogues have opened up: in the Catholic world with other movements and associations to contribute to strengthening unity, with Christians of different Churches working for full communion; with persons of various religions in fostering the journey of the unity of the human family; with persons of other convictions based on solidarity, justice, peace; with the world of culture and various human endeavors to bring about a new humanity. All this is what the Focolare works towards.

Cherylanne, a young member of the Focolare movement, shows us through real life examples how deep mutual love based on Jesus' life and teachings, can bring unity among people.

Crucial Role of Mutual Love

It is an ecclesial movement made up of a variety of people: young people, adults, children, families, priests, religious, bishops and the men and women focolarine like me, who live a consecrated life in communities. The word *Focolare* in Italian means a hearth or "fire place." The official name is the "Work of Mary" and the greatest work that Mary as a woman of Contemplation, Communion and Compassion did was to generate Jesus in the world and as a Movement we feel this calling to do the same, spiritually.

The greatest challenge we have in front of us is that of "rising to the highest contemplation whilst remaining in the midst of the world." It is only through re-uniting the 'spiritual' with the other dimensions of life that this is possible and social change can come about. In Chiara's view, *the way of 'drawing God down' into human affairs is through generating his presence in the community*. God is 'drawn down' in our midst by mutual love that exists between people. It is the 'condition' for God to be present in the community.

Mutual love is the most powerful transformative force in the world and this is strongly felt and an effort is made to live it first of all within the Focolare communities and by its members. *To love to the point that it becomes reciprocal is very challenging*. It calls for putting aside our own ideas, thoughts, and plans however perfect it may seem, so as to welcome that of the other. You can only do your part to sincerely demonstrate to the other that you are ready to give your life for the other. Only when two or more people live in this way can you experience what unity

My thoughts go to Chiara Lubich, the founder of the Focolare Movement, a woman, a mystic, a spiritual and social reformer who has attracted women and men of all cultures and ages to follow her charism of unity, and I tried to draw out all that could throw light on these three words through our own experiences and I hope that in turn they could be a light to you and to your journey.

Unity is at the heart of Jesus' message and his life and is also the deep yearning of every human being.

Love in the Midst of Hatred

It was right in the middle of the hate, violence and division of Second World War that Chiara and her first companions discovered their calling to unity and universal brotherhood. Being able to carry only a small book of the Gospel with them every time they had to run to the air raid shelters when the sirens went off, Chiara and her friends started to read the Gospel and live it in their daily lives, putting into practice all aspects of love that the Gospel spoke of. They soon rediscovered the invitation to constant, reciprocal love to meriting the presence of Jesus among them and this experience made their personal lives and their lives as a group take on a qualitative leap ahead. Chiara had no idea of forming any movement, but eventually a new

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is...because you live in Christ, it's Christ who takes over and his presence does miracles ...you see the effects particularly in its economic and social impact, God's Providence which is always so timely and then of course the light, wisdom, joy, peace, love the right ideas, innovative solutions to problems everything else follows.

Two Experiences of Hurt and Forgiveness

So what does it mean for us *to be women or persons of Contemplation?* It means being able to live our daily chores guided by two fires - the fire and light of God within us and the fire and light that comes from the presence of Jesus who lives among us...It's indescribable but it's a real presence, ... and we can tell when it is missing...

Safeguarding the presence of Jesus through mutual love was the most important thing for Chiara And her first companions. Once, one of them, Palmira, was heading for Mass and she was already in a hurry. Natalia, another of the focolarine staying with her, made her lose more time. It was something trivial, but



Palmira was a bit upset with Natalia and left in haste for Mass. As Mass started, she was unable to concentrate, since she felt that she was at Mass without being in full unity with Natalia. So she rushed out of the church and headed straight to the house which was a few minutes away. She asked pardon of Natalia, who was totally oblivious of the fact that Palmira was upset, and then ran back to the church in time to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Mutual love above all else.

This is still how we try to live even today, I had a formation meeting of the youth and I had left home with a little misunderstanding with one of the focolarine with whom I live. As I was nearing the meeting place, I was feeling so dejected and not in a position to conduct any meeting. I could no longer feel the strength of unity as I had lost the precious presence of Jesus in our midst because of what I had said to the other focolarina before leaving the house. I said to myself, "And what have I to offer these youth if not Jesus?" I had no phone and so I stopped the rickshaw in front of a Church and rushed to Jesus present

in the tabernacle, "Jesus," I said, "right now I have no way of asking forgiveness to the one I have hurt, but I ask you, present in her, to forgive me...and when I go home I'll make up." Just this was enough to give me all the strength, vigour and enthusiasm needed for the youth meeting.

The Deep Impact of Mutual Love

It is a life-style that is inculcated right across the movement in smaller units or groups of youth, adults, families and it has a tremendous impact on all that we do whether it is work, activities, meetings, outreach, programs, and diffusion...! This is also put to test when we all work together on common programs, as we all have different viewpoints, different ways of doing, different levels of experience. But this constant training of maintaining the presence of God among us through our readiness to give our lives for one another is a reality with all the effort that it takes individually and collectively and *it's amazing and heartwarming when people who come in contact with these groups or who attend the programs express that they have had an experience of God, or they have got the answer or they feel encouraged to love, to forgive...*

Here is a true story.

There was a big youth event and great preparations were on. The music band too was all geared up with regular practices. Just a few days before the event, there was a bit of friction and all were not giving their 100%. It was subtle and one could have even not noticed and continued. But then, at one practice, one stopped to say: "We can't continue practices if we are not ready to die for each other." A moment of total silence followed, as all were shocked. Then one took courage to ask pardon, and one by one all promised to their commitment to love. The event had a tremendous impact on all who came.

Compassion: Making Ourselves One

In order to love in the truest sense, we need to know how to be one with the others. To put ourselves in the shoes of the others. This means to be empty of ourselves, our worries and thoughts in front of every person who passes by us, so that we can fully enter into his/her heart. This means setting aside all our apprehensions, judgments, or reservations that we may have of the other in even small things. This is not sentimentalism, but rather, concrete action, love at work.

A true story illustrates this point.

Two years ago, we were at the wedding of the daughter of one of our members. Almost a year after the wedding one day we go to know that she was very ill and was rushed to the hospital. She was in need of blood and many from the Focolare and friends came forward to donate. Her situation worsened and she was kept in the ICU. The expenses were high and all of us knew that the family had limited funds. *What could be done?* The youth met among themselves and took the initiative of a fund-raiser and all pitched in. This situation brought everyone together

in prayer and action. Soon we discovered that the illness was a fruit of harassment by the in-laws. It was really sad. The girl finally could not be saved. One could sense that there was a rising anger and bitter feeling in the family towards the husband and his family for what had happened. So, all of us, especially some members in the field of counseling, came forth to spend time and support and help the family and to also help take the correct action against the wrong doers. *The result?* The mother, deeply touched by all the love received, is now even more in the forefront keen to give of herself and talents to others, the older sister, who is working with one of our social projects, wants to train girls who are able to stand on their own feet. Couples came forward to offer several services. All this is a fruit not of planned programs but of making ourselves one with the family and the situation.

Communion: Fostering Unity Wherever We Are

It requires us to be *Initiators of Communion, by taking the initiative to love.* Creating



a climate conducive to dialogue and sharing, because relations between members of the community do not arise spontaneously. To grow, they need a favorable climate of love, taking the initiative to love

one by one without waiting to be loved in return. Chiara has always helped us to make sure that, before all else, the walls of our focolares are not shaking, i.e., that there is no one among us who is sad, doubtful, worried, suffering. All the rest is a fruit of our reciprocal love. It may sometimes be easier to do social work, or go to the office, schools, etc., and not see eye to eye with the one you live with. So, first of all, be a family and in such a climate no one is afraid to share their opinion even though different. It implies finding every way to get all involved, although this will sometimes take more time.

This way of loving provokes reciprocity sooner or later and it can also provoke a chain reaction of love. Here the journey and experience of communion begins, which requires to be renewed every time. All the effort that I put in to make sure that Jesus is always present among us, goes a long way in stimulating also the others to live in God's presence as often as possible.

What Happened in an Office

We all go to work to earn our living. Work places can be quite challenging. Although we try to take this spirit of life there where we are in the way we work, or how we relate with colleagues and bosses, it's not easy, with the stiff competition, lobbying and backbiting that happen.

A few months ago, one of the focolarine who stays with me was a victim of such lobbying. Some colleagues wanted to grab

more responsibility and position and they made the life of others miserable. Two employees left, since they could not bear the stress. This focolarina would come home everyday destroyed by the stressful atmosphere at work. All of us, knowing what she was going through, tried to give her all the support she needed, to listen completely, send her messages of encouragement during the day, pray for her or see some solutions together.

She too could have given up like the other two who left, end up hardening her heart. Instead, we were all sustaining her efforts to challenge even this difficulty with an attitude of love. What is the result? Two months down the line, other colleagues too got the courage to stand up against what was going on in the office and this then came to the attention of higher ups. It could have been even risky, but God intervened. The main boss was transferred to another department. The situation is much better now and she too is a point of reference because of the manner in which she handled the situation. She says this would have been impossible without this life of unity in the community.

Let me end with a quote from Chiara Lubich, the foundress of the Focolare movement:

The Attraction of Modern Times

"This is the great attraction of modern times; to penetrate to the highest contemplation while mingling with everyone, one person alongside others. I would say even more: to lose oneself in the crowd in order to fill it with the divine, like a piece of bread dipped in wine. I would say even more: made sharers of God's plans for humanity, to embroider patterns of light on the crowd, and at the same time to share with our neighbor shame, hunger, troubles, brief joys. Because the attraction of our times, as of all times, is the highest conceivable expression of the human and the divine, Jesus and Mary: the Word of God, a carpenter's son; the Seat of Wisdom, a mother at home."

Chiara Lubich (Meditations) ✠

● **Ms Cheryllanne Menezes** works in Mumbai as Human Resource Manager at Kemia Tau SRL, a multinational Company. She is a member of the Youth for a United World, a branch of the Focolare Movement, and conducts joint lectures on comparative mysticism at Mumbai University.

DYING WAS THE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME:
STORIES OF HEALING AND WISDOM ALONG LIFE’S JOURNEY,

BY WILLIAM E HABLITZEL M D

This award-winning book presents the professional and private life experiences of a gifted physician, medical educator and writer. The leading piece is about a highly successful American businessman and public benefactor who enjoyed power and prestige till the day when he landed in the ICU. Assumed to be clinically dead; Alexander Kipton had a miraculous survival and learnt a precious lesson—to live in the present. The near-death experience became a passage for the man to live life more meaningfully. He lost his smug self-assurance and confessed that his “death was liberating”

At the beginning of his career as doctor, Hablitzel met Harold, a war veteran and farmer who faced death calmly. Harold refused machine support to sustain his life. At the point of his death he told his doctor, “I did not start to live until I started to die.” He had believed that he did not need to tell his family in words that he loved them. Now, facing death, he told his only son that he loved him. Dr Hablitzel considers Harold as his teacher.

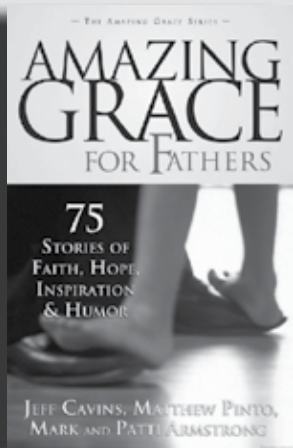
One key piece of wisdom that the author shares is what he calls “the wisdom of medicine” as distinct from the academic “science of medicine.” He found he had much to learn from his students. Doctors of modern medicine in general scoff at miracle healings. Young physicians even feel threatened by healing methods outside their discipline. An interesting confrontation happened between a self-assured physician on the teaching faculty and a resident over a terminal case of cancer. The patient wanted to pray over her proposed chemotherapy before beginning the sessions. The resident agreed. The doctor would not. The student cites scientific studies that prove that prayer and religion work. Prayer and science are thought of as incompatible “just because our science has been too primitive to allow us to rationally deal with that we cannot see.” Medical practice is as much about healing the soul as it is about healing the body.

- Reviewed by Dr Gigy Joseph

AMAZING GRACE FOR FATHERS: 75 STORIES OF
FAITH, HOPE, INSPIRATION & HUMOUR,

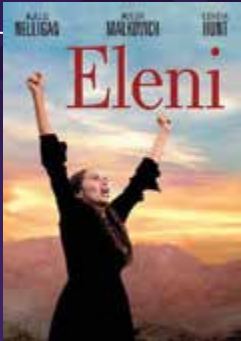
BY JEFF CAVINS, MATTHEW PINTO, MARK PATTI ARMSTRONG

The focus of this collection of inspiring anecdotes from life is on the experience of Fathers from around the world--stories of family tenderness, survival through life’s crises, miracles and lots of humorous reflections, including cartoons. The opening story speaks of the miraculous survival of a man trapped in the World Trade Center attack of 9/11. He would have perished with his friends and colleagues and kept asking God the question, “Why me?” Surely had plans for him, as he would find out soon. He and his family grew closer together and became more devoted to serving others. Moreover, when his wife became seriously ill and he had to take over the care of their little children, he understood the real purpose of his survival. In one of the stories we come to know how the heroic devotion of a widowed father of six children became the inspiration for his daughter to promote the idea of celebrating Father’s Day. Then there are tales of a “Father’s Strength” too; about how families and spouses survive crises by the power of faith and mutual support. In one story we see how a young father of two returns from a declared brain death by the power of prayer and family support. Canadian author Margo Pfeiff reports the story of Desiree Gill, a four-year-old girl in California who lost her father in an accident. She wants to contact him. On the occasion of his birthday the child is taken to her father’s graveside. She dictates a letter to him which they attach to a balloon with the picture of a mermaid on it and sends it up. Miraculously, four days later a Canadian hunter recovers the balloon near the Mermaid Lake 1400 miles away from California. His wife writes back to the little girl with the gift of the book Little Mermaid. The series of improbable coincidences convinces the little girl of her father’s presence and love beyond the grave. When the media picked up the story, Desiree began to receive letters and gifts from people all over the world! The book has many more such stories



ELENI

Director: Peter Yates. Cast: Kate Nelligan, John Malkovich, Linda Hunt, Ronald Pickup Oliver Cotton. Running time: 136 minutes. 1986.



Eleni is based on the true story of a Greek peasant mother named Eleni Gatzoyiannis, who heroically resisted the Communist violence in the town of Lia in Greece in 1948. Years later, Nicholas Gage, her son, now an American journalist, goes searching for his mother’s killer. During the war, when the Communist militia spread terror in Greece, the little boy Nikola was sent to his father working in America. Eleni planned to join them later. But she is soon shot by the rebel firing squad for her attempt to save her other children from violence. Nikola goes to Greece to seek out and take revenge on his mother’s murderers. He also interviews one of his former neighbours who was forced to testify against Eleni in order to save her own family from execution. When the Communist rebels took over Lia, his home village, field mines were planted around the village to prevent anyone from leaving. They tried to force Eleni’s eldest daughter to join. But Eleni burnt the girl’s leg with a hot poker to prevent her on grounds of disability. The guerilla leader took the next daughter and then tried to capture all the village children for Communist indoctrination. Eleni secretly smuggled the children out of the village. She was tortured, tried, and executed along with several others.

Nikola reconstructs the whole story. At one dramatic moment, he comes face to face with the killer, Katis, who has now settled quietly in Greece. But Nikola undergoes a moral change effected by the memories of his mother’s love and heroism. He renounces vengeance and returns to his family, with whom his emotional bond had become strained under his hatred for the killers. The film thus becomes a celebration of family devotion, forgiveness in the face of cruelty and a condemnation of dehumanizing political ideologies that destroyed millions of lives.



● Dr Gigy Joseph is a retired professor of English and college principal. His area of specialization is narratology.



FREY
MARTIN
DE PORRES

Director: Raymundo Calixto. Cast : Pedro Telémaco, Dad Dager, Juan Carlos Gardié, Alan Ciangherotti, Aroldo Betancourt, Mateo Pastor, Daniela Spanic, Iván Tamayo. Running Time: 106 minutes.

This inspirational movie covers the key aspects of this Afro-Peruvian saint who was a miracle worker and a great lover of animals and nature. At a time when slavery and racial discrimination were widespread, Martin transcended these evils and won the hearts of all people. Martin was born in 1579 in Lima, Peru, to a Spanish nobleman and a freed black slave. Martin was black, like his mother, while his sister was white, like their father. Their mother brought them up, with great sacrifice. Even from early childhood Martin showed extraordinary piety and love towards the poorest. He had the gift of healing already when he was apprenticed to a barber and medical man. He wanted to become a priest. But the prevailing racial laws would not permit him to be admitted as a regular aspirant to monastic life or priesthood. But his insistence led them to admit him as a “donated” servant. This meant that he had to remain as a servant doing menial jobs like gardening, kitchen work, etc. His devotion, humility and healing power made him a legend. He miraculously saved many lives. He faced racial insults, and doubts about his medical practices. But he displayed extraordinary miracles like levitation and bilocation and also the power to control animal behavior by communicating in their language. A most self-effacing moment was when he offered himself to be sold as a slave to save the monastery from financial crisis. Later, the superiors admitted him into the order as a regular Dominican Brother. When plague broke out in Lima, he attended to the sick and the dying and saved thousands of lives. When there was no room for treatment, he took the sick into his own room for care. This was against the monastery rules. When his superior questioned him about this, Martin humbly reminded the superior that charity should take precedence over rules. Saint Martin de Porres is a unique saint of modern times, honoured as the patron saint of racial harmony, mixed-race people, barbers, inn-keepers and public health workers

Being a Religious Superior Today: The Essentials

The National CRI offers five one-week seminars on this theme this year—one each in Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mangalore and two in Delhi.

Much planning and careful preparation go into a seminar—choice of relevant topics, selection of competent resource persons, a clean and welcoming venue with the facilities required.

We are also keen that the atmosphere in the seminar be joyful and loving, for people learn best in settings which are warm and open. Another aspect we take care of is to have *meaningful prayer services* so that community prayer becomes a deep and joyful meeting with the Lord, not just dull routine. Apart from the sessions, each day has also a movie related to the theme of the day. Movies, when used well, are a great source of learning.

Each seminar is followed by an anonymous written evaluation, to help us get the real feelings of every participant about all aspects of the seminar, what each one found useful or less so.

Here are quotes from a few participants. The first quote is from a young superior of a large community of thirty-one sisters and several activities. She writes:

“It was a great learning experience...

“The main topics dealt by Fr Joe Mannath SDB, the CRI National Secretary, were: key functions of a leader, self-care, levels of animation, psycho-sexual integration and celibacy, healthy friendships, counselling and spiritual direction, and tips for superiors. A leader needs to treat everyone as a human being and to see problems as opportunities.

“The important aspects of finance, maintenance of accounts and tax laws were explained by Sr Regis SMI, a former provincial and a lawyer very knowledgeable about administrative matters.

“Fr Anton Paul SDB, professor of Canon Law and director of Viswa Deep Institute, Bangalore, explained clearly a number of points under “Canon Law for Superiors.”

“Sr Shanthi Priya De Mello BS, of the General team of Bethany Sisters, effectively explained the role of a superior, especially in women’s communities. She stressed that the superior’s primary task is to animate communities and to accompany the members with love and care. Superiors should lead by example.

“Feelings and emotions are normal in life, and one should know how to handle them. This practical topic was ably covered by Fr Dionysius Vas SJ, rector of St Aloysius College, Mangalore. He illustrated how accumulated anger leads to sadness; and prolonged sadness leads to depression. His various tips for handling emotions were very helpful.

“Personally, I was very much satisfied with this seminar, which was inspiring and enriching for me. The input sessions from various resource persons, the meaningful liturgy and prayers, the value-based movies after supper—all these activities made us reflect and recognize our inner potentiality to grow. I sincerely thank Fr Joe Mannath SDB and the CRI team for organising this seminar.” (Sr Lydia BS, Maryvale Convent, Kinnigoli, Mangalore)

“Learnt a lot from this program. Basically the role I have to play as an animator, not to mention topics like canon law, administrative matters and the like. Also had a lovely time there getting to know sisters from other congregations and their spiritualities.” (Sr Anifa Gomes SCCG)

“It has really been a vivifying experience where I have gained a lot from the sessions as well as the interactions. I am trying to implement what I have learnt...beginning with a caring and compassionate attitude towards my sisters and collaborators. Your prayer services have made a great impact and still linger in my mind and heart. Thank you once again!” (Sr Loretta Rozario SCCG)

A suggestion given by my several participants was to make the seminar longer, and to make it available to many more religious.

An item in the evaluation form, “*The one thing I remember most vividly about my experience here,*” yielded these responses:

“The prayerful and good atmosphere.”

“Different congregations coming together.”

“The organization.”

“The persons and the life-style.”

“Love for one another.”

“Conducive atmosphere and cordiality.”

“Family spirit. Feeling at home.” ☩



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