

FR

August 2019



# AGNEL

SHRAM NEWS



***Star of  
the Sea***

FR. AGNEL  
ASHRAM

# NEWS

August 2019

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"I joined Balbhavan this year. I made lots of new friends. I am learning to speak English."

-Sahibaz Shaikh



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# The Human Face of India

It's been 72 long years since India won her freedom from British rule. Traditionally, this day is celebrated with great joy on 15th August. Once a year, the nation's woes and travails are placed on the back burner. This year however it is going to be something special.

On August 5th, the Home Minister of India, Amit Shah, made an announcement in Parliament that sent tremors across the globe. In a swift and bold move, the Government of India

decided to scrap Article 35A and Article 370 of the Constitution of India that give special status to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. This has been a bone of contention between different shades of political ideologies over the last seven decades. Depending on which end of the spectrum you subscribe to, your reaction will swing dramatically from one end to the other. On one end of the spectrum lies the socialist belief that Article 370 is sacrosanct and can only be modified with the consent of the Government of Kashmir. On the other end of the spectrum lies the extreme right belief that the only thing that matters is our nationhood and the belief that India is one entity.

It is indeed sad to note that both extremes propound esoteric emotions at the expense of basic human values. There is no denying that the

left is politically correct in upholding the letter and spirit of the Constitution. On the other hand, the right is also correct in defending our nation and the unity of India. However, both

positions have negated the importance of basic human values. Neither side has considered the humongous human cost borne by the people of Kashmir.

For generations, common Kashmiris have spent their lifetimes in a war zone. Children have grown up playing on fields with

bullets whizzing over their heads. At least three generations have squandered their youth pelting stones or facing bullets depending on which side they were trapped.

Conservative estimates say that over 40,000 lives have been lost in the Kashmir Valley. Every day at least four people die as victims of violence unleashed by militants or in retaliatory action by the armed forces.

The universal insensitivity to the human problem in Kashmir is appalling. The

whole world views the issue either as a statistic or as an article of law in the statute book. Hardly anyone has addressed the conflict in Kashmir as a human problem concerning human beings with human aspirations and concerns.

That leaves us with a question that begs an answer. Do we support the revocation of Article 370 or do we oppose it? The honest answer would be another question. Which position will deliver a



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more humane response to the trauma faced by the people of Kashmir? If revocation will heal the wounds of the last 70 years, if it brings a better quality of life to the common Kashmiri, if it puts an end to the mindless violence; then definitely revocation of article 370 deserves our support. If on the other hand, it only adds to the spiral of violence and leads the state from the proverbial frying pan into the fire; then it can hardly be counted as a worthwhile solution.

What is done, is done. There is no point in trying to undo history. Having taken a bold step, the onus now lies on the Government of India to redeem its promise of a better life to the people of Kashmir. It is now the Central Government's responsibility to put an end to the violence, since they are now the custodians of public law and order; having declared Jammu and Kashmir a Union Territory.

Now it becomes the responsibility of the Central Government to ensure that all the basic needs of human existence are delivered to the common

man in Kashmir. Infrastructure for hospitals, schools, colleges, transportation etc. must be put in place within a reasonable time-frame. They must kick-start the local economy to ensure job generation and a new era of prosperity. Total peace in the valley will bring the tourists back in droves. Along with that, investments will flow into the state. Kashmir will then become the jewel in the crown.

Having cast the die, there is now no looking back. The Central Government has to spare no effort in winning the hearts of the common folk in the valley. Once their hopes and aspirations are met, militancy will find no takers. Deprivation pushes desperate youth into the ranks of the terrorist groups. As in other parts of the world, we will see that prosperity is the only antidote to upheaval. Once people realize their dreams, they themselves will celebrate their existence as an integral part of India !!

*Hansel D'Souza*

**Fr. Agnel Ashram - Bandra  
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TIME	MASS	TIME	NOVENA
07:00 a.m.	English	07:45 a.m.	English
08:00 a.m.	Konkani	08:45 a.m.	Konkani
09:30 a.m.	English	10:15 a.m.	English
TIME	NOVENA	TIME	MASS
10:30 a.m.	Tamil	11:00 a.m.	Tamil
EVENING			
TIME	NOVENA	TIME	MASS
03:00 p.m.	Gujarati & Marathi	03:30 p.m.	Marathi
06:15 p.m.	English	06:30 p.m.	English
07:15 p.m.	English	07:30 p.m.	English

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*All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope.*

*-Winston Churchill*

# Mary's Assumption

## – The New Ark of the Covenant

-Leon Bent

The Assumption is the oldest Feast day of Our Lady, but we are oblivious how it first came to be celebrated: Initially, the “Memory of Mary” was celebrated. Later, it metamorphosed into the Feast of the Assumption. It was observed since apostolic times.

Initially it was thought that the Assumption of Mary was just a fanciful story, the product of the Church's overactive Marian imagination, a belief entirely extraneous to the Gospel of Christ.

This doubt led me to do research on the subject, and to my utter amazement, I discovered a whole new dimension of Mariology, in its multifarious nuances that led me (a simple lay person) deeper and deeper, and with greater intensity into the controversial, nevertheless, beautiful subject of the Assumption.

Today, I will delve into one very crucial aspect of Mary's Assumption:

The human Ark of the Divine Covenant was assumed into heaven. The body which gave birth to God himself on this earth was not allowed to decay after death. It has been the belief of the Christians, right from the early days of Christianity, that the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary completed God's work in her, since it was not fitting that the flesh that had given life to God himself should ever undergo corruption. The Virgin whose life began fully in grace, as was hailed by heaven “full of grace, the Lord is with you,” has to end fittingly by assumption into heaven.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been announced as a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. This doctrine was dogmatically and infallibly defined by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950, through his Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*. It teaches that

the Blessed Virgin Mary “having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.” This belief is accepted as the *Dormition of the Theotokos* by the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Besides the Roman Catholics, the Christians of the Eastern Catholic Churches, Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy, and parts of the Anglican Communion and Continuing Anglicanism believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary was bodily taken up into Heaven at the end of her life. The taking of Mary into Heaven had been an established teaching across the Eastern, Western, Coptic and Oriental churches from at least the late 7th Century and they had been celebrating the festival of Mary's

assumption settling the date at August 15.

### **The Blessed Virgin was Assumed Body and Soul into Heaven**

The strongest evidence for the belief of the early Christians in the Assumption is found in ancient liturgies and in homilies in honour of Mary's passing away.

The Dogma of Mary's Assumption into Heaven stands on a strong

foundation: biblically, theologically and historically. For faithful Catholics it has been proved over and over again in approved apparitions such as Lourdes and Fatima, and, of course, Guadalupe. The best way to do this is by celebrating the Eucharist in honour of the Assumption of Mary. It also helps if one meditates on Mary's life and the Titles she has, and pattern one's life on that of Mary. Maybe, one can also mediate and intercede to the Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of all grace, to take our life to the next level.

Recently discovered Syriac fragments of stories about the Assumption of Mary, have been dated as early as the third century. And, there are undoubtedly more manuscripts to be found. It must

Recently discovered Syriac fragments of stories about the Assumption of Mary, have been dated as early as the third century. And, there are undoubtedly more manuscripts to be found.

be remembered that when we are talking about these “Transitus stories,” we are not only talking about very ancient manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts, but we are talking about two different “families” of manuscripts written in nine languages. They all agree on Mary’s Assumption and presuppose a story that was already widely known.

**Mary’s Body is the Dwelling Place of God on Earth.**

First and foremost, if Mary is the new Ark, then her body is nothing less than *the dwelling place of God on earth.*

*The original Ark was made of “pure gold” and kept in the “Holy Of Holies”, because it was “the Place” where God would descend from heaven to “meet” his people. It was the sacred container for the Ten Commandments, the manna from heaven, and the Staff of Aaron (Hebrews 9:4). So, now, the new and greater Ark must likewise be free from any impurity and be completely holy. Mary is the sacred vessel for the “Word” made flesh, the “Bread of Life,” and the “High Priest”:*

*Now, if Mary is the new Ark, and the Ark is the dwelling place of God on earth, then, by implication, Jesus is God on earth, then, by implication, Jesus is God o earth. In other words, he is divine. The mystery of Mary’s identity as the new Ark illuminates the even deeper mystery of Jesus’ divinity.*

**(Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary*, Penguin Random House (Image) New York, 2018, pp.63-64).**

The link between Mary and the Ark, and the divinity of Christ was noticed by Christians writing long ago. Consider the words of ancient Christians writing in Rome, Egypt and Syria.

The Lord was made without sin, made in His human nature of *incorruptible wood, that is to say, of the Virgin and the Holy Spirit*, overlaid within and without, as it were, by *purest gold* of the Word of God....Tell me, O Blessed Mary, what was it that was conceived by you in the womb; what it was that was borne by you in a Virgin’s womb. **(Hippolytus of Rome, *Discourse on Psalm 3* [2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Century A.D.)**

Now, if Mary is the new Ark of the Covenant, then

it makes sense that Jesus the new David, would bring her up into heaven, to be with him forever in the heavenly Temple. In other words, the New Testament revelation of Mary as the new Ark is essential for understanding the belief in her bodily assumption into heaven. This ancient connection between the Ark, the woman, and the bodily

assumption of Mary, makes sense when we remember that the new Ark is not just Mary’s soul but her body. In the recent words of Pope Benedict XVI:

**The passage from the book of Revelation also indicates another important aspect of Mary’s reality.**

As the living Ark of the Covenant, she has an extraordinary destiny of glory because she is so closely united to the Son, whom she welcomed in faith and generated in the flesh, as to share fully in his glory in Heaven. This is what the words we have heard suggest: “A great portent appeared in Heaven, a woman clothed with the sun...” (Rev.12:1). Mary, Mother of God, full of grace, fully docile to the action of the Holy Spirit, already lives in God’s Heaven, with her whole being, body and soul” (Benedict XVI, “Homily Mass for the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary,” August 15, 2011).

**This gold nugget!** The opening Prayer for the Liturgy of the Assumption: *All-powerful and ever-living God, you raised the sinless Virgin Mary, Mother of your Son, body and soul to the glory of Heaven. May we see Heaven as our final goal and come to share her glory. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

**And, this final flourish!** The Assumption of Mary into heaven is a living testament to the Resurrection of Jesus and our resurrections into heaven. Because Mary is the first Christian, God deigned to demonstrate her resurrection in a unique manner (by virtue of the death and resurrection of her only Son). Just as Christ came into the world – to His Mother – in a singular fashion, so God has deigned that Mary should go to Heaven – to her Son – in a singular manner.



# Independence Day and the Assumption of Our Lady.

-Christine D'Sylva.

Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did.

Mary is the safest, easiest, shortest and most perfect way of approaching Jesus.

Independence Day is annually celebrated on 15th August as a national holiday in India commemorating the nation's independence from the United Kingdom on 15th August 1947.

On the eve of 15th August 1947, India's tri colour flag was first hoisted by the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, at the Red Fort in Delhi.

He concluded the speech by saying, "We end a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again."

Today, the main event takes place in Delhi and the Prime Minister hoists the National flag at the Red Fort accompanied by gun shots, a parade and live performances and music. The entire event is broadcasted on television. Vande Mataram and Jana Gana Mana are both sung by patriotic Indians all around the country.

The Assumption of Our Lady is also celebrated on this day. Therefore, Christians go to Mass to celebrate both these very important feasts - Independence Day being a milestone in Indian history and the Assumption serving to remind us of the holiness of the Mother of God.

It is said by some that Mother Mary died in the presence of the Apostles but her tomb when

opened upon the request of St Thomas was found empty. The Apostles then assumed that she was taken up to Heaven..

This empty tomb was a feature both Mother Mary and her son Jesus shared. In Jesus' case it is known as the Resurrection while in Mother

The Assumption of Our Lady can be defined as simply- The Immaculate Mother of God, the Virgin Mary having completed the course of her earthly life was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.

Mary's case, it is known as the Assumption because it is assumed she was taken up to Heaven, There were no sightings of this episode but since the tomb was empty, it is assumed that God the Father honoured her mortal body with the same respect he depicted to his only beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

It is a very fitting tribute to this great Lady who was pure, blameless and who underwent trials and suffering without any complaints in order to fulfil the will of God.

Therefore, the Assumption of Our Lady can be defined as simply- The Immaculate Mother of God, the Virgin Mary having completed the course of her earthly life was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.

Many Catholics believe that Mother Mary did not die at all but was assumed directly into Heaven. This is still debatable and it appears the Catholic Church has no definite answer as to whether she died, then was assumed into Heaven or whether she directly assumed into Heaven without being buried in a tomb.

The Roman Catholic Dogma leaves this point open by merely using the words, "Mother Mary was assumed into Heaven having completed the course of her earthly life."

It is a nation-wide public holiday in several countries around the world.

According to ancient Jewish custom, it is thought that she died eleven years after the death of her son, Jesus. However, this too is not stated as a fact but an assumption.

What can we learn from this glorious event?

We understand that Earth is not our permanent dwelling. It is just for a short period of time. If we live good lives, we too can be assured of a place in Heaven with Jesus and his Mother Mary.

It also teaches us not to lose our faith and serenity in times of troubles and difficulties. Mother Mary in Heaven is a gift by God as a Mother to us. We turn to her intercession and we are assured that there is never a prayer she has never heard. She is like a loving mother to us, who listens to our

prayers with a loving heart, ready to place our favour before her Son, Jesus.

We are also reminded to lead our lives under the guidance of Our Lady who is like the Star of the Earth, guiding us through all our troubles and difficulties with a loving touch especially when we falter. She is there to soothe our pain and hurt, and enfolded in her maternal love, we can strive to look forward to eternal life where at last we shall be in Heaven, our eternal home.

We can conclude with the words of this popular hymn.

Be with us Mary, along the way,

Guide every step we take,

Lead us to Jesus your loving Son.

Come with us Mary come.



*“Love our Lady. And she will obtain abundant grace to help you conquer in your daily struggle.”*

*- St. Josemaria Escriva*

# The Assumption of our Lady into Heaven

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- P.A. D'Mello

On 15th August we will be celebrating the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary whereby she is being taken body and soul to Heaven after her death. On this day we will also be celebrating the Independence of our country.

It was a belief by all Christians that the Assumption went on for many years. It was only when Pope Pius XII who declared on November 1, 1950 that the Catholic Church was accepting as a dogma of faith the Assumption and includes doctrines about her Immaculate Conception that she was conceived free from original sin.

The Assumption of Mary into Heaven has special significance as it is closely linked with the Ascension of Christ and being an integral part of the process of the Redemption of mankind. We know that our Lord rose again from the dead on Easter Sunday and went up to Heaven, both body and soul on Ascension Thursday, so is our Lady's body now in Heaven. The only difference is that our Lord went up to Heaven visibly or in the presence of many people, whereas our Lady's body was taken up without public manifestation.

No one knows exactly where, when or how Mary died. Apostolic tradition tell us that it could be three and fifteen years after the Ascension of Jesus. The Evangelist St. Luke presents a short description of the importance of the incarnation, how the eternal Lord became man: Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a Virgin called Mary and he said "Greetings favoured one", the Lord is with you. But she was perplexed by his words and wondered what sort of Greeting this might be. The Angel then said to her, "Do not be afraid

Mary for you have found favor with God. You will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and called the son of the most high and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David." Mary was specially prepared to say yes to his calling and she did it with great humility and a total surrender to God.

The Christian Church recognizes Mary's Assumption as a universal truth. The doctrine of the Immaculate conception defines Mary as conceived without original sin. Through the Rosary, she is prayed to and is sought as the intercessor between the faithful and Jesus.

At the wedding at Cana (John 2), Jesus obeyed his mother when she asked him to make wine, though he felt his hour had not yet come.

All these beliefs about Mary form the basis from which the significance of the Assumption grew in value. Mary stood at the foot of the cross when all the disciples, except John, had fled. She was with the Apostles at Pentecost when the gift of the Holy Spirit was given. Mary shared in the most intimate details of the life of Jesus, His birth, Life, Death and Resurrection.

The feast of the Assumption coincides with India's Independence as a free democratic country. We have just had our Lok Sabha elections and the campaign as we all know was bitterly fought by both the NDA and the Opposition Parties. With the BJP led NDA emerging winners in the Elections and will hold office for another five year term, they should ensure that all problems the country are facing like terrorism, mob lynching, cow vigilantism are resolved. The Prime Minister's victory speech in Parliament premises was one

*Contd. on pg 14*

# I am Nobody's Princess

Princess. When I say the word Princess you are struck by the image of an elegant, delicate woman walking down the steps of her palace contemplating minor inconveniences in her perceivably perfect life. When I say Princess, are you also struck by her weakness, dependence and her only goal in life to meet her Prince charming so that he can turn her sorry life around? I have a few questions to these Princesses. Couldn't Cinderella have been bold enough to stand up to her torturous stepmother instead of remaining her helpless slave? Why did Ariel sacrifice her ethereal voice just to meet some unknown Prince? If their love was so true, why couldn't she ask the Prince to come and meet her in the ocean instead? What if Sleeping Beauty's Prince had never come to meet her? These Princesses portray exactly what a girl shouldn't be – dependent, fickle, faint hearted and always submissive.

I know, what you are likely to say. "Hey, chill. It's just fiction." I agree, but what about girls all over the world presuming that weakness, dependency and pretty faces are the only sign of true beauty. Basically, fit into the society's image of perfect little girls (Princesses). Any girl who's not thin, not particularly nice to look at, is carefree or opinionated and/or unafraid to express her views is termed as 'disrespectful' or 'a tomboy'.

In fact boys, along with girls carry the burden of leading 'a perfect fairy tale life'. Shedding a tear is considered weakness and accepting defeat is unmanly. Have you ever read about a 'Prince' crying? As toxic masculinity infiltrates the world, sensitive men are shamed.

To ease the suffering, I thought of giving them

new role models. Goddesses. Indian Goddesses. Indian goddesses are polar opposites of Princesses. They are strong, fiercely independent, highly intelligent and are their own 'Prince Charming'. Indian goddesses are an epitome of power. They are the women every girl must look up to.

My first chosen Goddess is Kali. She is intense, powerful and fearless. This dusky beauty, proudly flaunting her dark complexion, can slay any demon in her way. So don't think that dark isn't beautiful. We should learn from Kali to be fearless and to stand up to anybody looking to suppress us. My next nominee is Sarasvati – Goddess of wisdom, music and learning. Intelligence and tranquillity emanates from every pore of her skin. I suggest all my girls to at least try to be like her – smart, confident and poised. Number three is Durga – Goddess of justice and protector of all that is good and harmonious in the world. Protecting our world and all that it stands for is an important quality to be learnt from this ferocious deity.

There you go, I roasted the Princesses and gave you new role models to look up to. In conclusion, Indian Goddesses could easily take Princesses down in a fight. Girls, put up an incessant fight against this world trying to tear you down. So don't be a Princess, BE A GODDESS instead.

*Sanika Deshmukh-Std - IX*

*Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School  
& Jr. College, Vashi*

Couldn't Cinderella have been bold enough to stand up to her torturous stepmother instead of remaining her helpless slave? Why did Ariel sacrifice her ethereal voice just to meet some unknown prince?

# What is Indian-ness?

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-Sudhir Kakar

*By forgetting sympathy, India is in danger of losing its highest civilisational ideal*

Every civilisation has its own view of the world and man's place in it, values that leak into the psyche of its members. Sympathy has been a dominant value in the world view of our own civilisation.

Some of the greatest Indian icons – Buddha in ancient India, Kabir, Nanak, Tukaram, Basava in medieval India, Tagore and Gandhi in modern India come immediately to mind – have held that sympathy is essential as to how we connect (or must connect) not only to human beings but to all existence. Here Tagore and Gandhi are in complete agreement. “Brotherhood,” Gandhi writes in one letter, “is just now a distant aspiration. To me, it is a test of true spirituality. All our prayers, and observances are empty nothings so long as we do not feel a live kinship with all life.”

Sympathy, as I understand it, is the feeling of kinship, a sense of ‘we’ that extends to beyond what is our kin. And this feeling of kinship is not limited to human beings but extends to the natural world. One can compare sympathy to a mountain climb with many base camps marking its progress on the way.

The first camp from which one cannot see the summit – covered as it is by clouds, though we know it is there – is tolerance, defined minimally as giving the benefit of the doubt to others. The second camp, a little higher, can be said to be compassion, while the third and the last camp from where one climbs to the summit is empathy, the ‘feeling into’ another person, although of course, empathy can also encompass a ‘feeling into’ nature.

The point is that the climb fosters deeper and deeper feelings of loving connectedness although only a few, rare Saints can reach the summit,

expressed in the Upanishadic ideal of ‘he who sees all beings in his own self and his own self in all beings’. Most of us can consider ourselves fortunate if we can catch a glimpse of the peak of sympathy from the base camps of tolerance, compassion and empathy.

Yet, today, one feels that the traditional Indian civilisational emphasis on sympathy, love in its most elevated form, as indispensable to social cohesion and solidarity, is being eclipsed by other values, such as justice, the righting of wrongs. We are all familiar with the famous slogan of the French revolution, now a universal aspiration: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. It is interesting to note that fraternity, brotherhood, occupies the last place in this short list and, indeed, has become completely muted, if not sidelined, in contemporary discourse.

In our fascination with Western intellectual Gurus, we do not realise what a disproportionate space the Western idea of the role of power in social relations has come to occupy in the modern Indian mind. Again, this is not to reject the value of the role of power and the truth it contains, but seek to assimilate this truth with our own civilisational heritage on the importance of sympathy.

For instance, social movements in service of justice for the weak and the oppressed are rapidly picking up pace in our country, shaking traditional hierarchies and power structures. This is a welcome development. Some of these Movements, however, seem to operate on the basis of only one ethic; justice, which is related to the issue of power, of correcting skewed and unfair power relations, a highlighting of Equality in the three aspirations of the French revolutionary slogan.

*Contd. on pg 12*

# The Fundamental Unity

-Ananya Awasthi

*Integral Humanism can help reconcile nationalism and internationalism*

Tracing its origins to the Upanishadic traditions, Advaita (non-dual) Vedanta is an outlook towards life which believes in the “non-dualism” of Atman (soul) and Brahman (universal metaphysical reality), while acknowledging the Prakriti (material world) as an ever-changing context. It does not recognise any differences between the nature of life — whether of human, animal or plant origin — and acknowledges it as being part of a larger cosmic consciousness. Applying this framework to the modern political, economic and social context, Deendayal Upadhyaya coined the term Integral Humanism and offered a non-dualistic doctrine as an alternative approach to nationalism and internationalism. Rejecting the intrinsic diversity based on race, colour, caste or religion, it identifies all human beings as part of one organic whole, sharing a common consciousness of national thought.

While the parameters for material success and development emerged in the background of industrial and technological revolutions, they laid an undue emphasis on evaluating the world in a segmental outside-in manner. An integral understanding of life is, instead, holistic in nature. For example, a medical model of health may be restricted to its biological needs, while an integrated understanding of human life comprises of body, mind, intellect and soul. The practice of yoga is an example of going back to this integrated view.

In fact, modern developments in science validate

the integrated view of life. We now accept that the beginnings of life were made from a single explosion called the “Big Bang”. This led to emergence of primal energy, which later went on to give different life forms, as clarified by Einstein’s  $E=mc^2$ . This understanding scientifically validates the Advaitin’s understanding of non-dualism of all life forms and the inter changeable nature of “Shakti” (Energy) and “Prakruti” (Matter).

Nationalism as a concept arrived relatively recently with the origin of “nation-states” in 17th-18th century Europe. From economics to philosophy, the theories of “survival of the fittest” and the “zero-sum game” reigned supreme. And as history has shown, this form of exclusionary nationalism not only led to two World Wars but also directly or indirectly promoted the colonisation of Asia and Africa.

The idea of oneness amongst people of all races, castes, creeds, geographies and genders is fundamental to the interpretation of integral frameworks in the international context. Perfectly compliant with the modern notions of democracy and the UN, the integral doctrine is perhaps the oldest framework for human rights. It accords equal rights to all by virtue of the intrinsic unity in life forms. This template is not only democratic but goes a step further in promoting the case for social justice and equal opportunity for even the last man standing, namely, “Antyodaya”.

Similarly, in the context of international relations,

We now accept that the beginnings of life were made from a single explosion called the “Big Bang”. This led to emergence of primal energy, which later went on to give different life forms, as clarified by Einstein’s  $E=mc^2$

this doctrine is not “utilitarian”, nor does it promote the progress of one nation at the cost of another. In this worldview, identifying with both one’s nation and the rest of the humanity becomes the basis of peaceful co- existence. Most importantly, this idea of collectivity is not antagonistic to “nation first” thinking. Integral Internationalism is the perfect balance between the need to defend your nation against violent threats while simultaneously contributing to international security. A strong defence against cross-border terrorism not only protects the rights of your nation but also promotes international security.

In the light of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is noteworthy to see how Integral Ecology takes us back to the age-old wisdom of interdependence

with nature. Rejecting the difference between human, animal and plant forms, an integral framework treats the environment as a global good, making environmental protection the shared responsibility all of humanity. “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, a Sanskrit shloka meaning the entire world is my family, reiterates the Advaita thought on how each one of us across the globe are intrinsically connected both in our challenges and opportunities.

The principles of Integral Humanism offer a non-dualistic prism for perceiving the world we live and acting upon the fundamental unity of humankind — an outlook which offers powerful solutions for political, social and economic cooperation across the world.

*Courtesy - Indian Express*

*One individual may die for an ideas, but that idea will,  
after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives.  
-Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose*

**Contd. from pg 10 - What is Indian-Ness?**

In an almost sacralised ethic of justice, what matters is the outcome, not the path and there are eloquent voices that have defended violence in service of justice. In such cases, should the ethic of sympathy, compassion in this context, not temper the quest for justice? In our quest to right a wrong, bring the ethic of justice to the forefront, are we in danger of losing sight of what Gandhi and Tagore – and before them our greatest icons – held as a defining characteristic of Indian civilisation ... sympathy? In Tagore’s words, “Creative force needed for the true union in human society is love; justice is only an accompaniment to it, like the beating of tom-tom to song.”

Given the march of exclusive nationalisms all over the world in recent years, religious nationalism in Turkey, Indonesia, India and parts of the Islamic world, racial nationalism in the United States, cultural ‘sons of the soil’ nationalism in most of Europe, one would be tempted to say that a secular, inclusive nationalism was a liberal dream which has few takers today. But perhaps what

is needed is a vision of inclusive nationalism that is not of the ‘progressive’ kind, which only pays homage to man’s reason and conditions of material life, but one that bases itself on the fostering of a consciousness irradiated by our civilisational heritage of sympathy.

What is needed is a revival of an ‘idea of India’ that has deep roots in our civilisation and to which our greatest cultural icons have borne witness, namely that each one of us is deeply embedded with other human beings as also connected to animate and inanimate nature, a connectedness that demands a cultivation of sympathy for all that is not self. At certain historical times, this supreme value of our civilisation may be temporarily superseded. But even when banished into unconscious depths at such times, sympathy continues to claim its privileged position in our psyche as a niggling feeling of poorly understood disquiet that follows a betrayal of our highest civilisational ideals.

*Courtesy - Times of India*



# There is no Joy Greater than the Joy of **GIVING**

## **Luke Kaithackal, U.S.A.**

I am enclosing a cheque of \$100 to be utilized for your charitable works, especially taking care of destitute children. Please pray for us.

## **Xavier Gomes, Kolkata**

I am sending a D/D of ₹.9600 for the poor boys of your Ashram. Please send me a receipt and remember us in your daily prayers. Thanking you.

## **Anita Eapen, Trivandrum**

Enclosed is a cheque of ₹.10,000 as my Easter Gift for the children in your Balbhuvan. Please request them to pray for us especially for Amrith and Rita. Thank you.

## **Sanjeevu Mathew, Kottayam**

I have received many favours through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. To express my gratitude, I am enclosing a cheque of ₹.5000 for your charitable works. Please pray for me and my family members. May God bless you.

## **Keith Monsurate, Dubai**

I enclose a cheque of ₹.10,000 as thanksgiving offering for favours received through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel. This amount may be used for the destitute children in your Balbhuvan. Kindly keep me and my family in your prayers and for the safety of our jobs.

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### *The Assumption of our Lady into Heaven - Contd. from pg 9*

of reconciliation and unity. He has reached out to the minorities and said that he would like to take everybody along. We hope that this will be backed by action.

May our Blessed Mother shower her blessings on our country and guide our leaders to take effective steps to ensure that we have peace, progress and prosperity in the country.

*We never give more honour to Jesus than when we honour his Mother, and we honour her simply and solely to honour him all the more perfectly. We go to her only as a way leading to the goal we seek - Jesus, her son.*

*- St. Louis Marie De Montfort*

# Power Up Your Brain



Watching cute animal videos, shopping online or even drinking champagne are among some surprising ways to improve your memory

Advances in the field of neurology show that our brains have the potential to adapt and develop, no matter how old we are. So follow these 15 tips to boost your brainpower.

## **1 Keep dancing**

People who dance learn complex sequences, test their spatial awareness and have the ability to respond quickly to others. This helps them perform better with complicated cognitive tasks.

## **2 Be in bed by 10pm**

Sleep is vital for optimal brain health. During sleep our body cells detoxify and re-energise, and our brain cells are no exception to this process.

## **3 Enjoy a glass of bubbly**

Reading University researchers say three

glasses of champagne a week can improve spatial memory — the part that records information about our environment. It's thought that the grapes used, contain compounds that help turbo-charge memory.

## **4 Swap hands**

Using your non-dominant hand to brush your teeth or pick things up requires the brain to pay close attention to a normally unconscious behaviour. "This stimulates interaction between the two hemispheres of the brain, meaning new neural pathways develop," says cognitive neuroscientist, Dr Lynda Shaw.

## **5 Mix it up**

Doing the same type of puzzle every day is a bit like going to the gym and lifting only arm weights. Check out free brain-training apps, such as Elevate and Luminosity.

## **6 Have a plate of rogan josh**

The antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of curcumin, found in the Indian spice turmeric, could prevent brain cells dying, say researchers at the University of Southampton.

## **7 See a dental hygienist**

The bacteria that cause gum disease may trigger an immune response in the brain which destroys neurons and could bring on symptoms such as memory loss.

## **8 Shop online**

Using a computer in later life may help keep your memory intact, say US researchers from the Mayo Clinic. They found that people who used a computer at least once a week were 42 per cent less likely to develop mild cognitive impairment.

## **9 Watch cute animal videos**

Japanese researchers who asked students to play the game 'Operation', found performance scores improved by an average of 44 per cent after they spent several minutes looking at cute pictures of animals.

## **10 Deal with hypertension**

High blood pressure in your 40s and 50s is a strong risk factor for the later development of Alzheimer's and Dementia, so get yours checked regularly.

## **11 Stay busy**

Research shows that brain function plummets when people stop working. A recent British study found that short-term memory declined nearly 40 per cent faster.

## **12 Turn up the volume**

Evidence suggests that music stimulates the brain in a very unique way. When you look at the brain imaging of somebody who is listening to or playing music, almost the whole organ appears to be active.

## **13 Copy Popeye**

Eating a daily dose of leafy greens, such as spinach, could make your brain 11 years younger, say Chicago researchers. It's thought that vitamin K, folate and other nutrients may help us stay sharper for longer.

## **14 Move your body**

Researchers in Pittsburgh found that a brisk walk of 40 minutes, three times a week, increased the size of the hippocampus (the brain's memory hub) in people over 55.

## **15 Learn a foreign language**

Learning a different language has numerous cognitive benefits, say scientists. Try using an app that keeps testing your vocabulary over several weeks, so it gets embedded in your long-term memory.

— *Courtsey, Daily Mirror*

*The human brain has 100 billion neurons, each neuron connected to 10 thousand other neurons. Sitting on your shoulders is the most complicated object in the known universe.*

*-Michio Kaku*



# FR. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

## Blessed with a Grade

**Vapi-Gujarat:** Ours is a Pharmaceutical Firm having tie-up with a US-based company under the strict guidelines and observation by the US Food & Drug Ministry. Most of the medicines of our Firm are exported to US & European countries. It is mandatory to conduct strict auditing on quality of medicines and hygienic condition of the factory on every 2 year basis. Since I am the Chief Engineer and quality controller of the Firm, I was under heavy tension on as to what grade would be accorded to our Firm after 10 days inspection. I turned to Fr. Agnel and fervently prayed for his blessing. I am now very happy to inform you that through the intercession of Fr. Agnel, our Firm was accorded with A Grade classification by the US Govt. on par with International standard. With a grateful heart, an offering of Rs. 10,000 (Rupees ten thousand) to the Ashram.

*-Mr. Cyriac John*

## Blessing In Critical Time

**Kottayam-Kerala:** I was passing through a very difficult situation in my life. I did not get solace or protection from any source. I was mentally in a rundown condition. In this plight, I tearfully prayed to Fr. Agnel for his protection. Like an Angel, Fr. Agnel came down at a decisive time and protected me from all dangers and evils. I am now leading a happy life. With immense gratitude and homage, an offering of Rs.5,000.

*-Sally George*

## Secured Promotion And Increment

**DUBAI :** By the grace of Ven. Fr. Agnel I got a promotion and due increment. With a grateful heart, an offering of Rs.18,290 to the Ashram.

*Kunal Chamanlal*

## A Graceful Bond With Ven. Fr. Agnelo

**Vasai :** I am an ardent devotee of Ven. Fr. Agnel for the last 40 years. He has been a great source of solace and strength in my professional life. Almost every Sunday I would visit the Ashram and I am very proud to say that I would be the first devotee to be present at the Ashram when the Ashram opens in the morning on Sundays. Recently, I received a miraculous blessing from this saintly Priest. As a token of my profound gratitude, a humble offering of Rs.20,000/- (Rupees twenty thousand) to the Ashram for its good works. Dr. Kirit Sutaria, Shradha Villa, Opp. Bishop's House, Stella, Vasai West. (ach.74/7392) dt. 21.07.2019.

## Blessed With Good Job In Critical Time

**Borivali :** I was working with a Firm for about 2 years but due to some unfavourable situation, I left the job and joined another Company. But, there also things were shaping up against me in a bad manner and finally, I left that job. I was rendered jobless for over 3 months. I tried at many places for a job but all my efforts were in vain. In this crisis, I came to the Ashram and fervently prayed to Ven. Fr. Agnel. I am now extremely happy to inform you that Ven. Fr. Agnel blessed me with a good job with higher position and handsome package. My heartfelt thanks to Fr. Agnel with an offering of Rs.10,000/- (Rupees ten thousand) to the Ashram from my first salary. Ms. Shane Fernandes, 205/206. Kanery, Holy Cross Road, I.C Colony, Borivali West, Mumbai. 400 103. (sfx.183-18265) 07.07.2019

**Daman:** A thanks offering of Rs.6,000/- to the Ashram for having received a particular favour through the intercession of Ven. Fr. Agnel in a critical time, which otherwise, would have been a lifelong headache for me. Rajeshkumar Baria (reg.1,45,143)

## Out of Their Bounty

P. Srivastava	Mumbai	5000	Nidhi Shenoy	Panvel	1000	Stanley Gasper	Kolkata	500
Sijo John	Kerala	20000	Sheetal Talreja	Mumbai	1000	J. S. Rodrigues	Vasai	500
Bejon Desai	Nashik	12000	Deepika Patel	Canada	1000	Joana C. D'Mello	Vasai	500
Norma Ferreira	Mumbai	10000	Jerson Fernandes	Mumbai	1000	John Fernandes	Mumbai	500
T.V. Antony	Mumbai	10000	B.r. Henriques	Mumbai	1000	G.J. Parakal	Kerala	400
James J. Lobo	Mumbai	10,000	K.J. Jose	Kerala	1000	Agnel D'Souza	Chennai	400
S. A. Joe Lobo	Mumbai	10000	P.F. Eugene	Kerala	1000	Sachin D. Tuscano	Nallasopara	350
M.M. Mistry	Nashik	9000	S. Bellarmin	Dharavi	1000	Hiren Gala	Dombivli	350
Chemdaji Runwaly	Mumbai	8000	Anil rodrigues	Pune	1000	Ishwar Attara	Mumbai	300
Jaimon Raphael	Virar	6000	C. Engles	Amritsar	1000	Sophia Merlyn	T.N.	300
Brizal D'Silva	Vasai	5000	R.T. Chacko	T.N.	1000	Rajathi M.	T.N.	300
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5000	P. Arockiaraj	T.N.	1000	Vilia Allen	Kolkata	300
A.S. D'Silva	Mumbai	5000	H. Gonsalves	Kerala	1000	R. Victor	T.N.	300
Subramaniam R.	Mumbai	5000	A. Stephen	T.N.	1000	Bertha M. D'Cruz	Kerala	300
R.K. Parikh	Mumbai	5000	Z.L. Dushing	Aurngbad	1000	Kurian Thomas	Kerala	250
S.V. S. Rama Rao	Mumbai	5000	Arun Jadhv	Kerala	1000	Vinod Victor	Kerala	250
K.s. Jayakumr	Kerala	5000	Elma R. Lopes	Virar	1000	Shanta Bai	Ahmednagar	201
R. K. Nazareth	Karntaka	5000	M. S. Misquitta	Vasai	1000	A.S. Pawar	Ahmednagar	200
Sanaya Mistry	Nashik	3000	Evelyn D'Mello	Mira Road	900	Sayali Carval	Vasai	200
Eugene M. Joseph	Kerala	3000	Gavin Fonseca	Mumbai	750	H.N. Desai	Gujrat	200
George Xavier	Kerala	3000	M.V. Malaviya	Khopoli	750	C. Desmier	T.N.	200
Mini George	Kerala	3000	Agee O. King	Mumbai	700	C.f. Dennis	Kerala	200
Sunil Lopus	T.N.	2500	Mary Asir	T.N.	700	L. Amalanyagm	T.N.	200
A.M. Nagarshesh	Gujarat	2500	Leena K. Adhav	Pune	700	F.M. Kobla	Mumbai	200
Judith Banter	Mumbai	2000	Monica D'Souza	Pune	700	V.B. Sebastian	Kerala	200
G.N. Desai	Mumbai	2000	Canute D'Souza	T.N.	600	J. Miranda	Goa	200
Sonl A. Desai	Mumbai	2000	A. D. Naik	U.S.A.	501	Jose Mathew	Kerala	150
Saroj G. Desai	Mumbai	2000	M. A. Rodrigues	Virar	500	T. Sebastian	Kerala	150
Amit D. Desai	Mumbai	2000	Mervyn Fernandes	Mumbai	500	Solanki J. Parbat	Diu	125
D. D'Sa	Mumbai	2000	A.r. Fernandes	Mumbai	500	Jayshree Naik	Pune	101
Rajesh Shenoy	Panvel	2000	R.A. Machado	Vasai	500	S. S. Kulkarni	Mumbai	101
Vinaipa Shenoy	Panvel	2000	Mohit Mehta	Mumbai	500	Manan Mehta	Mumbai	101
Rajendra Chhatpar	Mumbai	2000	Durgesh Chhatpar	Mumbai	500	S. Ashok Salve	Ahmednagar	101
Tushar Desai	Mumbai	2000	Naresh Sakrecha	Mumbai	500	D. r. Navsaria	Mumbai	101
Peter Hendricks	Pondicherry	2000	E.T. Davis	Mia Road	500	Joseph P. Parmar	Gujarat	101
R.A. Francis	Kerala	2000	R.P. Manav	Mumbai	500	P.C. Jasnani	Dahisar	100
Dilip B. Correia	Vasai	2000	V. Acharya	N. Mumbai	500	S.S. Ethel	Pondicherry	100
Morris C. D'Mello	Vasai	2000	Soham S. Rokade	Mumbai	500	A. Alphonse	T.N.	100
Deepa Rao	Thane	1500	M.N. Macwan	Anand	500	Josekutty Thomas	Kerala	100
Jeetu Rohira	Mumbai	1500	Vilas Nath	Mumbai	500	J.J., Jameskutty	Kerala	100
S. G. Andrades	Vasai	1200	A. R. Mascarenhas	Vasai	500	N. Manickam	Mumbai	100
Maria B. Vas	Vasai	1200	V.t. Rodrigues	Vasai	500	L.P. Palnde	Ahmednagar	100
I. D. Kapadia	Lonavla	1100	Senal & Saloni	Vasai	500	Nisha Ekka	Ranchi	100
K.M. Daruwala	Mumbai	1001	N.M. Amolik	Ahmednagar	500	S. Paul	A.P.	100
Jatin Desai	Valsad	1001	Dhiraj Bhatia D.	Mumbai	500	K.T. Jose	Kerala	100
T. Pasawala	Ahmedabad	1000	Janardhan	T.N.	500	A. Amaldass	Karntaka	100
Brendan M.	Mumbai	1000	Bhavan Kotak	Gujarat	500	N.X. George	Kerala	100
Taksha Chawan	Vasai	1000	Linto George	Kerala	500	A.J. Tribhuvan	Raigad	100
Sunita M. Tuscano	Virar	1000	Sarosh Lath	Daman	500	D. Sebastian	Kerala	100
David Kumar	Mumbai	1000	M.C. Antony	Kerala	500	Mary titus	Kerala	100
Dominica Correia	Mumbai	1000	R. R. Magar	Nashik	500	Y. A. Lahase	Gujarat	100
Dolly F. Bomanji	Secunderabad	1000	Paul D'Costa	Mangalore	500	M.L. Kolhe	Ahmednagar	100
R. Anthony	Mumbai	1000	A. Agnel	Kerala	500	B. Martin	Orissa	100
Sumit Amit Desai	Mumbai	1000	I. Thomas	Kerala	500	H.B. Mytheya	Karnatka	100
Tanaz F. Davar	Pune	1000	Mariakutty George	Kerala	500	B. Martin	Orissa	100
Madonna Lopes	Mumbai	1000	Rini Dencil	Kerala	500	Stella Lawrence	Chennai	50
			Teena Joseph	Kerala	500			

# All Generations Will Call Me Blessed

*E.F. Joseph*

**A**round 2000 years ago, to be precisely 9 Months before the birth of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, made a great prophecy in the house of her relative Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, that **from now on all generations will call me Blessed. (Lk.1.48).** Yes, true to her prophecy, down the ages till date she is being called Blessed by generations all over the world and it will continue till the end of the world.

No day in the world will ever pass by without reciting “Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus,” in all languages and praising her blessed name, venerating her holy image or invoking her heavenly intercession. No day will pass without reciting the Holy Rosary,

Litany, Memorare, Hail Queen and so on. She is Immaculate, born without original sin and chosen by God to be the mother of His son, Jesus Christ.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the only person who is known in different names and titles in the world. Such as Mother of Perpetual Succour, Mary Help of Christians, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Our Lady of Good Health, Our Lady of dolorous; Queen of Heaven, Queen of Angels, Queen of Patriarchs/Martyrs/Apostles//Prophets/Disciples/Virgins, Mother of God, Mother of Christ, Mother of our Creator, Mother of our Savior, Tower of David , Morning Star, Seat of wisdom, Mystical Rose, Gate of Heaven ..... and the question is what else !

Most of the Shrines (Pilgrim Centers), Churches, Religious Congregations, Charitable and

Educational Institutions in the world are known by her Blessed name. Prominent Marian Pilgrim Centers in India are Our Lady of Vailankanni-Tamil Nadu, Our Lady of Pilar-Goa. Mother of Perpetual Succour-Mahim, Mumbai, Stella



Maris- Andaman Nicobar and Mount Mary Basilica-Bandra, Mumbai where a 9 days special Novena is conducted every year followed by what is popularly known as Bandra Fair. Devotion to Mother Mary is not reserved to any particular religion or community. Lakhs of people, irrespective of their faith, religion, culture and status visit these Shrines invoking her heavenly intercession and blessings.

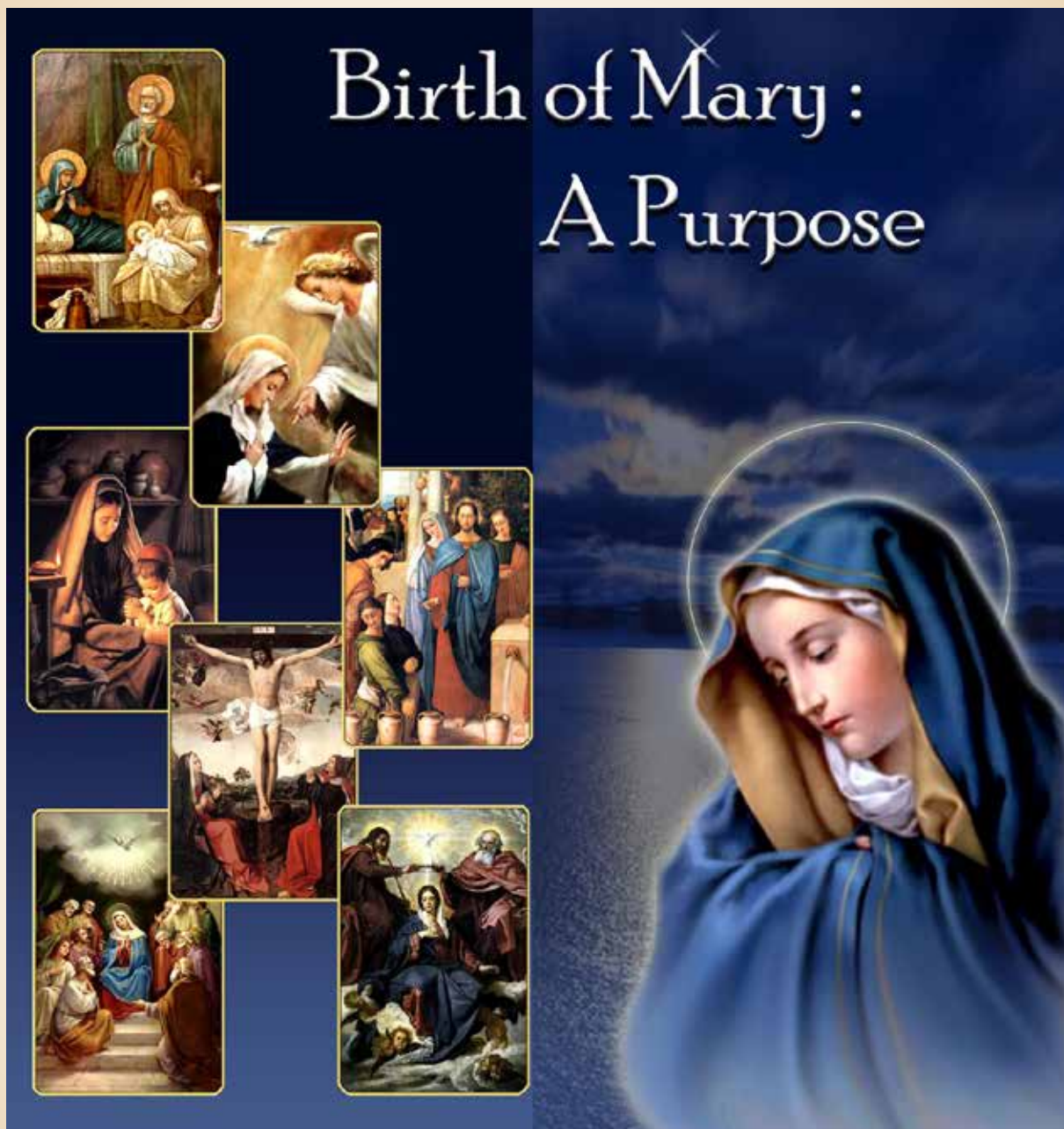
In the Holy Catholic Church, most of the Feasts and celebrations according to the liturgical calendar are on her Blessed Name. Our New Year starts with the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God, Months of May and October are specially dedicated to the

Blessed Mary (Rosary), Feast of Annunciation on 25th of March, 31st May Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 9th June Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary , 15th August is the Feast of her Assumption, 8th September Feast of her Nativity (Birthday) and 8th December Feast of the Immaculate Conception and many more. As space restricts, I am unable to highlight details of other Feasts on her Blessed name at different parts of the world.

I am fortunate, rather blessed to be born to a woman, whose name is Mary that is, my beloved mother. Let me conclude with “Hail Mary, full of grace, blessed are you among women and you shall be called blessed by generations all over the world till the end of time.

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