

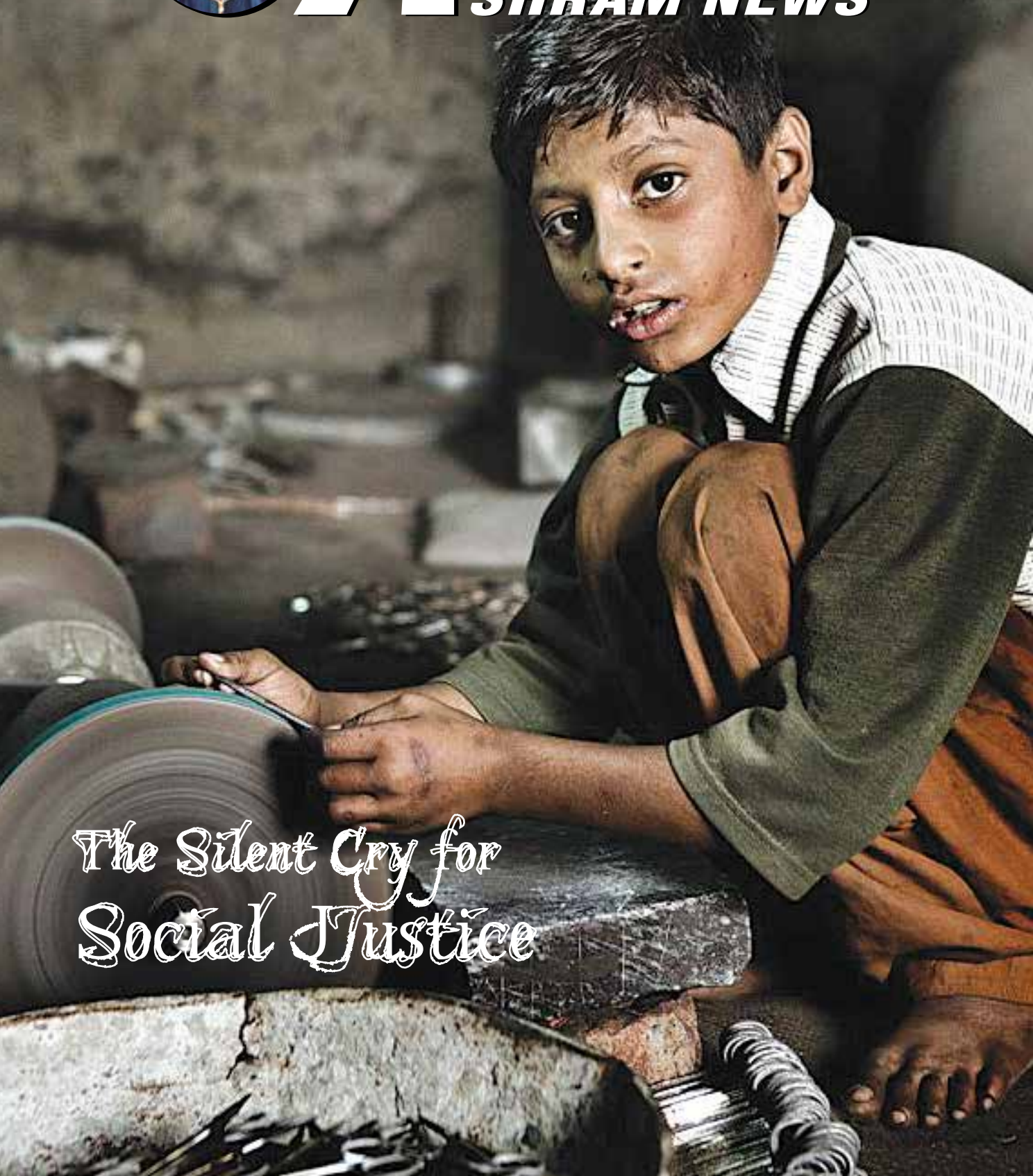
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February 2019



# AGNEL

SHRAM NEWS



*The Silent Cry for  
Social Justice*

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Fr. Agnel Ashram News

February 2019



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# Social Justice a Myth ?

World Day for Social Justice is being celebrated on February 20th this year. The term “social justice” itself is often misunderstood. This term originated in the 1840’s as a movement to right the injustices of medieval society. The industrial revolution ushered in its wake gross injustice by marginalizing vast sections of the working class.

While the term might be just a few centuries old, the concept has existed for millennia. The concept of justice in society was discussed by western philosophers like Plato, Socrates and Aristotle. Of course, each society based its thought in the milieu within which it evolved. For the Greeks only citizens had rights; and women, slaves and aliens were not considered citizens !

In India, the concept of social justice was embodied in the term Ram Rajya. The mythical God-King

Ram was considered the epitome of virtue. He was a role model for rulers, and his kingdom – Ayodhya, was the iconic kingdom where peace, justice and prosperity prevailed. Every section of society lived in harmony with each other and no one went hungry or was deprived of his rights to a humane existence. While one might dismiss this as a myth, the fact remains that the principles of “social justice” were defined and revered in our country thousands of years ago !

With such a rich heritage it would have been normal to expect “social justice” to be prevalent in Indian society. However, this is anything but true. The teeming millions of Indians living in poverty are arguably the most deprived and denied mass of humans outside of sub-Saharan Africa.

Ever since independence seventy-two years ago, India’s ruling elite have come to power by raising visions of an “ideal society”. Once in five years, slogans promising Ram Rajya, Acchhe Din, Garibi Hatao, Roti Kapda Makaan and other fanciful creations of the copywriter’s pen flood our media. To the toiling masses social justice is just another catchphrase.

So what does social justice entail in the Indian context? To begin with, most societies on this planet are agreed on the basic principle. To lead a human life, food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education are mandatory. Any deprivation or lack of these basics would constitute grave injustice and denial of human rights. If this is used as a basis to

evaluate the state of social justice in India, we would surely fail on all parameters.

To the western world, social justice concerns gender issues, safety

of women and minorities and rights of the child. Having achieved reasonably acceptable standards of living, their goals have now been set higher. Gender justice and child rights dominate the discussion on social justice, while we in India are far removed from their reality.

To an average Indian, the challenge of living is finding potable water, basic nutrition and affordable housing. Healthcare and education are still distant dreams. There has been a commendable effort to eradicate diseases like polio, dysentery and cholera. The government campaign to build toilets in every home too is commendable. However, a lot more needs to be done to raise the standards of living to achieve the norms of western societies.

Social justice begins with freedom from want. While equality might be unattainable, an equitable distribution of resources and equal opportunity for all are more realistic goals. Despite the brave efforts of individuals and works of charity by groups, very little progress has been made in this regard. Only the government has the infrastructure, reach and resources to implement suitable

**To an average Indian, the challenge of living is finding potable water, basic nutrition and affordable housing. Healthcare and education are still distant dreams.**

measures on a vast scale. The resources too exist. India is home to the world's fourth highest number of billionaires. We are adept at generating wealth. We have the potential to reach the pinnacle of economic growth. Do we have the commitment to usher in a more equitable society – a Ram Rajya !!

*Hansel Dsouza*

**The challenge of social justice is to evoke a sense of community that we need to make our nation a better place, just as we make it a safer place.**

-Marian Wright Edelman



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

**Boniface Fernandes, New Delhi**

I am sending my contribution of ₹.60,000 for supporting orphans in your orphanage. Kindly request the children to pray for us. Thank you.

**Siril T.George,Bangalore**

We are sending you a cheque of ₹.10,000 as our thanksgiving offering for favours received through the intercession of Ven.Fr.Agnel. Kindly pray for us.

**Christina Parmeshwaran, Mumbai**

Enclosed is a cheque for ₹.3,000 for the benefit

of the destitute children in your Balbhuvan. Please pray for us.

**Layla A. Mathew, Karnataka**

Please accept my gift of ₹.1,000 for the use of the destitute children under your care. Please remember us in your daily prayers.

**Joseph Stephen, Vasai**

Enclosed is a cheque of ₹.500 for your charitable works. Kindly pray for our family and good health of our family.

# Today's Dreams are Tomorrow's Marvels

-Ibony D'Souza

Some people have a great contempt for dreamers. They pride themselves on their extreme practicality, and are fond of asserting the folly of building castles in the air. Yet every great achievement in the world's history was first foreshadowed in the mind of the achiever.

It was a "castle in the air", an impalpable dream, vaguely outlined in the imagination before it became a real substantial structure.

There must be an air castle before there is a real castle. The plan precedes the building. Equally true is it that you must toil for the bricks and mortar that shall go into your castle or it will never come out of the air. All of the inventors, discoverers and other great achiever of the past were scoffed at and called Idle visionaries and time wasters. But these same "time wasters" proved to be the most practical of men, the greatest benefactors of the race.

Think of the debt we owe to the celebrated physicist, Albert Einstein, who came to the extraordinary discovery of the principle of relativity, after having a vivid dream! Elias Howe too, invented the lock stitch sewing machine based on a famous dream that helped him understand the mechanical penetration of the needle.

The very discovery of the country in which American dreams were dreamed and realised in the past, and are being dreamed about and realised today, was the result of years of Christopher Columbus's dreaming. None but a vigorous, practical dreamer would have persisted in sailing West day after day, week after week, with a crew in mutiny and ready to put him in chains.

All of the inventions and discoveries, improvements and facilities which we are using and enjoying today were dreams to those who lived before us. It was the dream of Professor Bell and his father which opened a new world

to the deaf and dumb people. If it was not for Guglielmo Marconi's dream which made possible long distance radio transmission and radio telegraph system, not only thousands of lives, but a great many ships and a vast amount of property would have been lost.

At one time, anyone who talked seriously of mechanical flights in the air was looked at pityingly by the wise ones, and relegated at once to the list of cranks or madmen. Now air travel has become for many almost a daily routine. Think of what the world owes to those great dreamers of democracy in the past. That mighty dream crumbled thrones and toppled monarchies and dictators in the past has gone on increasing in vividness and strength. Until today, mankind is actually talking of a World Republic.

The measure of our usefulness to Society is not gauged by what we think or dream or promise, but by what we actually achieve or the things we start or put in the way of accomplishment by those who come after us. The pagan world called the disciples of Jesus Christ "madmen" because they preached and taught a code of ethics that could not be understood by the mass of their contemporaries. Jesus himself was not understood even by the little band of his chosen disciples. Even He was derided as a dreamer, mocked at, spat upon, crucified as a preacher of sedition.

Whether young or old, if you encourage your dreaming propensities, you will tend to bring out new powers which, perhaps, you did not know you possessed. We have a great deal of unused ability, but we don't know just how to get hold of it. The way to bring this latent ability out is to try in every way possible to make your dreams realities. Nothing that the mind of man can conceive is impossible. The dreamers of today are the achievers of tomorrow. ■

# The Love-Life of God

## Inside A Couple

---

-Lorraine & Leon Bent

The Sacrament of Matrimony is about couples in action reflecting God's love. The Church is incomplete without us being a part of it. The Sacrament signifies God's presence constantly breaking into our lives in Word and Spirit. Each one of us has a primary need of significant other people one can rely on. The uplifting and superlative meaning Jesus and the Church give to friendship, fellowship and communion, speaks of human love as sacred. It is a tangible and visible expression of God's love in the world. Matrimony opens the door for a vowed, committed pair to constantly experience God in the ordinariness of everyday life.

Matrimony helps couples integrate our love into our spiritual journey. It makes 'personal encounter' and sexuality, blessed, and prompts the partners to view life with the eyes of faith.

### **A Man and Woman Marry for Love. They promise to love one another over a lifetime.**

- We marry to know God in our love for one another, more particularly through our sexual relationship.
- If we are vibrant and excited about this fact, then, we present the face of Jesus and become attractive witnesses of His love for everyone.
- The Spirit-filled, faith-imbued couple is offered intimacy which emerges as *Fascination*, the work of the Holy Spirit and *Passion*, the power of the Spirit.
- The Church sees marriage as a binding, irrevocable, permanent covenant before God and His people.
- A marriage is a total gift of oneself to another, in fierce faith.
- Sanctified love leads to couple power which can change the world. If we do not perform this task the world will remain broken: 'fleshy' (evil) and Christ-less.

- God, in His grand vision and wisdom brings husband and wife together, so that, we can bring others together by our unity. The Kingdom of God is the fellowship of the people of God.
- We are the Church! By the very fact that we are 'one, holy, Catholic and apostolic'!
- The Church is inspired and edified by the beauty of the 'twosome'! This is why it must dedicate itself to assisting all couples to live in love, joy, peace and hope.
- We consecrate our marriage because it gives us the privilege, essentially and necessarily, to attain holiness and salvation in unison.
- Since God comprises Divine Persons, man and woman, created in His image and likeness, are designed to become 'one flesh' in perfect harmony and intimate love (Gen.1: 27). The nuptial twosome share in the 'perichoresis': the united, communing, in-dwelling, eternal, cyclic blissfulness of Trinitarian love.
- And, finally, Christ died on a Cross out of total self-love, *kenosis*, for humankind, so must husband and wife, if we are to love one another in a redemptive, healing love that reaches its zenith in "*pure love*." This degree of intimacy takes on a silver glow, is then laced with gold, and if God wills it, becomes a brilliant diamond, when we love as Jesus loves (Jn.13:34; 15:12).

### **Why Celebrate this Love with a Religious Ceremony?**

We marry in the Church, so that, we might know God in our couple love: "God is love and anyone who lives in love, lives in God, and God lives in that person" (1 Jn. 4:16). If we are excited about this fact, then we are a sign of Jesus to one another and the world. This is intimacy: The creative love of the Father, the enriching love of the Son and the ever-present love of the Holy Spirit.

God's Plan for a married twosome is that we be lovers, so that, we have the 'love life' of God inside us. "Vowed Love" is based on the communitarian love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### Why Seal Married Love with the Eucharist?

The Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass, the Banquet of Love is used to celebrate a marriage. This seals the marriage ceremony in a powerful way. "The one bread and the one chalice:" the two partners in oneness, 'the twosome and Jesus', the couple and the community. Wow! There is concord in the air!

The Eucharistic Sacrifice symbolizes Jesus' faithful, unifying and healing love. "This is my life given up for you!" This is what the couples say in effect, through the "Wedding Vows." This is the great covenant sealed in my blood", not the blood of animals of old, says the Lord. The Holy Spirit helps us to live in memory of this love: "Do this in memory of me!"

The Wedding ceremony is a sign of God's presence and love for us. *It is a reality we see only with the eyes of faith. Faith is a very personal experience.* It is a couple's particular vision of God operative in warm conviviality.

**The Church sees marriage as a binding, irrevocable, permanent covenant,** before God and his people. God's fidelity (unseen) is pledged through the love of the spouses (seen). His goodness (unseen), is made real in the goodness

of the spouses (seen). His forgiveness and healing (unseen), is brought forth in the forgiveness and healing of the spouses (seen).

Now, this gold nugget! The Transformation of water into wine mirrors, in John: 2: 9-10, (CCC 796), the marriage between humanity and divinity upon the Cross, and transubstantiation during the Eucharist (Jn.6: 53; 1 Cor.10:16). Further, the wine of the marriage celebration looks to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven (Rev.19:7-9; CCC 1335). The "best wine is always served last" as at Cana, when consecrated partners have summer in their hearts and winter in their hair, in their twilight years! This, indeed, is "True Love," that translates into eternal bliss! The Mount Tabor experience in marriage!

And, this final flourish! Be of good cheer! The stars are shining brightly! The moon is smiling again! So is the sun, as it brightens your world with its brilliant light! God is looking down on you kindly!

The last word! Go, Grow, Glow! Write your own Love Story as Jesus had it done in the Gospels!

**BYLINE: Lorraine & Leon Bent have been a part of Worldwide Marriage Encounter for 38 years and have written 5 Books on Marriage alone, including a highly researched volume – a multifaceted synthesis on marriage. ■**

## **Fr. Agnel Ashram - Bandra** **MASSES and NOVENAS ON SUNDAYS**

MORNING			
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

### **Weekdays Mass in English at 6.00 p.m.**

Novena Prayers and Kissing of Relic are held on every Saturday after 6.00 p.m.

Mass Favours obtained, petitions and offerings may kindly be sent to :

Rev. Fr. Superior

Fr. Agnel Ashram

P.O. Box – 6656, Bandstand,

Bandra (W), Mumbai – 400 050.

Tel : 67114000.

Fax : 67114100.

Email : agnelashramnews@gmail.com

Web : <http://ash.fragnel.edu.in>

# Our Lady of Lourdes and World Day of The Sick

-Leon Bent

Our Lady of Lourdes is a Roman Catholic title of the Blessed Virgin Mary, venerated in honour of the Marian apparitions that, reportedly occurred in 1858 in the vicinity of Lourdes, in France. The first of these is the apparition on 11th February 1858, when 14-year old Bernadette Soubirous told her mother that, a “Lady” spoke to her in the cave of Massabielle, while she was gathering firewood with her sister and a friend. Similar apparitions of the “Lady” were reported on seventeen occasions that year, until the climax revelation of “Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception” took place.

Bernadette claimed she saw “a petite damsel, in white, with a golden Rosary and blue belt fastened around her waist and two golden roses at her feet. In 16 subsequent visitations she heard the lady speak to her, saying, I am the Immaculate Conception, and asking that a chapel be built there. At first ridiculed, questioned, and belittled by Church officials and other contemporaries, Soubirous insisted on her vision. Eventually, the Church believed her and she was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1933.

On 3rd July 1876, the Vatican officially granted a Canonical Coronation to the image that used to be in the courtyard of what is now part of the Rosary Basilica. The image of Our Lady of Lourdes has been widely copied and reproduced in Shrines and homes, often in garden landscapes. Soubirous was later canonized. After Church investigations confirmed her visions, a large Church was built at the site. Lourdes is now a major Marian pilgrimage site in France; only Paris has more hotels than Lourdes.

The veracity of the apparitions of Lourdes is not an article of faith for Catholics. Nevertheless, all

recent Popes visited the Marian Shrine at some time. Benedict XV, Pius XI, and John XXIII went there as Bishops, Pius XII as Papal Delegate. He also issued an Encyclical, “Le pèlerinage de Lourdes”, on the 100th Anniversary of the apparitions in 1958. John Paul II visited Lourdes three times during his Pontificate, and twice before as a Bishop. The Pope reminds the faithful of France, that every Christian land is a Marian land and that, “there is not one nation redeemed in the blood of Christ which does not glory in proclaiming Mary, its Mother and Patroness.”

The Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in southern France is a popular pilgrimage destination for individuals, with special devotions to Mary, and for those seeking miraculous

healings. A miracle was officially recognized at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, in France at 2 pm on February 1, 2018 the 70th Lourdes miracle recognized by the Catholic Church.

The World Day of the Sick is a Feast day of the Roman Catholic Church, which was instituted on 13th May, 1992, by Pope John Paul II. Beginning on 11th February, 1993, it is celebrated every year in commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes, for all believers seek “a special time of prayer and sharing; ...offering one’s suffering”.

Pope John Paul II had been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease as early as 1991, and it is significant that he decided to create a World Day of the Sick, only one year after his diagnosis. The Pope had written a great deal on the topic of suffering and believed that it was very much a salvific and redeeming process through Christ, as he indicated in his apostolic letter, “Salvifici Doloris”.

**The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes was chosen because many pilgrims and visitors to Lourdes have reportedly been healed by intercessions of the Blessed Virgin.**

*Contd. on pg. 13*

# Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

The students of **Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School and Jr. College, Vashi** participated in a rally promoting the Maha Swachhata Abhiyan – Swachh Bharat, Swasth Bharat programme on 11th Jan 2019.

340 students of Standard V, along with their teachers enthusiastically participated in “Swachh Bharat” rally. Students took an oath to keep their house, area, city and their country clean. They also promised



*Students at the Swachh Bharat Rally*



*Children at the ‘Swachhata Drawing Contest’.*

to spread awareness about “Swachhata” to their family, friends and in their neighbourhood. Former Corporator of the local area, Mrs. Pranali Lad, led the students. Little children carrying banners, placards and raising slogans about “Swachhata” was an endearing sight. On Monday, 14th January, 2019 children participated in a drawing contest on Swachhata. ■

## 70th Republic Day celebration at Bandra

On 26th January, 2019, The B.I.R.D Committee organized the “70th Republic Day” celebration at Bandstand, Bandra. Every year the committee celebrates Republic Day from Galaxy Society to Bandstand with 25 Schools participating in it. Our School **Fr. Agnel Technical High School and Jr. College, Bandra**, were selected to participate in the Parade and march-past. The Chief Guest “Lieutenant General S K Prashar” unfurled the flag followed by march-past and Parade participated by different schools. The students of our school performed their best along with the other schools. The programme was witnessed by a large crowd including Fathers, Principals, Teachers, Students and the Officers of Defence

Forces-Army, Navy, Air force and Coast Guard. Also an Exhibition we set up by the officers displaying their field. The Exhibition was open for the common man too. The programme ended with a small snack party sponsored by Taj Lands End Hotel, Bandra, for the participants. ■



# 150<sup>th</sup> Agnel Jayanthi

Fr. Peter D'Souza, Superior, welcomes the gathering



A Prayer Dance by



Releasing of tri-colour Balloons by Archbishop Anil Couto on the 150th Birth Anniversary of Fr. Agnelo



Audience watches t

# Celebration, Bandra



the students of Fr. Agnel, Vashi



Dance by Budding Artists of Agnel's School, Vashi



the programme with rapt attention



# Grandparents Day Celebration 2018

Yet another remarkable moment was appended to the honour of Fr. Agnel's Vidyankur School, Pune as we celebrated the much awaited celebration of the Grandparents Day on 3rd November 2018. The celebration of the priceless presence of grandparents in our lives and the children's lives was organized in a wonderful way. The programme started with a warm welcome by the teachers and lovely opening dance by the little ones. The tiny tots touched the hearts and souls of the audience by performing magical musical skits, which kept everybody spellbound.

The moment of the day was the execution of the games arranged for the grandparents which was enjoyed by one and all present there.

The Guest of honour of the ceremony, respected Principal Mrs. Minal Kasbey, said " I am utterly delighted by the performance of our little juveniles and the organizers ". The Director Rev. Father Agnelo Gomes, further added " The message given by the performance of the kids was incredible ". The grandparents were very overwhelmed by the event organized by Vidyankur School.

Everybody was hitched by the pledge "ONE WORLD, ONE FAMILY" to protect and love each other always. The programme concluded with a Vote of Thanks to the grandparents and the Management. ■

*Photos on Inside Back Cover*

## Fr. Agnel Balbhawan Day – 2019, Greater Noida

The second Saturday of January 2019 saw yet another Balbhawan Day dawn on the Agnel family – the 19th year. This year heralded a new beginning. No longer did the vagrant weather feature in the discussion as Agnelites, benefactors and well wishers headed towards Greater Noida. They made their way to SATRANG, the swanky, new Auditorium at Fr. Agnel School, Greater Noida. 19 years just flew by. So much has happened at the Bal Bhawan, so many little twists and turns like any other home caught up in the whirlpool of growing up. Yet, this Balbhawan Day was special for it marked the end of a long wait for an Auditorium where all could gather to celebrate this miracle of love – the Balbhawan.

Fr. Bento welcomed the Chief Guests and the guests . That's how he fondly refers to all those who have been a part of the making of this miracle. He then shared the glad news about the young men and ladies stepping out of the safe haven of their home, the Balbhawan, into the world outside pursuing programs that range from archaeology to physiotherapy to chartered accountancy. Fr. Bento, like the proud father that

he is, drew our attention to the graffiti on the entrance wall that every guest had "ooh aahed" as they walked in. It was the handiwork of the children of the Balbhawan and it took them a mere 16 hours to paint the long wall!!! Again he drew our attention to the frames with paintings all along the stairs to the Auditorium. They are paintings, all of them, by the Balbhawan children.

The Balbhawan Day unfolded with its usual array of songs and dances by the tiny tots...a glimpse of the immense talent waiting to blossom in the years to come.

Fr. Carvalho, in his stirring Address, urged the children of the Balbhawan to rise above the ordinary. He told them that the only way they could express their gratitude for all the sacrifices of time, money, and hard work of innumerable men and women is to break out of the stranglehold of mediocrity and soar to heights where they truly belong.

*Photos on Back Cover*

The anticipation mounted because the guests knew that the best was yet to come. And then the climax of the morning entered with the splendor worthy of the moment. They walked in, the Sisters from Heaven and from the word go they bedazzled the gathering with their vigorous, vibrant, live-wire rendition of the musical numbers from the iconic movie Sister Act. The audience was captivated as Rev. Mother Superior Terrifica led her choir of nuns Sr. Amnesia, Sr. Nervousia, Sr. Pietica, Sr. Diabetica and 20 other angelic voiced young boys and girls sang one glorious number after another and captured the high energy of Whoopie Goldberg and her Sister Act.

It may have been a few off notes and slips but what came through so brilliantly was their love for singing. They put their hearts and souls into giving their best and the auditorium resounded with the melodies and the applause of a wonder-struck audience. The icing on the cake was the beloved, evergreen Boney M favourite, By the Rivers of Babylon.

The morning folded up with the heart-warming finale where the entire Balbhawan family came on the stage. Fr. Bento, Kiddos, Seniors, Aunties, Sisters and all to say grace. The guests and the children then moved to the grounds for that scrumptious spread that has become another dearly loved Balbhawan Day tradition. ■

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## *Contd. from pg. 8 - Our Lady of Lourdes and World Day of the Sick*

The feast of O.L. of Lourdes was chosen because many pilgrims and visitors to Lourdes have reportedly been healed by intercessions of the Blessed Virgin.

In 2005, the World Day of the Sick had a special significance since it was the year John Paul died from a sepsis. In 2013, Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation on this Feast day, and he cited his declining health as his reason for retiring.

The “World Day of the Sick” calls the faithful to pray for those who are sick, and to offer their own sickness and struggle, joined to the sufferings of Christ, on behalf of those in need. Catholic Online presents this marvellous letter of Pope John Paul II:

This day, which, beginning in February 1993, will be celebrated every year in commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes, for all believers seek “a special time of prayer and sharing, offering one’s suffering for the good of the Church.

It is only in Christ, the Incarnate Word, Redeemer of mankind and victor over death,

that it is possible to find satisfactory answers to such fundamental questions.

In the light of Christ’s death and resurrection, illness no longer appears as an exclusively negative event; rather, it is seen as a “visit by God”, an opportunity “to release love, in order to give birth to works of love towards neighbour, in order to transform the whole of human civilization into a civilization of love” (St. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, “ Salvifici Doloris”, n. 30).

Now, this gold nugget! The World Day of the Sick - in its preparation, realization and objectives - is not meant to be reduced to a mere external display centering on certain initiatives however praiseworthy they may be, but is intended to reach consciences to make them aware of the valuable contribution, which human and Christian service to those suffering, makes to better understanding among people and, consequently, to building real peace.

And, this final frontier! May the Blessed Virgin Mary, “Health of the Sick” and “Mother of the Living”, be our support and our hope, through the celebration of the World Day of the Sick. ■

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*“The opposite of poverty is not wealth. In too many places, the opposite of poverty is justice.”*

-Bryan Stevenson

# World Day of Social Justice

-By Christine D'Sylva

***It is not enough to have just a politically independent India. What is also needed is to have an Indian nation where every citizen will have religious and political rights so that every person will have an equal opportunity to develop.***

- Dr Ambedkar

***The earth is the mother of all people And all people should have equal rights upon it.***

- Chief Joseph.

We celebrate many important days such as Father's day, Mother's day, Women's day etc.

Then there definitely exists a need to have a Social Equality Justice day.

Our world is not an equal world. There are various pertinent issues such as poverty, unemployment, social injustice that prevail.

**Our world is not an equal world. There are various pertinent issues such as poverty, unemployment, social injustice that prevail**

The United Nations General Assembly has decided to observe 20th February as the World Day of Social Justice.

Social justice occurs when attempts are made to remove barriers that people face because of several factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability.

It is in the interest of human dignity that we must make every effort to ensure that social equality prevails. Of course, we do not exist in an ideal world where social equality is the norm but yet efforts have to be made to see that inequality as far as within our reach is removed.

To cite one example; The Company Fortune 500, has adopted a policy of accepting people suffering from Autism as a small part of their workforce. The United Nations was so impressed by the results of accepting autistic people whose two main advantages are that they do not get bored easily and rarely lie, that they have formed

an asset to this Company. The United Nations desires more Companies to adopt this policy so as to give people with Autism (which is a disability) a fair chance at suitable employment.

In such a manner, the United Nations continues to explore various means to make social equality a distinct possibility. In our country, India, we too are making progress in attempting to remove social inequalities. The principle of social inequality is having a revolutionary effect on life in contemporary India.

This impact is very dramatic because truthfully no other major society in recent history has had inequalities so gross or long preserved.

To illustrate, we are aware that there exists the notion especially amongst the lower strata of society that men should remain in the same occupation and station in life as their forefathers because of religious precepts and social custom. Therefore if

a man was a carpenter, it followed that his son would also follow in his footsteps. Rarely would the young lad think of anything but carpentry, and if he deviated it was a matter of shame and anger for his family.

India has many other social inequalities like the caste system that sadly still is prevalent today especially in the rural areas which form 80 percent of our population.

It is very astonishing for foreigners to view the gross inequalities in our nation. The marked contrast between the very poor and the very rich is startling. On one hand, there exists slums that stretch from one end to another and in the same area bungalows and high-rise buildings thrive.

All discrimination is wrong. There exists discrimination not just in our country but the world over. Women are unfairly discriminated against, and at times, treated like the inferior sex. Yet, both sexes have essential roles to play

and it is incorrect to state that one sex is more important than the other. Both balance each other and have their own roles to play so that society functions as a comprehensive whole. Yet, people forget this and this gives rise to women being treated poorly, not just in society in general but at times in the basic unit which is the family. We hear of brides harassed for dowry, husbands resorting to domestic violence against their wives etc.

Today the “Me Too” Movement has gained momentum. This Movement highlights the sexual harassment and sexual assault that occurs in our society and is often swept under the carpet and hidden.

Victims of sexual harassment are encouraged to

voice their experiences and this enables others to realise that they are not alone in facing such problems as well as tells the world about the magnitude of the problem. It has been found that because of the “Me Too” movement, many employers have been forced to make changes in their policies; for example re-examining gender based pay differences and improving sexual harassment policies.

Thus, we see clearly that social equality is a necessity in today’s society and all efforts must be undertaken to achieve equality.

We shall conclude with the words of Nelson Mandela, “I am influenced more than ever before by the conviction that social equality is the only basis of human happiness.” ■

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## 150th Agnel Jayanti celebrated at Pune

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**F**r. Agnel’s Vidyankur School celebrated 150th Agnel Jayanti of their Patron. Ven. Fr. Agnel de Souza on

21st January 2019. The Director Rev. Fr. Agnelo Gomes garlanded the bust as the hymns were sung. A message was given to the students by Rev. Fr. Agnelo Gomes inspiring them to lead a selfless life like Ven. Fr. Agnel de Souza.

A special prayer service was conducted by the students asking God for his blessings on all the Pilar Fathers and their institutions. The students also offered their prayers to Ven. Fr. Agnel de Souza.

Miss Kashesh Agrawal through her speech described Ven. Fr. Agnel de Souza’s holiness and strong traits as an Indian sanyasi.



*Garlanded The Bust By Our Director*



*Prayer Service*



# Fr. AGNEL'S BLESSINGS

## FERVENT PLEA ANSWERED

**KUWAIT :** I am from Holland working in Kuwait since last few years with a reputed Company. For the last few months I was facing some serious problems in the Company and I was mentally disturbed. In this predicament, a Staff member, Mr. Shaikh Ansari, who is an ex-student of Fr. Agnel School at Bandra, advised me to pray to Ven. Fr. Agnel. Although I did not have his Novena prayer leaflet, trusting in his heavenly intercession, I fervently prayed to him. I am now very happy to inform you that through the blessing of Fr. Agnel, I am relieved of all tensions and I am now happy at my work-place. With a grateful heart, an offering of ₹.5000/- to the Ashram.

-Kathleen Hellen

## SAVED FROM DEFAMATION

**MULUND:** Although we belong to some other faith, we are ardent devotees of Ven. Agnel for the last many years. We were praying to Ven. Agnel for a particular favour in a critical time which otherwise, would have been a black mark on our family reputation. Through the intercession of Ven. Agnel, our prayer was granted in the right time. Our sincere thanks to Fr. Agnel with an offering of ₹.11,000

-Meena Vashi

## SHOWER OF BLESSINGS

**SANTACRUZ:** By the grace of Ven. Agnel, my son passed SSC with high marks and secured

admission for higher study in a reputed college despite stiff competition. Moreover, I am blessed with a good job with a handsome salary in a foreign country. As a token of our profound gratitude, an offering of ₹.10,000/- (Rupees Ten thousand only) for one-time meal for the poor children at the Ashram.

-Victor D'Souza

## SECURED GOOD JOB IN US

**VASAI:** My son who is Post-Graduate in Computer Engineering, was trying to go abroad for a better job since a long time. But all his efforts were in vain. He was very upset. In this plight, I started a Novena to Ven. Agnel for 9 consecutive Sundays. I am now extremely happy to inform you that through the blessing of Fr. Agnel, my son has secured a job in the U.S. as a soft-ware Engineer with a handsome salary. With a grateful heart, an offering of ₹.2000/- to the Ashram.

- Primas Peter Dabre

## FRUITS OF GRACEFUL BOND WITH VEN. FR. ANGEL

**TEXAS-USA :** I am a staunch devotee of Ven. Fr. Agnel since my School days. Through his heavenly intercession I had a bright academic career, got suitable job and I am now well settled down in the U.S. As a token of my sincere thanks, an offering of ₹.4000/- (Rupees Four thousand only) to the Ashram.

-Saji Chacko Mathew

# Family as the Primary Agency of Peace

-By Narayani Ganesh

Most of us begin our lives in a family, once we leave the warmth and security of the mother's womb. Along with basic necessities, an average family provides love and care, so crucial to a growing child. We know deep inside that whatever we are today, is due, in a large measure, to the upbringing and values we imbibe from immediate and extended families, and from those who we consider 'family', outside the home. Some seek out a spiritual mentor who they can engage with for life guidance. So besides nature, nurture plays a crucial role in shaping our personality, attitude and behaviour that get reflected in our daily conduct.

Our upbringing and the associations we make (satsang), do influence our attitude and behaviour. It is from these 'families' that we acquire, by osmosis, an understanding of ethical and moral values and principles, also depending on the prevailing socio-political context. Hence, the tendency for peace-promoters to routinely quote from the Maha Upanishad that says, 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' – the whole world, the entire earth and all that is in it, is my family.

Interestingly, this phrase is engraved on the entrance to Parliament in New Delhi, perhaps to inspire legislators to always remember that despite all the diversity and differences, we need to discuss, debate and resolve issues, form policies and pass laws in the spirit of being one family. Why? Because by and large, no one would wish to harm his family and so would not take any step that would mean inflicting violence or aggravating conflict in the family. The effort would always be to love one's family members and work towards maintaining peace and happiness in the household.

So, when we extend the concept of family from one's hearth to one's homeland and beyond, it is only logical to assume that as members of one large earth family, we will act responsibly and love one another in the same spirit as do members of the smaller family unit. Hence, we often say, that the family is the cradle of peace – all fundamental value systems, love and togetherness, caring and sharing, all emanate from that cradle.

At the risk of oversimplification, one could ask, could the breakdown in the family as a cradle of peace – in some cases – be due to the fact that increasingly, children spend most of their

time alone, left to their own devices, consuming negative narratives on multi-media? And parents, to assuage their guilt for not being able to spend enough quality time with their children, end up giving in to their every wish and demand, ply them with

expensive gifts and hesitate to discipline them when required, for fear of losing their love?

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan says that instead of over-protecting and pampering their children, and putting pressure on them to only excel in material spheres, parents need to nourish them with spiritual values that will contribute to their all-round well-being and prepare them to participate in creating a peaceful and loving world. The family is the microcosm that gets reflected in the macrocosm; it is the "experimental field of non-violence", as Acharya Mahaprajna put it.

Relationships formed with selflessness and affection will engender non-violence, while relationships formed with selfish motives breed violence. ■

- Courtesy *The Times of India*

## Out of Their Bounty

Joan Fernandes	New Delhi	27000	T. Dalmeiy	Bhayandar	1000	Catherine Thomas	Kerala	300
Sosamma Saji	U.A.E	45000	Avani D. Sheth	Mumbai	1000	Shernaz Mistry	Pune	300
Big Tree	Mumbai	18000	David Patrao	Mumbai	1000	P. K. Alphonsa	Kerala	300
Thelma D'Souza	Mumbai	18000	V.S. Bilolikar	Mumbai	1000	Alphonsa Nirmala	Kerala	300
Mariaraj	Bangalore	10000	A. Gala	Dombivli	1000	R. Victor	T.N.	300
Mary D'Souza	Bangalore	10000	S.A. Stephen	T.N.	1000	S. Merlyn	T.N.	300
Sunil Lopes	Tamil Nadu	5000	M.M. Athanil	Karnataka	1000	S. Mistry	Pune	300
Christina & Maria	Telanana	5000	Girly Elgin	Kerala	1000	Maharukh	Mumbai	351
C.Jacob	Kerala	5000	E.L. Rodrigues	Goa	1000	Benaz Daver	Mumbai	501
Valsa Mathewkutty	U.A.E	5000	R. Arulanandham	Mira Road	1000	Bharti M Sheth	Mumbai	501
Dylon D'Souza	Mumbai	5000	A.K. Augustine	Kerala	1000	Annat Antony	Kerala	500
Biswajit Das	Kolkata	5000	Annet P. Giri	Pune	1000	Nisha Ekka	Jharkhand	200
Shyam Soni	Mumbai	5000	T. Mistry	Gujarat	1000	D.C.DAWSON	Jharkhand	100
Agnel Vincent	Kerala	5000	Arun Jadhav	Kerala	1000	Prema Indirani	Tamil Nadu	400
A.V.N. Appa Rao	Hyderabad	3000	Delight Jackson	Australia	500	A.V.Francis	Tamil Nadu	300
Dhumini Thomas	Kerala	3000	Malini S.Patel	U.S.A.	151	Anto Paul	Kerala	250
Vinay Sherigar	Thane	3,000	R.Ananthan	Tamil Nadu	501	D.Desmier	Tamil Nadu	200
Neville S.Ramon	Gujarat	3000	Maria D'Souza	Karnataka	500	S.Devadas Pillai	Mumbai	200
Jessy Pinto	Karnataka	3000	Neela Gunderia	Mumbai	500	George D'Souza	Karnataka	250
Letitia Mibterio	Karnataka	3000	Calestine Pinto	Karnataka	500	Shetal Shah	Mumbai	101
Agnel Traders	Kerala	2000	Louise Clancy	Karnataka	500	Surendra Gandhi	U.K	121
Martin Parackal	Kerala	2000	Liji Joseph	Kerala	501	p.Mistry	U.K.	100
Yogesh Joshipura	U.S.A.	1500	K.S.Rao	Mumbai	501	Anto Paul	Kerala	200
Freny Daruwalla	Pune	1001	Milind kumble	Mumbai	501	Beatrice Joy	Kerala	200
Annie D'Souza	Mumbai	1000	Anosh Waghmare	Pune	500	Prema Indirani	T.N.	200
Rebecca Zaman	West Bengal	1000	Khushmita Ganata	Mumbai	501	B. Susainathan	T.N.	200
Pervez Mehta	Mumbai	1000	Lucy Joseph	Kerala	500	H.N. Desai	Valsad	200
Gee Thomas	Mumbai	1000	Priya L. Dias	Vasai	500	J. Miranda	Goa	200
Bulbul Dutt	West Bengal	1000	M.G. Coutinho	Vasai	500	Deepak Mathew	U.S.A.	200
Kiran Fernandes	Mumbai	1000	Y. Fernandes	Mumbai	500	Anna Mathew	Kerala	150
Arokiamary Bob	Pune	1000	Evita A. D'Costa	Mumbai	500	Jose Augustine	Kerala	150
P.j.George	Kerala	1000	C. Wilson	Mumbai	500	S.S. Kajave	Mumbai	150
Hansaben Waghela	Gujarat	1000	C.R. D'Mello	Virar	500	T. Sebastian	Kerala	150
Anil Mody	Mumbai	1001	Steffi R. D'Mello	Virar	500	S.B. Remjie	Mumbai	111
Shashikant Babulal	Mumbai	1001	Nirav G. Parmar	Gujarat	500	K.B. Bhosale	Ahmednagar	101
Aloo Daruwalla	Mumbai	1500	P. Idnani	Mumbai	500	Vijay Amolik	Ahmednagar	100
Stanislaus E	Kerala	1000	A.J. Hariawala	Mumbai	500	Mikhayil Padale	Maharashtra	100
A. Jayasimhan	Mumbai	1500	D.M. Patel	Virar	500	J.N.Diwan	Gujarat	101
S. Panchal	New Zealand	1151	M. Kapadia	Mumbai	500	Antony R.	T.N.	100
J.H. Sampat	Mumbai	1100	N. Bhalerao	Mumbai	500	Daisy Polly	Kerala	100
S. I. Agarwal	Mumbai	1100	Sunita Vikas X.	Mumbai	500	Jose Mathew	Kerala	150
Shashikant Babulal	Mumbai	1001	Tyronne Barrow	Mumbai	500	Shalini Mehra	West Bengal	100
Jacob Almeida	Thane	1000	K.S. Rao	Mumbai	500	Pratima Subhash	Pune	200
Riju A.X.	Kerala	1000	Joseph C.D.	Kerala	500	Christabel	Kerala	300
Keiky Minoo	Mumbai	1000	M.J. Pereira	Pune	500	Vijay Amolik	Ahmednagar	100
Yogenra Parikh	Thane	1000	V. sophia	T.N.	500	Ramesh Magar	Nashik	100
Dr. Thomas	Kerala	1000	G. Veeramani	T.N.	500	Mary Philomina	Kerala	100
M.D.Mathai	Kerala	1000	Kurian Thomas	Kerala	500	T. Sebastian	Kerala	100
R.S.Raju	Bangalore	1000	C. Nazareth	Mangalore	500	P. Attick	Orissa	100
Rita Patel	Mysore	1000	S. Chettiar	Mumbai	500	Thressiamma	Kerala	150
Mariyamma Pius	Kerala	1000	Arokia Nadar	Mumbai	500	Sagar Remjie	Mumbai	111
Baby Joseph	Kerala	1000	M. Antony Raj	Mumbai	454	A.Alphonse	Tamil Nadu	100
Michelle D'Mello	Vasai	1000	Mary Antony	Kerala	400	K.C.George	Kerala	100
P.K. Raghuvanshi	U.S.A.	1000	M.Rajathi	Tamil Nadu	300	Earnest Aruja	Kerala	100
N.S. Manuel	Mumbai	1000	Lumi Savarimuthu	Tamil Nadu	300	Agnel Amaldass	Karnataka	100
M.R. Valiyaveetil	Mumbai	1000	R.Victor	Tamil Nadu	300	Eileen D'Cruz	Karnataka	100
						Elsy Francis	Kerala	100

# Grandparents Day Celebration



Welcome dance for Grandparents - UKG



Grandparents are a blessing -LKG Periwinkle



Giving the message of one world, one family -  
Nursery Periwinkle



Playing the role of Grandparents-LKG Rose



Respect all the religions - UKG Jasmine



A dance performed on Grandparents day - UKG  
Tulip



An activity of fun for the Grandparents

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